

SESS. II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, PRISONS BRANCH

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 1890.

ALSO

REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF "THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1886,"

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1890.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The INSPECTOR OF PRISONS to the Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE.

SIR,—

Justice Department (Prisons Branch), Wellington, 1st May, 1891.

I have the honour to present this my eleventh annual report on the prisons of the colony, together with the fifth annual report on the working of "The First Offenders' Probation Act, 1886." I have visited the eleven larger prisons on the dates stated in the attached table marked J, and have at all times found them kept clean and in good condition, due attention paid to sanitary arrangements, and a high state of discipline maintained. I have also visited the smaller or police gaols whenever time and circumstances permitted.

1. As regards the First Offenders' Probation Act, it will be seen from the details attached that the Act continues to work in a most satisfactory manner.

2. As heretofore, the supplies for the several prisons have been publicly tendered for, and no complaints have been made either by the prison authorities or by the various contractors. The usual custom of all tenders being addressed to and opened by the Visiting Justices has been strictly adhered to, and their recommendations as to the acceptance or rejection of tenders invariably adopted.

3. There was only one case of breaking out of prison during the past year—namely, at Wanganui, when a prisoner managed to escape from the carpenter's shop, but was recaptured. At Auckland a prisoner got away from an outside labour party, and at New Plymouth two prisoners escaped from the breakwater works, but in each case they were recaptured within a couple of hours.

4. Table A shows that the health of the prisoners has been very good at all the prisons. The daily average of sick has been 8·39 males and 2·68 females, a daily average decrease over the previous year of 2·21 males and 2·82 females.

5. Eight deaths have occurred during the year, as against six in 1889—namely, one at Auckland, three at Lyttelton, one at Napier, one at New Plymouth, and two at Wellington.

6. No executions took place during 1890. One death sentence was passed, which His Excellency the Governor was pleased to commute to penal servitude for life.

7. From Table A it will be seen that at the commencement of the year there were 552 males and 81 females confined in the prisons of the colony, and at the close of the year 495 males and 67 females, being a decrease of 57 male and 14 female prisoners. In the year 1890, 4,062 males and 901 females passed through the various prisons, whilst during the previous year the numbers were 3,872 males and 802 females, giving a total increase of 289 in cases dealt with.

8. During the past year the daily average number of prisoners was 515·01 males and 67·60 females, as against 551·22 males and 75·02 females in 1889, a daily average decrease of 36·21 male and 7·42 female prisoners.