

The credits are slightly down on the peak figure for 1944-45, and this has been due mainly to the fact that through a shortage of staff it has not been practicable to operate the quarry at Mount Eden on occasions during the year. Despite the curtailment of pig husbandry following the closing of military camps, the production from the farms has been well maintained, the credits from the farms and gardens aggregating £55,655. The bootmaking industry returned £8,846, mail-bags £3,051, road-construction work £8,314, tailoring £2,032, and quarrying £8,375.

During the year ending 31st March last the Department supplied goods and services to the Army to the value of £3,925, to the Air Department £2,367, and to the Ministry of Supply £4,137. The aggregate contribution in materials supplied by the Prisons Department for war purposes totalled a value of £58,798.

Experience has shown that nowhere more than in prison does mischief follow in the wake of idleness, consequently it has always been regarded as important to plan to keep prisoners fully occupied, and preferably usefully occupied, for work that is of economic worth, besides helping to keep down the cost of administration, is not so soul-destroying as the drudgery of task labour. In New Zealand we are fortunate in having an extra-mural programme of work on the prison farms to which any surplus prisoners can be readily drafted. As already mentioned, this work provides splendid opportunities for training inmates in a healthful avocation so that if they choose to follow the land they can earn an honest livelihood on release. Even if they do not so desire, the temporary occupation in the open air helps to build them up physically, and there is no doubt that health and moral outlook are closely related.

INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The following is a brief summary of the purpose and the main activities of the various institutions:—

Mount Eden.—To this prison are drafted all long-sentence prisoners and others who cannot with safety or convenience be transferred to the prison farms and camps. With a view to providing useful employment and affording facilities for suitable segregation, the following are the main industrial activities carried on: tailoring, boot-manufacturing, mail-bag making and repairing, tobacco-manufacturing, plumbing, carpentering, gardening, quarrying, and laundering.

Mount Eden makes its own bread requirements and draws its requirements of meat and milk from the Waikeria Farm. Also, the tobacco leaf used in tobacco-manufacturing is grown principally at Waikeria. Both of these are economical arrangements designed to make the Department, as far as practicable, self-sustaining.

The boot-shop has made quite a substantial contribution to the war effort, and the standard of military boot produced was high.

Cells are equipped with wireless receiving-sets, and lectures, entertainments, &c., are frequently held. The library is fairly well stocked, but new books are needed. It is augmented by magazines, periodicals, and weekly papers. As soon as circumstances permit, the facilities of the Country Library Service are to be extended to prisons. Educational classes are regularly conducted under qualified teachers, classes being specially directed, with the aid of film strips, to the meeting of the peculiar needs of the prisoners. Facilities are afforded to any prisoner who desires to embark on any special study by correspondence, &c. The Department provides for regular showings of talkie films.