

1900.  
NEW ZEALAND.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, PRISONS BRANCH

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1899;

ALSO

### THE OPERATION OF "THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1886"

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1899.

*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,—

Department of Justice, Prisons Branch, 1st May, 1900.

I have the honour to present this my nineteenth annual report on the prisons of the colony, together with the fourteenth annual report on the working of "The First Offenders' Probation Act, 1886."

1. I have periodically visited the different prisons on the dates stated in the attached table marked J. I have on all occasions found them clean and in good condition, every attention being paid to the sanitary arrangements, and a good state of discipline being maintained, while the management is both effective (with one exception referred to hereafter) and economic. "The First Offenders' Probation Act, 1886," is working better and better each year.

2. The food, clothing, and necessaries for the year have been supplied by public tenders, which, as usual, have been submitted to and recommended by the Visiting Justices. The contractors have given satisfaction, no complaints being made during the past year.

3. Eight escapes took place during the year (all male prisoners), viz.: One escaped from the defence-works at Fort Takapuna, Auckland, and was recaptured on the same day; two escaped from the works at Sticking Point, Lyttelton, and were very soon recaptured; one escaped from the works at New Plymouth, and was immediately recaptured; two escaped from the Cook Gardens works at Wanganui, but were rearrested the same day; one escaped from the works at Mount Cook, Wellington, and was recaptured after four days; while another escaped from the same locality, and was rearrested the same day. No one broke out of prison during the year, and the escapee from Wellington referred to in my last year's report as being still at large was rearrested by the police on the 6th October last.

4. A reference to Table A shows that the health of the prisoners has been fairly good throughout the year, the daily average of sick being—males, 9·67; and females, 1·30; an increase in the males of 5·02 and in the females of 0·47 as compared with the previous year.

5. Ten deaths occurred amongst prisoners during the year, 9 males and 1 female—viz.: 3 at Auckland, 1 at New Plymouth, 1 at Wellington, 4 at Lyttelton, and 1 at Dunedin. Two at least of these cases should not have been sent to a prison for treatment, being in a comatose state when received, and dying soon afterwards. In each case a Coroner's inquest was held, in accordance with the Prisons Act, and verdicts of "Death from natural causes" were returned.

6. There were no executions during the past year.

7. From Table A it will be seen that at the commencement of the year 530 males and 65 females were undergoing detention in the different prisons of the colony, while at its close there were 518 males and 48 females, giving a decrease of 12 males and 17 females. During the year 1899, 3,693 males and 676 females passed through the various prisons, as against 3,505 males and 631 females during the previous year, an increase of 177 males and 44 females, making a total increase of 221 prisoners for the year.

8. During the past year the daily average number of prisoners in the different prisons has been 537·03 males and 53·98 females, a decrease on the previous year of 26·52 males and of 0·43 females.

9. From figures supplied by the Registrar-General, the population of the colony at the end of the year 1899 was 420,352 males and 376,007 females, a total of 796,359 persons; whilst on the same date the number of prisoners (males and females) was 566. The average percentage of prisoners according to population was therefore 0·0735, as against 0·0759 in the previous year.

10. During the year 1899, 60 male and 2 female misdemeanants in default of bail, and 39 males and 12 females supposed lunatics, were detained in the prisons, an increase of 15 males and 2 females in the former, and in the latter a decrease of 1 male and 5 females.