

Rations and other necessaries supplied by the contractor were of good quality, and the conditions of contract strictly adhered to.

The bi-weekly visits of the Gaol Surgeon took place. Visits were also made at other times when urgency demanded his services.

Divine Service has been held as usual every alternate week, with one or two exceptions, by Church of England clergymen, and on the intervening Sundays prayers have been read by a prison officer. The conduct of prisoners on these occasions was exemplary.

The Visiting Justices made their customary visits of inspection, and also visited as required and dealt with the various matters brought under their notice. In this connection it is with much regret that I have to allude to the death, in November last, of the late Hon. J. A. Bonar, M.L.C., who for some thirty-five years, I believe, officiated at this Prison in the capacity of Visiting Justice. The Department was represented at the funeral by two members of this Prison's staff following the remains of the deceased gentleman to their last resting-place.

From different parts of this and the neighbouring colonies some thirty persons visited and were shown through the Prison; and, with the exception of the late Hon. J. A. Bonar, M.L.C., in his official capacity, there were no visits of members of the Legislature to record.

Without the Prison some of the work performed by prisoners during the year was as follows: At the Westland Hospital a large landslip on the road leading thereto was removed, and a quantity of earth on banks taken down to prevent a recurrence; the water-table pitched with stone, foot-paths cleared of weeds, and the grounds of the institution put in order. For the Volunteer authorities range-mounds have been kept in order, and an addition made to the markers' butts. The grounds at the Supreme and Magistrate's Courts and Customhouse have been attended to as required. Some 13 chains of the Shallow Rush Road was formed and metalled for a width of 12 ft., and a culvert put in. At Cass Square the footpaths and ornamental plots have been kept in order, and grass mown over an area of some 8 acres. Work at the cemetery has consisted in the formation of several plots on that part cleared by prison labour during the preceding year. On the Prison Reserve about 2 acres of ground, for many years little better than a swamp and covered with a growth of rushes, was brought under cultivation, two-thirds of which was planted with potatoes and the balance with vegetables for prison use. During the latter part of the year, when the cultivation of ground should have been in full swing, work was much retarded owing to continued wet weather; nevertheless, all things considered, I am fully satisfied with the class and amount of work done. About 22 chains of fencing was erected, 35 chains of drains cut, and several trees also planted. Procuring firewood—for the year—for the Prison and officers' quarters, and silver-pine posts for fencing purposes, and cartage of same from the reserve, was a very considerable item of the work performed by prisoners. A gravel-pit was also opened on the reserve, a drying-ground for clothing formed and gravelled, and the necessary posts erected.

Within the Prison repairs have been effected where necessary, and six gates made for erection where required on the reserve. Prisoners' boots have also been put in thorough repair, advantage having been taken of a shoemaker prisoner undergoing a term of imprisonment. The female prisoners were, as usual, employed washing and repairing clothing, &c. A few articles of under-clothing were also made by them.

One officer, since resigned, was reported during the year for neglect of duty. With this exception, the conduct of officers was good.

First Offenders' Probation Act.

None were placed on probation during the year. The entry in the "Female" column opposite "Probation," in sections Nos. 3 and 4 in annual return No. 1, refers to a person tried at the District Court, Greymouth, a separate probation district, and there admitted to probation.

The probationer mentioned in the concluding paragraph of my last annual report is still in this district, and doing well.

I have, &c.,

T. R. POINTON,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

INVERCARGILL PRISON.

SIR,—

H.M. Prison, Invercargill, 3rd January, 1902.

I have the honour to report for your information the working of the Prison under my charge from the 1st January to the 31st December, 1901.

1. Number of prisoners in custody at the commencement of the year, 17 males, no females; number received, 107 males, 10 females; number discharged, 101 males, 10 females; number remaining at end of year, 23 males, no females.

2. General conduct and industry has been very good. There are a few exceptions to this—those who will never work or behave themselves either in or out of prison if they can help it. The prisoners are employed by the Corporation making concrete bridges, and are giving every satisfaction.

3. One prisoner, sentenced to two months' hard labour for attempting suicide, on admission was at once sent to the Hospital for medical treatment for injuries self-inflicted. One young prisoner serving four years for rape was also sent to the Hospital suffering from rheumatics and matrairie. He was ten weeks in the Hospital, and, notwithstanding his illness since his first admission into prison, he has increased his weight by 47 lb. and his height by 7 in. There have been no other cases of sickness during the year.

4. During the year eight prisoners were punished for eleven minor offences. One prisoner attempted to escape by the iron fence leading to the main wall, for which he was sentenced to six