

The tea ration, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. per day, is more than enough; I would suggest $\frac{3}{8}$ oz., and increase the sugar ration slightly.

Remarks.—During the year the Prison Camp was visited by His Excellency the Governor, who kindly performed the planting of the first tree on the 5th March, 1901; also the Hon. J. McGowan, Minister of Justice (twice); the Hon. T. Y. Duncan, Minister of Lands and Forests; the Hon. W. Hall-Jones, Minister for Public Works; and numerous tourists from all parts of the world, who were favourably impressed with what they observed, and expressed good wishes for its future success.

I remain, &c.,

J. C. SCANLON, P.W.,

Acting-Gaoler.

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

WANGANUI PRISON.

SIR,—

I have the honour respectfully to submit my second annual report on the working of this Prison for the year ending the 31st December last.

The total number of admissions shows an increase of two on last year—viz., 206 for 1900 and 208 for 1901. There has, however, been a considerable increase of male prisoners and a larger decrease (in proportion) of female prisoners, the number for 1900 being 175 males and 35 females, and for 1901, 194 males and 14 females.

There were discharged during the year 188 males and 19 females. On the 1st January, 1901, there were in the prison 15 males and 5 females, and at the close of the year 21 males and no females.

Of the crimes for which prisoners were committed, nine were for offences against women and little girls. These, however, all occurred in the first few months of the year, and during the last half-year there has not been one case. For an offence of this nature one prisoner was flogged once and one twice, whilst in the previous year two were flogged, and I am of opinion that, although flogging is not a pleasant theme, for this class of crime it appears to be the only deterrent. It is also a fact which I think is worth recording, that the second flogging is far more dreaded than the first.

The health of the prisoners has been exceedingly good, no sickness having occurred except what was imported.

Three sentenced prisoners (two males and one female) were removed to the Asylum during the year. They ought never to have been brought to the Prison, but should have been examined, in which case I have no doubt that all three would have been sent to the Asylum; but the average country policeman does not seem to be able to discriminate between lunacy and vagrancy. Although there have been several cases of lunacy in Wanganui, not one has been sent to prison, Sergeant Dwyer always having them examined at once and sent direct to the Asylum.

The general health of the prisoners is, I think, a matter of congratulation, considering that the prison has been fuller than ever before, the daily average being the highest for many years—viz., males 18.48, females 2.10. And in this connection perhaps I may be permitted to state that, in my opinion, it is a great pity the jurisdiction of the District Court is not considerably extended, and appointed to sit at more frequent intervals. Last year we had a young woman committed for trial for a petty theft, but as it was from a dwelling she could not be tried at the District Court; she therefore had to wait trial three months, and then received a sentence of four months. Again, it not unfrequently happens that a prisoner may be awaiting trial for some months and be after all acquitted.

There have been nine cases of prison offences reported. Six were punished, two discharged with a caution, and one case withdrawn by myself. With one exception they were all of a trivial nature, the exception being the case of a man who purposely injured himself on the works, and who, after he came out of the Hospital, received a sentence of seven days' bread and water in the open Court.

The rations have been excellent, and there have been no complaints.

The conduct of the officers has been good, but, as I pointed out last year, one of them has arrived at an age that militates considerably against his efficiency. The junior is a young officer, and, as he is attentive to his duties, will, if he goes on in the same way, make a good warder. And here I would respectfully point out that, as the daily average has nearly doubled since I came here, I think the time has arrived when a third permanent officer should be appointed, more especially as the employment of temporary officers is never satisfactory.

The cruel injustice to all concerned of sending men to prison who are suffering from delirium tremens still continues, and warders and prisoners alike, who have to turn out in the morning and do a day's work, are not unfrequently kept awake for two or three nights in succession by the demoniacal ravings of these drink lunatics.

First Offenders' Act.

This Act continues to work satisfactorily. Nine probationers have been released under it during the year, and all save two have done well. One has been rearrested twice, and is now awaiting the Supreme Court for the second time; and another, a Native, is leading an idle, lazy life, and will, I fear, yet have to be brought before the Court again.

All moneys due to date have been paid.

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

R. T. NOBLE BEASLEY,

Gaoler and Probation Officer.