

of bail, and an increase of 7 supposed lunatics, none of whom can be looked upon as criminals; and consideration must also be given to the fact that in prisoners acquitted after remand there is the very large increase of 120 persons. As shown elsewhere, the greatest increase has been in Auckland and the largest decrease in Lyttelton.

7. During last year the daily average number of prisoners in the different prisons has been 728·72 males and 72·70 females, an increase of 21·15 males and 1·65 females. The largest increase was in Auckland—224·25, as against 190·84; while the largest decreases were—in Lyttelton, 102, as against 107; Dunedin, 45·27 as against 48·58; and Wellington, 157, as against 161. It is difficult to conjecture the cause of the increase of crime in Auckland, and the Gaoler's comments on this matter are worthy of consideration; but it may be partly accounted for by the fact that it is the first port of call for the boats from Frisco, New South Wales, and the islands. An undesirable class of immigrants is apparently being dumped down in the colony in the way of stowaways, cargo-broachers, and seamen and firemen who assault their officers or refuse to work, often on purpose to get into prison so as to remain here after their vessels have sailed.

8. The population of the colony (including Maoris) at the end of 1905 was 490,484 males and 435,116 females, a total of 925,600; while at same date the number of prisoners was 810; the average percentage, therefore, of prisoners to population was 0·0875, as against 0·0832 in the previous year, an increase of 0·0043; but as one-fifth of the 810 passed through more than once the real percentage of prisoners to population is 0·0318, not including the acquittals after remand, misdemeanants, and lunatics.

9. The health of the prisoners during the year 1905 has been good. Table A shows a daily average on the sick-list of 7·31 males and 1·97 females, an increase on the previous year of 0·07 males and a decrease of 0·29 females.

10. Three deaths occurred during the year—viz., 1 in Auckland, 1 in Wellington, and 1 in Lyttelton. As prescribed by the Act, inquests were held in each case and the usual verdicts returned.

11. There was one execution during the past year—viz., at Wellington—and death was instantaneous.

12. During the year 1905 34 male and 1 female misdemeanants in default of bail, and 48 males and 6 females supposed lunatics, were detained in the prisons, an increase of 25 males and 1 female in the former and an increase of 9 males and a decrease of 2 females in the latter.

13. During the year 1905 642 males and 61 females were acquitted after remand, as against 553 males and 30 females in 1904, an increase of 89 males and 31 females.

14. During the past year a more liberal scale of rations has been issued to remand and awaiting trial prisoners, and they are now granted the same amount of tobacco as the convicted ones.

15. Table B shows that prisoners were maintained at a gross cost of £48 17s. per capita, as against £48 9s. 6d. in 1904. The gross totals are made up as follows: Staff supervision, £30 14s. 5d., as against £30 3s. 3d.; maintenance, £14 14s. 1d., as against £15 2s. 1d.; incidentals, £3 8s. 6d., as against £3 4s. 2d. Of the incidentals, £403 12s. 11d. is recouped to the Government—viz., Railway Department, £307 12s. 11d., and Post and Telegraph Department, £96.

16. As an exemplification of the different prices in various localities, it will be noticed in Table B that in Auckland a daily average of 224·25 prisoners were fed for £1,557 17s. 11d., while in Wellington it cost £1,583 3s. 3d. to feed a daily average of 157 prisoners. In Napier a daily average of 45·36 prisoners were fed for £326 4s. 5d., while in Wanganui it cost £304 7s. 5d. to feed a daily average of 25·30 prisoners. Considering the increase in the cost of living in the colony in recent years and the liberal rations issued to prisoners, with the bedding and clothing, it is thought that a gross total of £48 17s. is not excessive. The utmost economy consistent with efficiency is observed.

17. As regards expenses of prisoners at tree-planting prisons—which are not included in Table B—at Waiotapu, where there were 6 officers and 63 prisoners, the gross annual cost per prisoner was £44 2s. 4d., made up as follows: Staff supervision, £17 9s. 9d.; maintenance, £17 8s. 1d.; incidentals, £7 4s. 6d. At Dumgree there were 3 officers and 34 prisoners; the gross annual cost was £37 1s. 6d., made up as follows: Staff supervision, £12 3s.; maintenance, £21 8s. 1d.; incidentals, £3 10s. 5d. At Hammer there were 3 officers and 25 prisoners; the gross annual cost was £47 3s. 5d., made up as follows: Staff supervision, £20 15s.; maintenance, £22 2s. 3d.; incidentals, £4 6s. 2d.; and at Waipa there were 3 officers and 21 prisoners; the gross annual cost was £41 1s. 7d., made up as follows: Staff supervision, £18 7s. 4d.; maintenance, £17 0s. 2d.; incidentals, £5 14s. 1d.

18. As regards educational attainments of prisoners Table C shows that out of a total of 4,472 male and 567 female prisoners received during the past year 19 males and 1 female were of superior education, 4,101 males and 513 females were able to read and write, 66 males and 9 females could read only, whilst 206 males and 44 females could neither read nor write.

19. A comparison of previously convicted prisoners, as shown in Table F, sentenced during last year with those sentenced five years ago—viz., in 1901—shows in those once convicted an increase of 51 males and a decrease of 8 females; in those twice convicted, an increase of 137 males and a decrease of 16 females; and in those thrice or oftener convicted, an increase of 328 males with a decrease of 93 females.

20. A reference to Table J shows an increase in prison punishments—viz., 158, as against 121 in 1904. Of these, 149 were for minor offences, and were dealt with by visiting Justices, while nine being for aggravated prison offences were dealt with in the Supreme and Stipendiary Magistrates' Courts. The percentage of prisoners punished was therefore only 2·72, and when it is taken into account that the same individuals were punished several times, it must be admitted that the conduct of the prisoners generally has been satisfactory, and no unnecessary punishments have been inflicted. As regards prisoners who have been discharged from gaol, it is satisfactory to be able to report that in many instances situations have been found for them, and good accounts are to hand as to their conduct and industry.