

1915.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, PRISONS BRANCH

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1914,

ALSO

OPERATION OF THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1908

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1914.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The UNDER-SECRETARY, Department of Justice, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

Department of Justice, Wellington, 30th June, 1915.

I HAVE the honour to present the report of the Inspector of Prisons for the year ended 31st December last, together with extracts from the Gaolers' reports and the annual prison statistics.

The details given in the report of the Inspector make it unnecessary for me to do more than refer to one or two of the more important works of the year.

As will be seen from the various reports, the general condition of the prisons has been satisfactory, notwithstanding the drawbacks due to the unsuitable buildings still in use. Discipline generally has been improved, and the conditions of labour and opportunities for the useful employment of prisoners improved and extended.

There was an increase in the number of prisoners during the year over the previous year.

There has been an increase in the expenditure, due to the increased number of prisoners, to the increase in prices owing to the war, and to the necessity of increasing the staff to meet the requirements of new conditions arising and the establishment of new camps.

There has, however, been an increase in the credits, which amounted to £9,162, as against £7,382 in 1913. A steady increase in this respect may be looked for in the future. Notwithstanding the conditions referred to, the cost per head was slightly less for 1914 than for 1913.

In accordance with your decision to abolish the prison at Lyttelton and to provide another and more up-to-date institution elsewhere, an area of about 1,000 acres of Crown land, which had formerly been set apart for other purposes, was secured about twelve miles from Christchurch, and close to the Templeton Railway-station. A large portion of the land is of poor quality, but a considerable area is excellent land, and with the labour available there is no doubt that it can be converted into a valuable estate. General farm-work will be carried on, and will provide means for the profitable employment of a large number of prisoners. A start has already been made and a small camp established, and the preliminaries for the construction of the main buildings put in hand. As the work progresses suitable prisoners will be sent there and the prison at Lyttelton reduced accordingly.

Another work that has been undertaken is the construction of a tourist road from Waimarino, on the Main Trunk line, to Lake Roto Aria and Tokaanu. This work calls for some special remarks as it enables a further development of the system of camp prisons to permit of prison labour being utilized under favourable conditions on works that will be useful and beneficial to the prisoners and to the community which has to maintain them. In May of last year by your instructions a camp was established about four miles from the Waimarino Station, and a commencement made with the work. It has been found necessary to have two camps, the main one composed of "habituals" at the Mangahuia Stream, and a small one some four miles farther on. There are at present fifty men in the two camps. A portion of the road had been partly formed, but there is about nine miles of entirely new formation, with several bridges and a considerable number of culverts, &c., to be constructed; and another ten miles of an old military road, which will have to be remade. This road will become a very important one, giving as