

1917.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1916;

ALSO

OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1908

(REPORT ON), FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1916.

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

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT to His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 15th July, 1917.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Prisons Department for the year 1916.

I have, &c.,

J. A. HANAN,

Minister in Charge of Prisons Department.

The INSPECTOR OF PRISONS to the Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Prisons Department, Wellington, 30th June, 1917.

I have the honour to submit the thirty-sixth annual report on the prisons of the Dominion, together with the prison statistics and extracts from the reports of the Gaolers and of the First Offenders' Probation Officers. The statistics and Gaolers' reports are for the calendar year ended 31st December last, while the reports of the five Probation Officers cover the period from the dates of their respective appointments to the 31st March, 1917.

Although, as indicated by the statistics, there has been a slight decrease in the prison population compared with the daily average for the previous twelve months, the year has been a very busy one both for the headquarters staff and for the Gaolers and other officers of prisons. The stress of the work has naturally been very much accentuated owing to the depletion of staffs consequent upon war conditions. Unlike other Departments, the Prisons Department is unable to employ female labour, neither can it utilize the services of youths below military age. As you have already been advised, the position has now become so acute that no further eligible men can be spared from our ranks if the efficiency of our control and management is to be maintained.

AMENDED PRISON REGULATIONS.

In compliance with your instructions, regulations have been drafted providing for an improved classification; for the removal of anomalies in connection with the treatment of remand and trial prisoners, debtors, first-class misdemeanants, and prisoners sentenced to imprisonment without hard labour; for a differentiation between the treatment of first offenders and those who have served previous sentences; and for the management and government of a Borstal institution.

Pending the gazetting of the new regulations a "general order" is being issued bringing into force immediately the sections dealing with remand and trial prisoners, debtors, first-class misdemeanants, and prisoners sentenced to imprisonment without hard labour.

This will enable unsentenced prisoners and prisoners of the non-criminal class to be placed on a much more satisfactory footing than heretofore, and will assist the Department in carrying out the scheme you have laid down for the amelioration of the conditions under which such prisoners are confined, and for the making of a clear line of demarcation between the criminal and the non-criminal.

An improvement in the general conditions, tending to humanize some of the older prison methods, has already been made, as personally directed by you after your initial visit to the prisons of the Dominion.

PRISON POPULATION.
Comparative Figures.

The last statistics to hand from the Commissioners of Prisons for England and Wales—viz., those for the year ended 31st March, 1916—show that the daily average number of prisoners in all their institutions had fallen from a total of 12,104 in 1914–15 to 8,256 in 1915–16, a decrease of 3,848, or 31·7 per cent. In New Zealand the figures for the year ended 31st December, 1915, were 1,008, while for the year 1916 they were 943, a reduction of only 65, or about 6·4 per cent. The English returns show that the prison population decreased by nearly 57 per cent. between the year 1913–14 and the year 1915–16, while in New Zealand we find that the figures for 1916 are in excess of those for 1913, the daily average for the earlier year being 893. During the first six months of 1917 we have had a slight reduction in our daily average compared with 1916, but even now the figures merely approximate to those of 1912. Unfortunately, 1915 was a record year in the history of the New Zealand prisons, and in spite of the fact that a number of ex-prisoners are known to have enlisted, it does not appear as if our criminal population is likely to be reduced to a figure appreciably below that reached during the pre-war period. When the war is over it is to be feared that we shall have the customary experience after the cessation of all wars—a large increase in the number of persons committed to our prisons.

It is difficult to assign a cause for the extraordinary difference between the figures for England and Wales and our own, but perhaps it is partly to be accounted for by the fact that, while the war has revolutionized the social conditions existing among the lower stratum of society in the older countries, making living possible where it was formerly impossible, and providing well-paid work for the masses who previously found it difficult to obtain work at all, conditions in this country have remained practically the same. The war has made little or no difference. In New Zealand it cannot be said that the ranks of the criminal classes are recruited from the poverty-stricken. Poverty and the conditions arising therefrom are seldom the cause of crime in this Dominion.

The reasons given for the fall in the English prison population are as follows, viz.: (1) The enlistment of many habitual petty offenders; (2) the restrictive orders issued by the Central Control Board (Liquor Traffic) and those made by the Justices and by the military authorities; (3) the great demand for labour, rendering employment easy and well paid, and resulting in ability to pay fines, this latter being greatly aided by the operation of section 1 of the Criminal Justice Administration Act, 1914.

Practically none of the agencies referred to operate in New Zealand except the first, and this is perhaps to a small extent counterbalanced by the creation of new offences by the War Regulations Act and the consequent committals thereunder, and by the sentences passed on military offenders by the Military Courts-martial.

Generally speaking, an analysis of the criminal statistics of this country appears to show that but for the intervention of the war the criminal population would either have remained much at the same level as in 1915, or would have shown an increase on the figures for that year.

The fluctuations in the prison population from 1881 to 1916 are shown in the table below:—

Daily Averages, 1881 to 1916.

Year.	Daily Average of Prisoners in Dominion Prisons.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.
1881	631·66	94·37	726·03
1891	459·22	58·39	517·61
1911	799·08	64·18	863·26
1912	855·28	64·07	919·35
1913	826·69	66·55	893·24
1914	916·09	63·72	979·81
1915	931·33	76·79	1,008·12
1916	895·99	82·78	942·77

EXPENDITURE AND RECEIPTS.

From the figures published in Table B, covering the financial year ended 31st March, 1917, it will be seen that the total expenditure amounted to £69,536. The total for the previous year was £71,174, the decrease for 1916–17 therefore being £1,638. The cash credits for the year amounted to £9,867, against £11,982 for 1915–16. The reduction of £2,115 thus shown in the cash earned by the Department is accounted for to some extent by the fact that the amount received for bricks supplied from the Mount Cook works is about £1,100 less than for the previous year, while there has also been a falling-off in the sale of dressed stone and road-metal at Auckland, and of concrete building-blocks at Invercargill.

In order that the actual value of the prison labour employed during the year, other than that utilized for domestic work or paid for by cash credits, might be fairly assessed, the Engineer-in-Chief of Public Works was asked to obtain estimates from his District Engineers of the value of the different classes of outdoor work according to free-labour standards that had been carried out by prison labour under prison officers for the twelve months ended 31st March last. The

returns from each district where public works were in hand have now been received, and the result is given below:—

Value of Prison Labour on Public Works as estimated by Engineers.

	£	£
Waikeria: Building and road-construction	2,605	
Roto Aira: Waimarino Road	2,785	
Point Halswell, Wellington: Various works... ..	1,659	
Paparua: Blockmaking and buildings	1,137	
Invercargill: Blockmaking, buildings, and reclamation-works	3,216	
Total value of prison labour on public works	—	11,402

Value of Prison Labour employed on other Works and Industries for which Cash Credits not obtained.

Auckland Prison: Tailor's shop	44	
Boot-shop	316	
Dressed stone	634	
Grammar School wall	624	
Lyttelton Prison: Boot-shop	200	
Quarrying, &c.	300	
Wellington Prison: Tailor's shop	611	
Alterations	60	
Kaingaroa Prison: Building	150	
Roto Aira Prison: Building	100	
Addington Prison: Building, &c.	150	
Invercargill, Paparua, and Waikeria: Work on reinforced-concrete telegraph-poles and fencing-posts and other concrete products	200	
	—	3,409
		14,811
Cash credits for tree-planting, bricks, farm-produce, gardens, road-metal, &c.		9,867
Total value of prison labour, excluding all labour employed for domestic and administrative purposes		<u>£24,678</u>

From the foregoing table it will be seen that the labour of the physically fit prisoners employed on works and industries has resulted in a saving to the State of nearly £25,000. This result must be looked upon as eminently satisfactory, more especially as a considerable number of the fit prisoners are employed on domestic work, cooking, cleaning, &c., within the prisons. The value of their labour is not shown, nor is that of the men employed on farming, development-work, &c. There is also a percentage of men who are mere derelicts and who are unfit for work of any description.

PROGRESS DURING THE YEAR.

Buildings.

Since the last report was written the south-wing extension has been finished and occupied, thus completing the whole of the original building scheme for Auckland. As stated in previous reports, the internal arrangements have been much altered from the design first prepared. Instead of dividing up the whole available space into cells, provision was made for a schoolroom, officers' quarters with reading-room, dining-room, recreation-room, baths, &c., store-rooms, and a prison infirmary. The infirmary was designed on the usual hospital lines, and is a marked improvement on the former hospital division, which was located in an old wooden building and was insanitary and inconvenient.

The completion of the new wing has also made it possible to demolish the old wooden divisions that had been an eyesore and a menace for so many years. Their removal has also enabled the Department to commence erecting subdivisional exercise-yards, six in number, to provide for a better system of classification than it was possible to carry out under former conditions. The whole of the work is being executed by prison labour under the direction of our own officers.

A start has also been made to replace the concrete floors of many of the cells with kauri flooring. The floors were in a very bad condition, and as they required relaying advantage is being taken of the opportunity to make the cells more fit for human habitation. In order to ensure economy an arrangement has been made with the Public Works Department by which all work at Auckland is now carried on without the assistance of free labour and without any charges for supervision. Our own officers are quite competent to control and direct the labour. The works in hand are thus being prosecuted at the lowest possible cost to the State.

The first wing of the new Waikeria reformatory prison, with kitchen block, including bath-rooms, washhouse, laundry, &c., is now in occupation, and is by far the best-equipped and most satisfactory prison building we have. To supplement the accommodation in the new building, where there are eighty cells, one of the temporary cell-houses was removed to a position adjoining the new structure, and has been converted into a very satisfactory auxiliary cell range containing twenty cells. Temporary exercise-yards have also been provided, and the whole of the arrangements reflect the greatest credit on the Supervisor of Prison Works and the other officers who were responsible for them. A small part of the new administration block, containing a Board-room, Gaolers' and clerks' offices, has also been completed and occupied during the

year. Three additional cottages for officers—one built of concrete blocks—have also been erected, while further accommodation has been provided for two married officers by the removal and subdivision of the former single officers' quarters. A reinforced-concrete building, comprising milking-shed, dairy, engine-room, and separator-room, has been commenced to enable us to commence dairying in the coming season. At Waikeria, as at Auckland, the whole of the work is being carried out exclusively by prison officers and prison labour with the most satisfactory results.

At Kaingaroa we have erected a cottage for the accommodation of the officer in charge. The material was provided by the Forestry Department in payment for huts and buildings taken over from the Prisons Department on the closing of the Waipa Prison camp.

At Wellington building-work has been largely confined to the making of alterations at the Terrace Prison to provide a small infirmary in the female division for use in connection with the treatment of women detainees under the Prisoners Detention Act. This is the first provision of the kind that has been made in our New Zealand prisons. The absence of even an infirmary cell in all the female prisons of the Dominion is a reproach we are trying to remove as far as possible with the limited means at our disposal.

At the Addington Prison for females a much-needed improvement has been made by the erection of a building containing washhouse, laundry, bathrooms, &c., in a convenient position adjoining the main structure. Here again considerable saving in expenditure was effected by carrying out the work ourselves under the general supervision of the Public Works Engineer.

At Paparua (Templeton) progress has been made in the erection of the first wing of the new prison. The buildings required are of a somewhat extensive character, and under existing conditions it cannot be expected that any additional accommodation will be available for another eighteen months or more.

The north-wing extension of the Invercargill Prison has been completed, but considerable delay has occurred in connection with drainage and other matters, with the result that the new building is not yet in use. Provision has been made on the top floor for a large drill-hall and gymnasium, Board-room, and other rooms. When the necessary equipment has been obtained there should be ample scope in this wing for the special work you have decided to carry on in connection with the education and training of the youthful class of offenders that are sent to this institution. Progress has also been made during the year in the erection of the main wall of the prison.

Other Works.

Stone-dressing, quarrying, &c., and the erection of an extensive wall on the Grammar School boundary have employed the bulk of the labour at the Mount Eden Prison. A small number of prisoners have also been employed at making and repairing boots for prison officers and prisoners. The estimated labour value of the work of erecting the Grammar School wall amounted to £624.

Tree-planting has been carried on as usual at the afforestation camps.

Sufficient progress has been made on the roadworks between Waimarino and Tokaanu to enable motor traffic to be carried on to a limited extent between the two places. One of the principal bridges on the route, that over the Whakapapanui Stream, has been completed, including extensive approaches of dressed stone. The bulk of the timber for this and other bridges has been obtained from the bush and squared or pit-sawn by prison labour, thus considerably reducing the charges for material.

Before the tourist season sets in it is intended to repair the sections of the old road between the end of our formation and the junction with the Waiouru Road that have suffered damage during the long period since its construction, and so enable motors to travel regularly over the whole length of the road without discomfort to the passengers or danger to the cars. The question of constructing what is known as the deviation or short-cut to Tokaanu will require to be considered during the coming summer. Some progress has been made in metalling the new road towards Waimarino, but owing to the lack of adequate transport facilities the work has proceeded at a somewhat slow rate.

The Public Works Engineer estimates that the value of the work carried out by prison labour on Roto Aira Road for the twelve months ended 31st March last is approximately £2,785, exclusive of the cost of material. This road will eventually become one of the arterial roads of the Dominion, and it will therefore be seen that its construction by prison labour is resulting in a considerable saving to the taxpayers of the Dominion.

At Waikeria a great deal of farming and development-work has been carried on during the year, thus considerably increasing the value of the property compared with last year's figures. No reliable estimate of the labour value of this work can be given. The construction of access and other roads has been prosecuted vigorously, the value of this work alone being estimated by the Public Works Engineer at £1,536.

Much useful work has been carried out by prison labour at Point Halswell, Wellington. Considerable progress has been made with the excavations. Concrete receiving and supply reservoirs have been built, and the necessary pipes laid in connection with the water-supply system, including the erection of hydrants and other provision for fire-prevention; a substantial brick cottage has been completed for the use of the officer in charge, an electric-lighting line with all the necessary poles, &c., has been erected connecting up with the Miramar Borough lines, and repairs have been made to the Defence Department wharves, &c. The total labour value of the work carried out during the year is estimated by the Public Works Department at £1,659. The plantations on the peninsula have been attended to, and other necessary work has also been carried out in addition to the special items enumerated above.

Brickmaking has been continued at the Mount Cook branch prison during the year.

At Paparua Prison (Templeton) a considerable volume of work is in evidence in connection with farming and development, but owing to the dry season results have been somewhat dis-

appointing. A new industry, the making of reinforced-concrete telegraph-poles, has been started here during the past few months.

At Invercargill the main work outside building operations has been, as in previous years, in connection with the carrying-on of the reclamation of the estuary lands. Good progress has been made, the main embankments having now been practically completed and the water shut off. Internal drains, roads, and embankments have now to be proceeded with on lines that have recently been laid down by the Chief Drainage Engineer, Mr. Thompson. A large amount of work yet requires to be done before the scheme is complete, but the undertaking has now advanced sufficiently to render it an assured success. Portions of the area above water-level were sown in grass during the autumn, and the growth that has already taken place gives a clear indication of the fertility of the land and augurs well for the future. The estimated value of the labour expended on the embankments, flood-gates, &c., during the year is £2,630.

From the foregoing it will be seen that a very large amount of useful reproductive work has been carried out by the Prisons Department during the past year, and that with the limited means at our disposal we have utilized the labour of the prisoners to the best possible advantage in assisting in the development of the country.

TREE-PLANTING.

Afforestation-work was carried on satisfactorily at Waipa and Kaingaroa until December last, when, owing to the area reserved for the purpose in the neighbourhood of the first-mentioned camp having been fully planted, the Forestry Department decided to cease operations there and concentrate on the planting of the Kaingaroa Plains. The prisoners at Waipa were therefore transferred to Kaingaroa in the latter part of December, and the camp was finally dismantled and closed so far as the Prisons Department was concerned. Three of the four officers stationed at Waipa had already enlisted, and the remaining officer, who had been declared unfit for active service, was transferred to Kaingaroa.

The amalgamation thus effected will result in economy of staff and in a reduction of the general working-expenses, but, as Waipa had been maintained as a special camp for selected first offenders, the step, although unavoidable under existing conditions, was a retrograde one so far as the classification of prisoners was concerned, and will require rectification so soon as circumstances permit.

The cash credits obtained from the Forestry Department for the work carried out at the two camps during the year was £3,201. Of that amount, £1,972 was earned at Kaingaroa and £1,229 at Waipa.

The progress and labour value of tree-planting operations since the inception of the work sixteen years ago are shown in the table below :—

Area planted by Prison Labour from 1901 to March, 1917.	Number of Trees planted.	Labour Value of Prisoners' Work.
13,106 acres.	36,539,800	£ 57,621

PRISON SCHOOLS.

The evening classes established in the Auckland and Invercargill Prisons have been carried on successfully during the year.

In order that our work in this direction should receive the attention it merited, the school-master in charge of the classes at each institution was asked to furnish a report regarding the effect of education upon the prisoners, the progress of the prisoner students, and the general average of intelligence compared with that of children attending the Board schools.

The statements supplied, which are included in this report under the heading of the respective prisons, throw an interesting light on the general question of the standard of education among those who offend against the law. As pointed out in previous reports, the standard is low, and this is particularly noticeable at Invercargill, where those attending the classes are all young men or boys.

The majority of these youths have been born in New Zealand or have lived in the Dominion for the greater part of their lives, and should, therefore, have had every opportunity of acquiring a satisfactory education. Whether their educational deficiencies have been brought about by low mental development, neglect of parents during school age, or other causes could only be discovered by special investigation; but, from a criminological viewpoint, the natural question to ask is whether it is a case of "cause and effect."

EMPLOYMENT OF PRISON LABOUR.

For the past few years ample employment has been found for the whole of the physically fit prisoners in the New Zealand prisons. Farms have been and are being developed, roads have been constructed, and reclamation and building work carried on. As each year passes, the amount of valuable reproductive work increases, but, as has been pointed out in previous reports, it is essential that a greater amount of industrial work should be provided in substitution for stone-breaking, stone-dressing, and quarrying as a means of employing men who, owing to the nature of their different offences or to their general tendencies, can only be employed "within the walls" or in places where they can be kept under the closest supervision. It is not enough that these men should merely be kept in "safe custody"—they should be kept at work that will develop any intelligence they have, fit them to some extent at least for taking their place in the ranks of labour on their release, and return the cost of their maintenance to the State.

It has been pointed out in previous reports that a considerable proportion of the articles, clothing, boots, &c., purchased for Government Departments and institutions could readily be manufactured in the gaols if the necessary steps were taken by the responsible authorities to see that orders were placed with the Prisons Department.

By your direction steps are being taken to provide suitable workshops at Auckland and elsewhere in order to enable a much greater amount of industrial work to be carried on in the central prisons, but our efforts must be supported by the purchasing Departments or no satisfactory results will accrue. There is no reason why some of the rougher classes of brushware, coir mats, boots and shoes, and clothing required by the Government should not be made in the prisons, and the middleman's profit saved to the State. This practice is largely followed in New South Wales and other Australian States with satisfactory results; and while we do not wish, nor shall we be able, to employ such a large proportion of our prison labour at indoor work as is done in the Commonwealth, we could carry on a great deal more of this class of work than we are able to do with the present lack of demand. In this connection I am pleased to say that the Post and Telegraph Department has recognized our efforts to develop business by placing with us an order to manufacture 1,500 reinforced telegraph-poles of various sizes, ranging from 20 ft. to 30 ft. in length. The work is being carried on at Paparua and Invercargill Prisons, and a number of very satisfactory poles have already been turned out at each place. If a further order can be obtained for supplying the northern districts the industry will also be established at Auckland.

It is somewhat unfortunate that other Departments can seldom be brought to recognize the fact that, while they might not be able to obtain their supplies more cheaply from the prisons than from private contractors, the General Government saves practically the whole cost of the manufactured articles over and above the cost of the material used.

The reports of the Commissioners of Prisons for England and Wales show that prison labour in the Old Country has been responsible for the production of a large output of articles for the Army and Navy during the war period, and that both prisoners and prison officers have been working overtime for the past two years to keep their production up to the highest pitch. Although the employment of prison labour in the same direction in New Zealand has been suggested, it has not been found possible to accept the departmental recommendation on the subject.

Increased means of employing the female prisoners at Addington and other places is also required, but so long as we are unable to obtain work other than washing, mending, and manufacturing articles for our own institutions, so long will there be a number of women in the prisons who cannot be fully employed.

CLASSIFICATION OF PRISONERS.

For some time past it has been apparent that a scheme of classification was one of the greatest needs so far as the New Zealand prison system was concerned. To establish such a scheme on a sound and permanent footing under existing conditions is a very difficult matter, but with the assistance of the amended regulations that have been drafted in accordance with your directions it is hoped that a step in advance may be made during the coming year. In view of the depletion of staffs caused by war conditions and the time that will be required to effect the necessary changes in the buildings, yards, &c., we cannot expect to make as rapid progress as we would wish, but there are certain obvious defects that we hope to remove as soon as the new regulations become operative.

In regard to classification generally, attention is again directed to the anomalies that exist in regard to the three classes of sentence—hard labour, reformatory detention, and the habitual criminal declaration. The last two named classes are allowed to receive a small remuneration for their work, habituais being even permitted, by regulation, to purchase indulgencies. Hard-labour prisoners, on the other hand, although no worse as criminals than reformatory-detention prisoners, and decidedly better than habitual criminals, receive no payment and no privileges except a small gratuity on release. As has been pointed out on other occasions, provision should be made for equality of treatment. Much justifiable discontent among the hard-labour prisoners would thus be obviated, and the work of the officers in charge made somewhat easier. In order to equalize matters to some small extent your approval was obtained to the abolition of the indulgence system as applied to the habitual criminals confined in the Auckland Prison. The new rule on the subject was enforced as from the 1st May last. These men are still paid a small amount (3s. 3d.) per week, but are not now allowed to purchase additional items of diet out of the money so earned.

The original intention of the provision for the payment of a small weekly wage to prisoners in the classes named was that the bulk of the money should be used to assist in the support of wives and children. In practice it has been found that the prisoners only avail themselves of this privilege to a very limited extent. In any case the hard-labour prisoner is just as much entitled to consideration in this direction as the habitual and the man undergoing a sentence of reformatory detention. In the same way experience has shown that as the Courts make no clear line of demarcation between the class of prisoners sentenced to hard labour only and those sentenced to terms of reformatory detention, both classes should in common justice be placed on the same footing in regard to release on probation on the recommendation of the Prisons Board or of some other body constituted for the purpose.

This question is invariably brought before me by hard-labour prisoners during my visits to the various prisons, and it is evidently felt that the differentiation in treatment when there is no difference in the criminality of the respective classes is most inequitable. An amendment in the Prisons Act to remedy this and other anomalies was brought forward in 1915 and again in 1916, but it was not proceeded with. During the recess the matter was brought under the notice of the late Minister, the Hon. Dr. McNab, who stated in January last that he hoped "during the coming session to have such a measure placed on the statute-book." The matter

has become a pressing one, and it is to be hoped that time will be found to pass the necessary legislation during the present year.

OPERATION OF THE CRIMES AMENDMENT ACT, 1910.

The report of the Prisons Board for the year deals shortly with matters arising out of the administration of the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, so far as it affects the release and discharge of habitual criminals and of offenders sentenced by the Courts to terms of reformatory detention.

Some years having now elapsed since the passing of the original Habitual Criminals Act, it is desirable that an effort should be made to arrive at the statistical position, and a return has accordingly been prepared by the Prisons Department covering the period from the first establishment of the Board until the present year, 1917. Prior to the passing of the amending Act in 1910 very few cases were dealt with. From the figures that have been compiled it appears that since the first sitting of the Board early in 1911 until April of this year 136 habitual criminals have been released from prisons on probation and 4 have been discharged without probation. Of the 136 released, 23 have been finally discharged after fulfilling the conditions of their probation for a substantial term. Of the total number released and discharged from prison (140), the return shows that 63 have been subsequently reconvicted or have broken the term of their probation and have been returned to prison, and 13 have absconded; 13 have joined the Expeditionary Forces (one of whom has since returned and been reconvicted); 13 have left the Dominion for the countries or States to which they belong, or have resumed their occupations as sailors, firemen, &c.; 3 have died, and 1 has been committed to a mental hospital. The foregoing statement accounts for 106 out of 140 habituals released or discharged from prison. The remaining habituals are still reporting to Probation Officers in different parts of the Dominion. A limited number have been released, returned, and released again. It will thus be seen that of the 140 men released or discharged by the Board 63 may be said to have failed to make good, while the position with regard to the 13 who absconded is uncertain. It is too soon yet to regard these figures as in any way final, in view of the fact that the men released in 1916 and 1917 have not yet been fully tested, nor in the natural course of things can any statistics on this subject ever be final; but the data are sufficient to demonstrate the fact that a reasonable percentage of those who have followed criminal careers during the greater part of their lives have again become law-abiding members of the community. Apart altogether from statistics, the Department is aware of many such cases. A sufficient period has not yet elapsed to enable us to make any useful comparison possible between the figures prior to the passing of the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, and those for the subsequent period, but there is little doubt that the enlargement and extension of the original Habitual Criminals and Offenders Act passed in 1906 have resulted in improved administration, and that the Act has thereby assisted in bringing about better results.

A further return is being prepared to illustrate the results from the working of the reformatory-detention section of the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, under the auspices of the Prisons Board, but owing to inadequacy of staff it has not been found possible to complete it in time to include it in this year's report.

CHANGES IN THE LOCATION OF PRISONERS.

Owing to the cessation of planting operations in the neighbourhood it became necessary to close the Waipa Tree-planting Prison in December last. The prisoners were transferred to the Kaingaroa camp.

Another change made was the transfer in January last of the habitual criminals from New Plymouth to a division of the Auckland Prison.

These changes effected a much-needed saving in staff, but it is hoped at a later period to again provide separate institutions for the two classes of offenders affected. Classification in our general institutions is extremely difficult, and it is only by reserving special prisons for each of the main classes that a really satisfactory system can be established and maintained. Very little can be done, however, until we have adequate staffs. Compared with other prison systems our staffs have always been below their proper strength, and under war conditions the deficiency has naturally increased.

INEBRIATES.

The inebriates' institutions at Rotoroa and Pakatoa have been visited during the year. The Salvation Army authorities are caring for the men and women committed to the islands as satisfactorily as circumstances permit, but, as pointed out in previous reports, a large section of the inmates should be provided for in institutions where discipline could be more strongly enforced and a substantial amount of labour insisted upon. Without these two essentials the efficacy of the measures taken to deal adequately with habitual inebriates under the Reformatory Institutions Act is more than doubtful.

DEPARTMENTAL AND STAFF MATTERS.

During the year it has been found necessary to make a readjustment of the work at headquarters in order to permit of the Under-Secretary of Justice taking over the additional duties of Under-Secretary of Native Affairs and Secretary to the Cook Islands. It was accordingly arranged that the Inspector of Prisons, who possesses the necessary statutory powers, should carry on the whole of the administrative work of the Prisons Department. As this change necessitated the presence of the Inspector in Wellington for the greater part of his time, it became necessary to arrange for the carrying-on of the detail inspection of the prisons by the appointment of a Deputy Inspector. This position was filled by the promotion of Mr. M. Hawkins, Supervisor of Prison Works and Gaoler at Wellington. This alteration in headquarters management was made in August last, and has been working satisfactorily since that date.

Since last year's report was written we have experienced increasing difficulty in keeping our staffs up to strength, and we have now had to take similar action to the Police Department in regard to appealing in every case where a prison officer is called in the ballot. We abstained from taking this course until the present month (June), only one exemption having been asked for previously, but with the responsibility that devolves upon us for the safe custody of prisoners of all classes we decided that the "danger-point" had been reached, and in the public interest we could not further reduce the margin of safety.

Prison officers have responded well to the call for men, and in addition to those who enlisted voluntarily a number have already been called up in different ballots. Our records show that there are thirty-four officers in the first category and eighteen in the second. This represents over 33 per cent. of our total authorized strength. Some of our officers have been wounded, and one (Warder Hazelton) has made the supreme sacrifice.

The conduct of the officers has been reasonably satisfactory. Certain officers who offended against the regulations have been suitably dealt with. In one case only was dismissal considered necessary.

Owing to continued ill health, Mr. A. A. Gideon, Gaoler at Invercargill, recently found it necessary to apply to be retired on superannuation, and the consent of the Minister and of the Superannuation Board having been obtained, he has decided to commence his three months' leave prior to retirement on the 1st July. Mr. Gideon is an old and valued officer of the Department, having entered the Prison service in 1882. He has always been a hardworking, highly practical, and useful officer, and his services will be much missed by the Department. It is hoped that freedom from official worries will restore Mr. Gideon to health, and so enable him to long enjoy the pension he has so well earned.

INSPECTION OF PRISONS.

With the assistance of the Deputy Inspector the prisons have been carefully and closely inspected during the year. Order and cleanliness have been kept up to a high standard, and discipline has been well maintained. The Gaolers and officers in charge have had many difficulties to contend with owing to shortage of staff and other troubles arising out of war conditions, but have carried on their work with the greatest efficiency.

HEALTH STATISTICS.

The returns of sickness given in Table A show that the daily average number of prisoners on the sick-list was somewhat higher for 1916 than for the preceding year—14·20 as against 12·66; but these figures give no reliable indication of the actual conditions. It frequently happens that men and women are suffering from disease before committal. They become hospital cases immediately on reception, and remain on the sick-list during the whole period of their incarceration. Thus, though the general health of the prisoners is undeniably good, two or three chronic cases of this description in one prison will readily make the returns for that prison considerably higher than those for the preceding year. This is particularly the case in regard to Maori prisoners, a percentage of whom are often found to have tubercular trouble on admission. The figures for Invercargill, where there are generally a number of young Maoris, illustrate this point very clearly. Speaking generally, it can be said that chronic disease very seldom originates in a prison.

Deaths.

There were six deaths in the prisons, including one suicide, during the calendar year, compared with eleven in 1915 and thirteen in 1914.

PRISONERS DETENTION ACT, 1915.

Since this Act was brought into operation it has been found necessary to apply its provisions in a limited number of cases only. The first case was treated at the Napier Prison as from the 14th February, 1916, the patient remaining under detention for a period of three months. Three male prisoners have since been detained at Lyttelton for treatment, and four at Auckland, while one female has been brought under the provisions of the Act at Wellington. It must not be understood, however, that those prisoners who are dealt with under the Prisoners Detention Act are the only ones suffering from venereal disease. There are sometimes others who are treated by the Medical Officers while serving their sentences. This particularly applies to the Addington Prison for females.

As pointed out in another paragraph of this report, the absence of infirmaries and other proper equipment for coping with this disease, and even for ordinary illness, is a regrettable feature of the New Zealand prisons that is being remedied as finance and circumstances permit.

PREVENTION OF CRIME.

In many respects the probation section of the Department's work is the most important of all, and in view of the steps now being taken by your direction there is every prospect of the work being carried on more vigorously than heretofore, and so receiving the prominence it deserves. In all matters of social reform the old saw that "prevention is better than cure" holds good, particularly when the "cure" is applied after the disease has become almost ineradicable. Our chief and practically our only hope of reducing the spread of crime lies in the growth of preventive agencies, not in the treatment of the offender after his committal to prison. While your proposed alteration and amendment of the Prison Regulations, entailing as it will a more

intelligent classification and separation of the different types of offenders, should be beneficial in its ultimate results, there is a still greater need for concentration on the work of prevention. With this object in view it is essential that the scope of the First Offenders' Probation Act should be considerably widened in order that its benefits may be applied to a larger class of offenders. In cases that are considered suitable by the Courts a far wider discretion should be allowed, even to the extent of removing the present restriction in its application to first offenders only. This is particularly so in regard to young people of both sexes. A committal to prison should be looked upon as a drastic measure that should only be adopted as a last resource when all attempts at rehabilitation by other methods have failed. A well-established, well-organized probation system is morally and economically sounder and more logical than the best prison system that was ever devised, alike in the interest of the State and of the individual. It may be thought in certain quarters that any considerable extension of the probation system would result in the loss of the deterrent effect of punishment for offences against the law, but this is a fallacy. The Courts have the power to direct a period of probation exceeding in length the term of any probable sentence that might be inflicted, and the conditions imposed are sufficiently restrictive to make the offender realize more fully the effect of his act than if he were locked up for a shorter period with a number of other prisoners. When on probation he is moving about and living among the community against whom he has offended under conditions that differentiate him from his fellows. In such circumstances he is more likely to feel his position than if in confinement with a number of other offenders, who are on the same footing as himself and are treated in exactly the same way.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

In order that the work that is now being carried on under the provisions of the First Offenders' Probation Act may be more fully understood and appreciated, space has been found in the current year's report for substantial extracts from the reports of the five gentlemen who have been appointed during the past two years to act as Probation Officers in the chief centres. The information contained in each extract is interesting and instructive, and the observations and recommendations contained therein should be of assistance to the Minister in building up an improved system of probation.

From the remarks of the individual Probation Officers it is evident that there should be a linking-up between the first-offender-probation system and the work that is now being initiated by you in your capacity as Minister of Education in regard to the more juvenile members of the community who come more immediately under the jurisdiction of the officers of the Education Department. It is hoped that with adequate co-operation between the officers of both Departments satisfactory results will accrue.

The returns received from the different Probation Officers throughout the Dominion show that 125 persons were placed on probation in 1916, compared with ninety-three in 1915. Of those released upon probation, twenty-one have now completed their terms without relapse.

The total sum ordered to be paid by the Courts towards the cost of prosecutions amounted to £287 10s. 1d. The amount collected was £228 8s. 6d.

I have, &c.,
C. E. MATTHEWS,
Inspector of Prisons.

EXTRACTS FROM GAOLERS' REPORTS FOR 1916.

ADDINGTON PRISON FOR WOMEN.

There were 31 prisoners remaining in custody on the 1st January, 1916. Received during the year, 141; greatest number in custody at one time, 47; lowest, 30. One woman was admitted six times during the year, 2 five times, 4 four times, and 4 three times.

The daily average on the sick-list was 0.16.

The conduct of the majority of the prisoners has been very good on the whole; the prison offences have been committed mostly by the old and incorrigible offenders.

The vegetable and flower gardens have afforded healthy and suitable employment for a great number of the women, the remainder being employed with laundry-work, cooking, cleaning, and sewing.

Apart from the Prison sewing, a great deal of good work has been done for the Red Cross City Branch. I enclose a list of work done during the past year, and it is a very convincing proof of the usefulness of some of these women if their energies are directed in the right channel. The list of items manufactured for the Red Cross Society is as follows: 440 pairs pyjamas, 316 underpants, 130 vests, 12 nightshirts, 6 bed-jackets, 34 dressing-gowns, 270 pairs socks, 30 mattress-covers, 3,211 handkerchiefs, 427 slings, 120 bottle-covers, 36 draw-sheets, 114 knitted face-washers, 37 treasure-bags, 12 tea-towels, 36 pillow-slips, 24 dusters, 144 bandages.

An association cell has been turned into a surgery, and fitted up suitably for the examination of prisoners. Electric light has been installed in the corridors, offices, and the staff rooms. A new laundry, with bathrooms, &c., is being built, and will be finished shortly.

Lectures on suitable subjects have been given frequently since June by Miss Hunt and Miss Hawley, both Official Visitors.

Divine service has been held on Sundays by the Rev. Canon Bean, Mr. Smail, and the Salvation Army for Protestants, and by members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society for Roman Catholics.

Suitable employment has been found for several of the prisoners on discharge.

It has been suggested to the various official and other visitors that they and the different bodies they represent should form a co-operative prison-gate mission, and that their help and supervision should be given to the prisoners on discharge. This would be more helpful and practical than the present method of prison-visiting; and, as it is the reform of the prisoners, and not the prison, that is required, this should appeal to those sincerely desirous of helping the prisoners in the best way.

AUCKLAND PRISON.

During the year 1,100 males and 110 females were received, being a decrease of 296 males and 56 females on the previous year's receipts. Of those received, 27 were habitual criminals, mostly from other prisons.

During the same period 1,118 males and 115 females were discharged or otherwise disposed of. There remained in custody at the end of the year 203 males and 17 females, 35 of the males being habitual criminals and 41 for reformatory treatment.

Two deaths took place in the District Hospital. One man was under sentence of three years, and had been in the hospital nearly six months suffering from tuberculosis; the other, a middle-aged man, was on remand for alcoholism.

The health of the prisoners on the whole has been good. There was a daily average of 3.73 males and 0.02 females on the sick-list. This is accounted for by the number of admissions into the District Hospital, some remaining there for a lengthy period. In this connection I may here remark that a number of derelicts, quite unfit for work and requiring medical attention, are frequently received into prison, thus helping to swell the sick-list. They are not criminals; still, prison seems to be the only place where they can be fed and sheltered. Some suffer from incurable diseases and are unfit subjects for either a home or prison; yet the prison is saddled with their maintenance. There exists an urgent need for another institution to which these unfortunates can be sent.

The conduct of the prisoners as a body has been good. There were 50 punishments against 37 individuals. Seeing the worst class of prisoners are confined here, punishments are not excessive.

There was one escape during the year, but the prisoner was recaptured the same night, and received a sentence of hard labour.

The principal work carried out has been the completion of the South Wing extension of the Prison, which is now being occupied by habitual criminals, most of whom were transferred here from New Plymouth. In addition to cell accommodation this wing contains officers' quarters, including kitchen and dining-room, reading-room, and billiard-room; schoolroom (now in use); infirmary, medical officer's room, and dispensary and stores, the fitting-up of which is all but finished, and will soon be ready for occupation. Some of the old wooden buildings can then be demolished, and more yard-space obtained. The subdivision of the exercise-yard is now being gone on with, but it will be some time before it is completed.

Nearly twelve months ago a start was made with the erection of a stone wall, 20 ft. high, to divide the Grammar School ground from that of the Prison, and afford space for five-courts for the school. This work has progressed very satisfactorily; although solid rock had to be cut through in many places, over two-thirds of the work has been done.

The outer wall of the Prison has been carried across the road inside the railway-gates, thus giving more privacy from the public view. A large archway is left for vehicular traffic, and a smaller arch over each footpath. This gives the entrance to the Prison grounds a handsome appearance.

Quarry-work, as usual, has utilized the largest working-party, getting out stone for building purposes and for stone-crusher. Notwithstanding that local bodies had to curtail expenditure owing to the war, the cash received for road-metal was considerably in advance of that of last year.

Physical drill daily, and evening school for prisoners on three nights a week, under competent teachers, are still being carried on with satisfactory results.

The spiritual welfare of the prisoners is well cared for, visiting clergymen being regular in their attendance, seeing and conversing with prisoners. There are three religious services held each Sunday.

The conduct of the staff has been good. Five officers joined the Expeditionary Forces during the year, one of whom was returned from the training-camp as medically unfit, and has resumed his prison duties.

EXTRACT FROM SCHOOLMASTER'S REPORT.

In reply to a memorandum from the Inspector of Prisons regarding the work carried on in the Prison school, the schoolmaster at Auckland reports as follows:—

The work done in the various classes is what is done in primary schools in similar classes—reading and spelling from the books read in the various standards, writing and English graded in difficulty according to the standard of the pupil, and geography of the British Empire.

With regard to progress, diligent prisoners make far better progress than children do. One man, no longer a pupil, worked from Standard 2 to Standard 5 in arithmetic in one year—what an average child takes four years to do. Others, again, appear unable to retain what they quite understand at the time of explanation. Lack of self-control appears to explain this condition. As a rule the men who make best progress are not those with heavy sentences, for the latter brood over their troubles.

With regard to the value of the work, this may be regarded from two standpoints—the actual amount of knowledge gained and the break made by the school in the daily routine. Maoris, as a rule, and men who know they will be free in a short time, work hard and make good progress, but the long-sentence men value school only inasmuch as it makes a break in the monotony of prison life.

GISBORNE PRISON.

There were in custody on the 1st January, 1916, 13 males and 1 female, total 14; and on the 31st December last 8 males, 2 females, total 10.

The health and conduct of the prisoners have been good. There was one escape during the year, but the escapee was soon recaptured. There were a few minor cases of sickness caused by the after-effects of alcoholism.

The prisoners were employed during the year at building a wall around the grounds, removing a sandhill at the back of the Prison, also attending to the garden and improving the grounds. The female prisoners have been constantly employed at keeping their quarters clean, washing and repairing prison blankets and clothing.

The conduct and attention to duty of the officers have been good.

GREYMOUTH PRISON.

There were in custody on the 1st January, 1916, 7 males and 2 females; expiration of sentence, 25 males and 2 females.

The general health of the prisoners has been very good, excepting three male prisoners received for medical treatment and suffering from effects of drink.

The prisoners were employed during the year keeping the Prison clean, and digging and cropping Prison garden. The garden is now well cropped with potatoes and vegetables, and it is hoped soon to be able to dispose of surplus vegetables and pay proceeds into Public Account.

INVERCARGILL PRISON.

At the beginning of the year there were 90 males and no females in custody; received during the year, 103 males and 5 females; discharged, 96 males and 4 females; leaving 97 males and 1 female in custody at the end of the year.

Generally speaking, the health of the prisoners has been good. One prisoner committed suicide in his cell. At the inquest a verdict was returned in accordance with the medical testimony that deceased died by self-induced asphyxia, being mentally deranged at the time.

Without exception, the conduct of the officers has been all that could be desired. As was to have been expected, there have been numerous changes owing to officers enlisting with the Expeditionary Forces.

The quality of the rations supplied has been excellent. As in the past, all vegetables required for the use of the institution are supplied daily from the Prison gardens as required.

The conduct of the prisoners has been satisfactory, but, as must be expected where a large number of young men are undergoing reformatory treatment, a certain amount of punishment has to be meted out to ensure proper control and discipline. There was one escape during the year, but the prisoner was recaptured by prison officers within thirty-six hours of the attempt. He was brought before the Supreme Court, and received an additional sentence.

The North Wing extension is rapidly nearing completion, and should be ready for occupation shortly. Included in this new building is a large hall (100 ft. by 35 ft.), which is to be used as a gymnasium and drill-hall. There is also a commodious Board-room, which has been suitably furnished; and attached are convenient rooms to serve as offices, ante-rooms, &c. A considerable portion of the outer wall of the Prison has been raised about 10 ft. The Prison lighter has been in constant commission during the year, conveying grit and shingle for block-making and concrete-work. The reclamation-work has been steadily pushed on, and about 50 chains of embankment completed, making a total now of 120 chains on the river-frontage; there still remains 45 chains (3 ft. in height) to be brought to completion. As the tidal waters have now been shut off over an area of 2,000-odd acres it has been found necessary to strengthen the embankment in places, which work is now being carried out. It is proposed to burn off about 500 acres of wivi preparatory to sowing down in grass in the autumn.

The Prison school still continues with excellent results, instruction being given thrice weekly. We still have a number of men who are studying with the International Correspondence Schools, thus proving that they are anxious to improve their status in order to be better fitted to take their place in the world on release. As far as can be judged, of those committed to prison, about 60 per cent. are unable to meet the Fourth Standard requirements: these form the majority of the pupils for whose special benefit the school really exists.

As is the custom now, during the school vacation lectures are being given by prominent citizens on subjects that are not only entertaining but also instructive. I have again to express my thanks to Mr. A. McLean, agent of the Prisoners' Aid Society, for the invaluable assistance rendered at all times to the inmates of this institution.

The classes for physical instruction have been continued throughout the year with the best results. The officer who has charge of this branch of the work takes the keenest interest in his pupils.

EXTRACT FROM SCHOOLMASTER'S REPORT IN REPLY TO INSPECTOR'S MEMORANDUM.

Progress of students: Speaking generally, I feel sure that all the men who have received a full year's instruction have made satisfactory progress. Of the fifty men at present on the roll about thirty have received a year's instruction, and at least twenty-five are eligible for promotion. Those who are not fit to go forward may be set down as mental degenerates, and even if they received ten consecutive years' instruction they would then be only average scholars. This type of man is almost hopeless. He needs careful individual attention, and with the limited time at my disposal I am unable to give much of it. Yet, although such an one may make but slight progress, I recommend his attendance at school, as he is at any rate breathing intellectual atmosphere, and seeing other men do their work with comparative ease may awaken his dormant faculties. I say "dormant" because I firmly believe that all the men at present attending school are capable of acquiring some knowledge; but there must be great care in its presentation. With regard to the average intelligence of prison students, this is a very hard matter to decide, as their qualifications are so varied that a just estimate seems rather improbable. I think I would be quite justified in saying that when I first receive the men they are below the average intelligence of school-children—they do not learn so quickly, nor do they at first evidence the same desire to learn; but once they become interested and realize they are making progress they learn much more quickly than children. From this you will see that I consider the average intelligence of the prisoners is equal with that of ordinary scholars. The mental degenerates before mentioned are of course excepted. Most of the men are capable enough and might learn readily, but they have a very natural hesitancy in owing up to what they really do know, and consequently waste a considerable time in "fencing"—making out they know very much more than they do.

Effect on students: Very marked. I have had men who on admission to the school were little better than animals. They resented my advances at first, but by slow degrees they became interested, and light seemed to dawn on their minds. This mental awakening is evident in the man's appearance: he walks along smartly, and has an air of mental alertness about him. Another factor, which to my mind is one of the strongest arguments in favour of the education of the criminal classes, is the fact that during the four years I have been instructing at the Prison upwards of two hundred men have passed through the school, and of these five only have reappeared on the school benches at Invercargill.

Re Maori prisoners: There seems to be no middle line with this class. With few exceptions they are deceptive and cunning, and on account of their mental laziness will scheme to get out of school-work. They assimilate what is presented much more quickly than the average European, and once they become interested they naturally become industrious. I have been extremely well pleased with the work done by the Maori prisoners and with the progress they have made.

KAINGAROA TREE-PLANTING PRISON.

There were 39 prisoners in custody on the 1st January, 1916, and 58 at the end of the year.

One prisoner escaped during the year, and was recaptured after three days, and transferred to the Auckland Prison.

The general conduct of the prisoners has been exemplary, and the work done on the plantation has been very satisfactory.

The general health of the prisoners has been excellent, there being a total absence of sickness during the year.

Divine service, both for Roman Catholics and Protestants, was conducted periodically throughout the year.

The officers carried out their duties in a very satisfactory manner.

Accommodation for an additional ten prisoners was provided by the transfer of huts from the Waipa Prison.

The quantity of vegetables grown in the Prison garden was more than sufficient for the requirements of the Prison during the year. The oat crop mentioned in my last report was a complete success, and will provide sufficient feed for the Prison horses until the next year's crop is harvested. The potato crop was also very good, and returned seventy-six sacks of good potatoes. About thirty pigs were bred during the year, nineteen of which were sold for the sum of £16 8s. 6d.; the remainder were slaughtered for the use of the Prison, the market value, at 5d. per pound, being £28 6s. 8d.

The following is a summary of the work carried out by prisoners during the year, viz.: Pits dug, 1,583,700; trees planted, 2,933,100. Lining out, weeding, forming fire-breaks, fencing, clearing for tree-planting, rabbiting, stable-work and general work, and the usual maintenance-work in connection with the plantation was carried out during the year.

LYTTELTON PRISON.

There were in custody at the commencement of the year 126 males.

The greatest number in custody at any one time was 130 males, and the least number 49. Increased accommodation having been provided at Paparua Prison, a large number of men were transferred there from Lyttelton, thus accounting for the large margin in greatest and least number in prison at any one time. The daily average in prison was 85'819.

Two prisoners after being received were found to be suffering from a contagious disease, and in accordance with section 4 of the Prisoners Detention Act, 1915, were detained for curative treatment in the Prison hospital. After a course of treatment the men were discharged, their sentences having expired in the meantime.

The health of the prisoners has been good, one man only requiring hospital treatment. The conduct and industry of the prisoners generally have been good.

The rations supplied were of good quality; vegetables have been obtained from Addington Prison, and potatoes from Paparua Prison.

As in previous years, the chief employment is quarrying for the Lyttelton Borough Council. Owing to decreased number of prisoners now in custody the staff was reduced, necessitating an alteration in the outside working-parties.

In May last the tailoring department at this Prison was closed, and the instructing warder and tradesmen prisoners transferred to Wellington Prison. The bootmaking department has been fully employed in maintaining the output of all classes of footwear for the prisons of the Dominion and also for some of the mental hospitals.

The conduct of officers has been satisfactory.

Divine service was held every Sunday by ministers of the several denominations, and on Christmas Day and New Year Day, by permission of the Department, entertainments were provided by Mr. Booth, of the Seamen's Institute (mission), and several gentlemen from Christchurch.

NAPIER PRISON.

On the 1st January there were in confinement 23 males and 3 females.

The greatest number of cases of sickness at any one time was 3 males.

The prisoners have been employed in the Borough Council Quarry, Coote Road, cleaning the Courthouse buildings and the police-station. The sum of £217 10s. was paid to the Public Account for mortar-sand, stone, footpath-sand, and rubble.

The supply of rations has been very good.

With the exception of the three male admissions to the hospital the health of the prisoners has been good.

NEW PLYMOUTH PRISON.

There were 38 males in custody on the 1st January, 1916, and 29 on the 31st December, 1916, including 1 male in District Hospital.

The employment at this Prison is quarrying and stone-breaking, for which the sum of £381 5s. 9d. was received for metal, &c. A little gardening is also carried on, and vegetables have been sold, for which the sum of £13 13s. 10d. was received; also Roto Aira Prison Camp supplied with vegetables to the value of £19 19s. 1d., and this Prison supplied with vegetables to the value of about £20; total, £53 12s. 11d. Three of the officers' cottages have been painted during the year, and all the cells of the Prison and cookhouse have been painted shoulder-high, and are all now in good condition.

The rations supplied to the Prison by the various tradespeople during the year were of good quality.

The conduct of officers during the year has been good.

The clergymen of the various denominations held religious services regularly during the year, and their services appear to be appreciated.

PAPARUA PRISON.

There were in custody at the beginning of the year 24 prisoners; 81 prisoners were received on transfer from other prisons; the daily average being 32.43.

The health of the prisoners on the whole has been good.

The food supplied by the tradespeople has been very satisfactory.

The conduct of the prisoners has been good. There were no escapes or attempted escapes during the year.

The conduct of the officers has been good.

The following building-work, alterations, and improvements have been carried out during the current year: Water has been laid on to all parts of the Prison, and a high-pressure hot-water system installed in the cookhouse, which provides hot water to plunge and shower baths. A Roberts' cooker has also been set up, providing efficient cooking-apparatus. An additional cell-house to accommodate 26 prisoners, and also containing two officers' rooms, has been erected, and the whole Prison has been enclosed with an 8 ft. paling fence. Two punishment-cells have also been built. Electric light has been installed throughout the Prison, including in all some seventy-five points. A motor-car shed has been built to accommodate the Prison motor-van. A manual fire-engine, with full equipment, is now being provided.

Extensions have been carried out to blockmaking shed, making the shed 120 ft. long by 36 ft. wide, and blockmaking proceeds steadily. In connection with this industry a number of concrete telephone-poles were made to the approval of the Post and Telegraph Department, and a further quantity of these poles are now to be made; also a number of concrete fencing-posts were manufactured, and are being used upon the Prison farm.

With regard to the new Prison, a start has been made with the foundation, and the whole of the first footing has been laid, and boxing for the top layer is now being set up. This work comprises some 300 cubic yards of concrete, 200 of which have been deposited. The whole of the special blocks required for base are now completed and ready to set in position.

During the year 210 acres were ploughed for crops and sown as follows: Oats, 122 acres; potatoes, 22 acres; mangels, 6 acres; turnips and silver-beet, 17 acres; mixed grass, 24 acres; lucerne, 16 acres; and vegetables, 3 acres. The whole of these crops were sown under favourable

conditions, but owing to strong winds and no rain the crops were light. 423 half-bred ewes and 9 English Leicester rams were purchased, from which a return of 120 per cent. of lambs and 12 bales of wool was received. 32 chains of sheep-proof fencing have been erected, and shelter-belts to the extent of 104 chains have been planted with poplars, ponderosas, and macrocarpas.

Divine service was conducted towards the latter end of the year.

The Fields Supervisor, Mr. Macpherson, visits the Prison farm frequently, and gives valuable instruction.

ROTO AIRA ROAD PRISON.

There were 49 prisoners in custody at the beginning of the year; 43 prisoners have been received during the year; 14 hard-labour prisoners were discharged, and 22 habitual criminals and reformatory-detention prisoners were released by the Prisons Board.

There was one escape during the year. This prisoner was apprehended after two days' liberty, and sentenced to a further term of imprisonment.

The conduct of the prisoners has been fairly good.

The work of forming the Waimarino-Tokaanu Road still continues to progress favourably. The prisoners at Roto Aira No. 1 camp have been employed chiefly on metal-crushing and road-metalling work. A little over a mile of road has been metalled to a width of 16 ft. with an average depth of 6 in.: this gives a really fine road, and it promises to be one of the best country roads in the North Island.

The prisoners at Roto Aira No. 2 camp have done some very good work. The road is now formed to a point about six miles beyond the Whakapapanui Stream; in addition a number of permanent culverts have been placed in position. Three bridges have been completed, and a fourth is now in course of erection. All the timber required for bridges is now being squared by hand from the bush: this has been the means of a considerable saving of money, as well as getting a better class of timber than that supplied by the mills.

The conduct of the officers has been good.

Rations have been of good quality and regularly supplied.

Divine service has been held on several occasions.

WAIKERIA PRISON.

There were 54 male prisoners in custody at the beginning of the year, 31 of whom were detained for reformatory treatment, the remainder undergoing hard-labour sentences. There were 90 males in custody at the end of the year.

The conduct of the prisoners on the whole has been very satisfactory.

The health of the prisoners has been good. There was one admission to the Hamilton Hospital. Other cases of illness were of a mild nature, and were treated in the Prison by the medical officer.

The new cell-range and kitchen wing have been finished, and an auxiliary cell-house erected on the east side of the main wing. All the prisoners have been transferred from the old cell-houses and huts to the new Prison. Work on the administrative wing has been delayed on account of other necessary work, but the office portion is being proceeded with, and is almost complete. The electric bells have been installed in the cells of the new cell-range. The Chief and Principal Warders' cottages have been connected up to the gaol by telephone. A supply-tank for bathing has been fixed in the bathroom, and I am pleased to say that it is a great success, as it results in a saving of water, and the prisoners can be bathed in half the ordinary time. The most important feature is that they are all under the officer's supervision all the time they are bathing. A tell-tale clock has been installed in the cell-range and No. 1 cell-house, and is working satisfactorily.

The Chief Warder's cottage has been finished, and two warders' cottages have been built and the foundations of another started. All the cottages on the farm have the electric light installed.

Two gangs of prisoners have been continuously employed cutting the road through the Tokanui Mental Hospital ground. Their progress has been slow, as the cuttings have been heavy and the fillings deep. There have been a number of culverts laid. The Settlers' Road has also been kept in good repair.

On the farm 10 acres have been ploughed, fenced, and planted in potatoes on the south end of the estate. The crops are looking very healthy. Forty acres of oats have been sown, and they look very promising. A large quantity of clover hay has been cut and stacked. Forty acres of new ground on the north end of the farm have been cleared, ploughed, disked and harrowed, and turnips sown. The orchard this year is making good growth. All the trees were pruned and sprayed and the ground cultivated. Two acres of mangolds have been sown, also 1 acre of carrots. Sixty acres of old ground have been ploughed, disked and harrowed, and sown. Pigs were sold to the value of £166 7s. We have doubled our stock this year. Cattle sold realized £21. Vegetables sold for cash and supplied to other prisons realized £159 12s. 6d. This season we were much troubled with blight, which accounts for the reduction in the return as compared with last year. We have a large stock of vegetables in the garden that will be ready shortly. All the walnut-trees in stock have been planted on each side of the main drive.

Divine service was conducted for Protestants by Revs. Olphert and Shaw, and for Roman Catholics by Father Lynch.

Four officers resigned, one was granted leave to join the Expeditionary Force, and three were transferred to other prisons. The conduct of the officers has been good.

WAIPA TREE-PLANTING PRISON.

This Prison was finally closed on the 21st December, 1916, owing to the area reserved for afforestation in the neighbourhood of the camp having been fully planted. The prisoners in custody at Waipa were transferred to Kaingaroa Prison.

The credit from the Forestry Department for the labour performed by the prisoners for the year is considerably less than last year's credit, which is chiefly due to the work being carried out at a long distance from the Prison and there being no credit given for the time taken up in marching to and from labour. During the months of September, October, and November a great portion of the time was lost through wet weather.

The conduct of the prisoners generally has been good, and a high standard of labour has been maintained throughout the year.

The rations supplied were of very good quality, and the quantity issued according to the ration scale proved entirely sufficient for the prisoners' requirements.

The conduct of the officers has been good, and their duties were carried out in a satisfactory manner.

At the close of the Prison one officer was transferred to Kaingaroa, and the other three officers, who have been granted leave of absence to enlist, will enter the military camp with the 25th Reinforcements on the 10th January, 1917.

WELLINGTON PRISONS.

At the commencement of the year there were in custody 187 males and 23 females; total, 210. In custody at the end of the year, 144 males and 22 females; total, 166. Nine male debtors were received; 6 males were released on the recommendation of the Prisons Board, and 3 males were transferred to a mental hospital; 7 males and 5 females were admitted to the District Hospital for treatment. The greatest number of cases of sickness at any one time was 6 males and 4 females. The daily average number in prison during the year was 169.39 males and 19.94 females; total, 189.33.

Two males died during the year, one whilst undergoing medical treatment for drunkenness.

There were 141 prisoners dealt with for breaches of the regulations, 54 of the number being placed in solitary confinement.

There was one escape and one attempted escape during the year. The escapee was captured on the 30th December after an absence of five months, and sentenced to a further two years' hard labour.

On the 19th December an outbreak of fire occurred in the tailors' workshop, damage being done to the extent of about £25.

I am pleased to record there were no offences committed by the officers during the year.

The sum of £407 13s. 9d. was paid into the Public Account during the financial year ending the 31st March, 1917.

The clergymen of the several denominations have held services on each Sunday in the year at the Terrace, Mount Cook, and Point Halswell.

The Official Visitors have made visits to the prisons at intervals and conversed with the prisoners.

At the present time great difficulty is being experienced in the matter of staff. A considerable number of officers, both married and single, having volunteered shortly after the beginning of the war, are now at the front. Every ballot still further reduces the number of experienced officers, and great difficulty is being experienced in the matter of finding suitable substitutes. As a result it frequently happens that quite inexperienced men have to be placed in positions calling for the exercise of the greatest vigilance and tact, and the results are not always satisfactory.

During the past year the inmates of the Wellington prisons have been employed as follows: At the Terrace a large central tailoring establishment has been organized and put in operation. Here the whole of the uniforms required for the various Prison officers throughout the Dominion are manufactured; also all prisoners' clothing, including underwear and socks, for all the prisons. The work is supervised by two tailor instructing warders, and many prisoners are thereby being instructed in a useful calling which should prove of great benefit to them on their release. The workshop is a large airy building, well lit and ventilated, and the prisoners employed therein are working under the best of conditions. A large central store has also been built underneath the workshop. Gardening has been carried on as usual, the whole of the supplies for the Terrace and Mount Cook Prisons being grown. During the year motor vehicles have been purchased, and the whole of the work in connection with the transfer of prisoners' stores and general cartage, &c., is now being carried out by the Department, resulting in added convenience besides being much more economical.

At Mount Cook Prison works bricks to the number of 801,000 were manufactured in a period of eight months during which brickmaking was being carried on. Of this number 607,296 were supplied to various Government Departments, the cash value being £1,358 3s. 11d., leaving a balance still to be disposed of. In addition to brickmaking, the workshops were kept fully employed. Two large road-rollers, of 4½ and 2½ tons respectively, were manufactured for Waikeria and Roto Aira roadworks; countershafting and gearing for pumping-plant for Point Halswell Prison; and repairs to trucks. A large quantity of tinware for use in the various prisons was also turned out, and in addition the whole of the engineering plant received a thorough overhaul.

At Point Halswell Prison a considerable amount of valuable work has been done. A six-roomed cottage in brick has been built for the officer in charge. The whole of the work, including manufacturing of the necessary bricks, has been carried out by prison labour under the direction of tradesmen officers. A line for the transmission of electric current has been laid from Miramar

to the Prison, which is lit throughout by this means, as is also the officer's cottage. The town water-supply has been laid to the Prison. This work necessitated the laying of 7,000 ft. of 2 in. water-pipe, and the building of two concrete reservoirs of 6,000 and 31,000 gallons respectively. A pump and electric motor has also been installed. The whole of the trees planted on the hills three years ago have been weeded and 25,000 additional trees planted. The whole of the trees are doing well, and in the course of a few years should transform the appearance of the surrounding hills.

During the year the excavated area has been considerably extended, some 40,000 cubic yards of clay having been moved.

The Defence wharf at Mahanga Bay has had an extension built on, and the old portion has been scraped and tarred. The approach to the wharf at Shelly Bay has been repaired, and strengthened by a new fence and wall. A new high-pressure fire-extinguishing plant has been installed at the Prison. All of the above works were carried out by prison labour under the supervision of prison officers.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

EXTRACTS FROM PROBATION OFFICERS' REPORTS.

AUCKLAND.

This report covers the period from the date of my appointment in July, 1915, to the 31st March, 1917.

My appointment was, I believe, the first of its kind in New Zealand, for until then the work under the First Offenders' Probation Act had always been carried on by either the Gaoler of the district or a senior police officer.

Results have, I think, more than proved the wisdom of your Department in separating this branch of work from gaol and police officials; but it must be fully recognized that the hearty and active co-operation of these officials is an important factor in the administration of the Act, and I fully recognize and acknowledge my indebtedness to the Gaoler and the police of Auckland for the valuable assistance they have rendered.

For the purpose of clearness I shall deal in this report with probation work under the following: (1) Investigating the antecedents of accused persons, reporting to Court, and making recommendations; (2) first offenders' probation; (3) informal probation; (4) comments in general.

Investigating the Antecedents of Accused Persons, reporting to Court, and making Recommendations.

This work often entails a great deal of unrecorded effort and time that cannot be seen or realized. In many cases dealt with large numbers of people have had to be interviewed before your officer was able to form an estimate of all the circumstances of the case in order to give the Court a specific statement with recommendations thereon.

The importance of this department cannot be overestimated, for it is the foundation of all future effort in assisting the youthful offender to reform, and upon it depends in a large measure the success or failure of the leniency and benefits of probation.

The Auckland Judges and Magistrates have given your officer much encouragement and strength in his efforts in this department, and their sympathy and support in the work of reforming young offenders and thus preventing them from becoming criminals has proved a strong contributing factor in the success of probation in Auckland.

First Offenders' Probation.

When I took over the books from Mr. Ironside in July, 1915, there were nine probationers on the register with uncompleted terms. Since then and up to the 31st March, 1917, there were 100 probationers placed under my charge by the Supreme and Magistrates' Courts at Auckland. Of this total of 109 the following analysis is interesting: Fifteen have enlisted for active service, two have absconded, and five have broken probation and been sentenced to imprisonment, the percentage of failures being 6.42. Taking the failures individually, we find that (1) was a half-caste Chinese youth from Sydney with an unknown history, but who was given a chance because of his youth. He was so clever that he passed himself off as a Maori, and actually served as a soldier in the Narrow Neck Camp without his nationality being discovered (for some time at least). When placed on probation he was sent to a good farmer, with whom he was getting on well and giving satisfaction when he suddenly absconded. The money he had earned but not lifted was sufficient to cover advances made to him for travelling-expenses. (2) A returned soldier, suffering from shell-shock, absconded after satisfactorily serving several months of his twelve months' term. In this case the accused apparently got away in another Reinforcement draft. I made no charge against him, and did not have him gazetted for arrest. (3) A deserted wife. Husband had got away to the front and left no allotment in her favour. Ill health, worry, and drink especially caused the forfeiture of her probation. (4) A deaf man who was so under the mastery of drink that he should never have got probation. While drunk he attempted rape, and received a sentence of imprisonment. (5) A "black sheep" of a highly respectable family. Laziness the root cause of his failure. (6) A youth of seventeen years—a spoiled boy who had never been taught self-control and who rebelled against the necessary discipline imposed upon him by probation, and was therefore taken by your officer to Court and received a sentence of reformatory detention. This course was not adopted before he was given several chances to respond to kindness and leniency.

(7) A young woman, an ex-industrial-school girl who for years was without the advantages of a mother's care and guidance. An instinctive thief, and altogether lacking in a sense of moral responsibility.

During this period under review a number of probationers have been transferred to Auckland from other districts, and a number have been transferred from Auckland to other districts. A number have completed their terms and to-day are honest and law-abiding citizens.

At the end of March, 1917, there were sixty-three first offenders remaining under my charge.

Informal Probation.

Apart from the regular First Offenders' Probation Act we have been working in Auckland Courts on a special system. This system simply is that the Magistrate or Judge orders a convicted person to come up for sentence at a stated time on the condition that during the interval he (or she) is under the supervision of the Probation Officer. This method has proved to be most useful in many cases, and has sometimes been adopted when the accused's antecedents and circumstances did not permit the application of the First Offenders' Probation Act. Your Department in recently printing a number of semi-license forms from my draft form for these offenders has greatly assisted in this branch of work. During the period of this report fifty-three of these cases were placed under my care by the Auckland Courts. Four have enlisted. Four have been called up for sentence, and of these a male and a female have been sent to the inebriates islands; one male under the influence of drink committed theft and was sentenced to reformatory detention, while the fourth, a mere youth, was sent to Invercargill Gaol for theft. Three of these four failures were, at the best that could be said for them, but forlorn hopes, as they were all victims of excessive drinking habits.

Comments in General.

One great difficulty of a First Offenders' Probation Officer is arriving at a true estimate of the past history of an offender; but if the School Visitor system were in vogue an official statement of the history of the case could readily be obtained. All that would be required would be the name of the school or schools attended, and then the home life of the accused could readily be obtained. The value of this knowledge would be inestimable to Judges and Magistrates in passing sentences.

My experience has unfortunately been that often parents' and relatives' opinions concerning accused persons are not shared by neighbours and disinterested persons. There is much said to-day about saving child-life—we have our Plunket Nurses, our St. Helens Homes, &c.—but what is going to be the ultimate use of all this if we have not some more effective methods of preventing these lives from drifting into weak and law-breaking citizens?

It has been a privilege to serve your Department as a Probation Officer, for I am convinced that this method is based on sound principles, and any information I have gained through this work is always and willingly at the disposal of the Department.

CHRISTCHURCH.

During the whole period I have had the honour to act as Probation Officer under the First Offenders' Probation Act the war has been raging, and the custom has grown up in the local Courts of allowing first offenders to come up for sentence when called upon on the condition that they enlist. This has made the numbers dealt with by me small. When I took over the work from Senior-Sergeant Mathieson there were on the book seven who had been reporting, among them a young woman about twenty years of age. If the First Offenders' Probation Act has done no other good in this Dominion than prevent this easily led young woman from being made to live with the class that are usually found in gaols, then it has justified its presence on the statute-book. When she completed her probation early last year she was married to a decent young fellow, and she declared to me the last time I saw her that she would never again be found living with her former associates.

Again, among those taken over was a married man who had a family of four. To prevent these four children becoming dependent on the Charitable Aid Board and having the thought lodged permanently at the back of their minds that when they were young their father was a criminal is in my judgment a most excellent work.

Of the five that have been given me during my first year was a young fellow who in a moment of romantic emotion married a girl not much different from himself, and to maintain the new position interfered with his master's money, hoping to be able to return it before it was found out. This foolish lad, not much over eighteen years old, would have been ruined for life if the Magistrate had not listened to my suggestion and granted him probation. Every month I see him officially, and sometimes during the month unofficially, and I declare that this is another case that vindicates the humane provisions made for first offenders in the Act.

If I might venture a little criticism, I think that the provisions of this Act are not often enough taken advantage of either in our local Magistrates' or Supreme Courts. Young fellows are let go on their undertaking to enlist, and I often want to know what will happen if they are found medically unfit, or for any other cause discharged. I think that in all these cases some hold should be kept upon these young men, so that in any eventuality like the foregoing they will be under some *kind* control. The First Offenders' Probation Act supplies the machinery for doing this, and in my humble opinion should be used more frequently.

By reason of my limited experience and the small number I have dealt with I hesitate to express any pronounced opinion, but I think a more simple method of transferring these probationers from one district to another might be devised to suit cases where such transfers are deemed necessary.

DUNEDIN.

On the 8th April, 1916, I took over all books and papers pertaining to the First Offenders' Probation Act from the Gaoler. On that date there was one probationer on the books. Since then I have taken charge of six cases, making seven in all. Of these, three have been transferred, and four remain on my register. I may mention that two or three cases whom I was interested in when before the Supreme Court were ordered to report to the Probation Officer in another district, the Probation Officer being a police officer who was interested in the cases.

I attend the Police Courts almost daily, and the Supreme Court at its quarterly session, and frequently confer with Judge and Magistrates when young people are coming before them. Then, again, I visit my probationers, either at home or work: this I find very helpful, and it is appreciated. Something like sixty-odd letters have been written in connection with the first offenders, to say nothing of the fairly bulky correspondence with the Department. Then, again, at certain times each month I meet the probationers at my office, and people who may be interested in any case coming before the Court. I am pleased to put on record that the Judge and Magistrates, Court officials, and the police lend me every possible assistance, and this helps me much.

Suggestions and Recommendations.

I have no hesitation in stating that the First Offenders' Probation Act has more than justified itself, and on the whole the result is that many who would have been a burden upon the State got a chance, and have seized the opportunity, and thus not only saved themselves, but the State from having to keep them.

The probation system suggests that the committal of first offenders to prison is unnecessary. In my opinion it could be used more than is done. To send a young man to prison for a first offence is taking a big risk of manufacturing a criminal.

The probation system prevents a man or woman in many ways from becoming a criminal: first, by showing him definitely what his duties are; second, by providing him with a Probation Officer, a friend who will assist him to develop self-reliance and self-respect by kindly advice and sympathy, and at the same time be present to protect him in case of emergency.

It is a difficult thing to do much with young persons if they think they are simply on a sort of ticket-of-leave; but when you can get them to feel that they are on their honour, then there is hope. The Probation Officer should be able to create such a hope in the minds of all who come under his control. When this is done the percentage of those going back is very small.

I do not agree that the term of probation should be short, but rather a fairly lengthy period should be adopted, giving authority to the Probation Officer to recommend to the Department, if a man or woman is doing well, that a certain time should be remitted. Say, a person is placed on probation for two years. If you can make the person feel that, his conduct being good, at least six months will be taken off, this would, I think, prove very helpful. There can be no doubt as to the efficiency of probation as the surest means of obtaining real reformation in young people.

The home: The Probation Officer has considerable power vested in him in regard to visiting the homes, and just as he uses it advisedly or inadvisedly he will be welcome or unwelcome, and his chances of success enhanced or minimized. This is the Probation Officer's best card if rightly played.

I would strongly recommend that many who are now convicted to come up for sentence when called upon should be put upon probation. I am satisfied that the results would be much more satisfactory through having the assistance of the Probation Officer.

INVERCARGILL.

From the date of my appointment, May, 1916, to the 31st March, 1917, five men were dealt with under the First Offenders' Probation Act, three of whom were granted probation at Invercargill—one by the Supreme Court and two by the Magistrate's Court; one was placed on the register by transfer, and one was on the register at date of my appointment. The terms of probation were—two for a period of two years, one for one year, and two for six months each. Two cases were reported on to the Supreme Court and two to the Magistrate's Court. Of the former, one was granted probation; and of the latter, probation was recommended and granted in each case. In the three placed under my charge two presented no difficulties; the other required moral support and friendly counsel. Two were transferred to other districts, two have completed their term satisfactorily, and one will finish his term with next report.

The First Offenders' Probation Act is without question an effective preventive agent. The primary value of the Act consists, in my opinion, in saving the offender from association with criminals and others with previous prison experience. A person convicted of a first offence, if imprisoned, is brought into personal contact with criminals whose habits of thought and conduct are, perhaps insensibly, communicated. After release, the offender has to face the future as well as the record of his past. For some time—how long depends on the environment and moral atmosphere of his private and home life—he lives in a world separated from former associations, the influence of which will probably force him into association with others alike circumstanced in relation to society. Smarting under the sense of moral defeat, the loss of self-respect, the shame and stigma inseparable from imprisonment, all unite in making a second offence easily possible.

Aid societies can do good work in assisting discharged prisoners to recover lost positions, but these cannot restore the power and virtue of lost reputations and personality that imprisonment entails.

The provisions of the Act could be applied with advantage in some instances where fines are inflicted instead of imprisonment, especially in the case of married men. The burden of a fine frequently falls upon the wife and family. Where a penalty is to be inflicted a term of probation

would be a greater punishment than a fine. The conditions of release have a restraining and deterring influence. On the principle that every prisoner is a loss as well as an expense to the State, the First Offenders' Probation Act would in this respect be effective and valuable, in that, while punishing, the penalty inflicted permits the offender to retain the conditions of family and social life, and to continue to maintain himself and his dependants.

The system now operating in the chief centres, of reporting to Probation Officers elsewhere than at the prison, should commend itself to every one. Probationers have expressed appreciation of the consideration thus shown to them. If the same consideration were extended to probationers in country districts the effectiveness of the Act would, in my opinion, be increased; and the virtue of the Act as a preventive agent would be enhanced if probationers were visited, advised, or otherwise assisted to recover themselves by one whom they could consult with, and who would be regarded as a friend rather than as an official.

The personal element is an important factor in the successful administration of the Act, and it is of more than temporary value.

NAPIER.

There were 3 male probationers on the register on the 1st January, 1916. Three males were received on transfer (2 under the Crimes Act and 1 under the First Offenders' Probation Act). Of this number, 3 were transferred to other districts, and 1 returned to custody for a breach of the conditions of his license and transferred, leaving 2 males on the register at the end of the year.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

There was 1 male reporting at the commencement of the year, and I received 1 transfer during the year: 1 was transferred to another district, and 1 completed his term unsatisfactorily, he having received fourteen days' hard labour for theft as a servant during the last month of his term, leaving none reporting on the 31st December, 1916.

WELLINGTON.

Previous to my appointment on the 1st June, 1916, I acted as Probation Officer under the Crimes Amendment Act for three years with a very different class of offender to those under review.

There were twelve first offenders on the register at the beginning of the period; eighteen were granted probation since, and five were transferred from other districts; seven completed their probation satisfactorily, five left with Expeditionary Forces, and one who was over military age as a member of the crew of a transport; eleven were transferred to other districts, leaving eleven on the register on the 31st March, thirty-five in all passing through my hands.

These do not demand the same attention as prisoners who are released on license by the Prisons Board. It is but rare that a reminder to report is sent out. Generally speaking, the exception is the man who has joined the Expeditionary Forces and who is under the misapprehension that military rule relieves him of all civil obligations. The conduct of probationers has been most satisfactory; the conditions have been observed, and the offender in every instance shows no desire to abuse the confidence placed in him. In one or two instances, in fact, young men who have been content with a very humble existence have roused themselves to study and qualified for better positions in life.

In Wellington the Magistrate's Court does not take full advantage of the Act. To my mind probation is infinitely preferable to even a short term of imprisonment—the herding with criminals is an exceedingly bad experience for any young man. When an accused person is convicted and ordered to come up for sentence when called upon he may be kept out of prison, but as a deterrent it is not nearly so effective as a definite term of probation. The Act, of course, does not provide for probation where a previous conviction has been recorded. Sometimes the only previous conviction may have occurred many years back, conduct being excellent in the meantime. If more rigorous conditions of liberty were imposed, with weekly or fortnightly intervals of reporting, this case, I think, would be better met. The ordinary man regards a conviction and "ordered to come up," &c., merely as a "let-off." If a man's character does not warrant probation, or if his crime is too serious, he may be let off in this way without the irksome conditions under the First Offenders' Probation Act. And therein is a weakness.

The system should, I think, be extended to juvenile offenders. There is a kind of informal probation in Wellington, but with no remedy if there should be a breach of the conditions imposed. The whole question, indeed, of the treatment of juvenile offenders needs revision. It seems wrong in principle and practice for boys of school age, especially those of twelve and under, to be brought before the Court unless for a series of charges or where apparently committal to an industrial school is necessary. Court procedure is not very good education for the youthful mind, and a very informal Bench would be preferable, consisting of the schoolmaster and a Justice of the Peace with some intelligence, with, say, the Probation Officer to advise, and the elimination of legal counsel. Probation could then be extended and terms imposed which would be binding.

While on the question of juvenile offences, it seems rather a pity that provision for birching is not applicable to offences that come under the category of mischief or obscenity. This method of punishment is undoubtedly the best way to meet these classes of offence, and if supplemented by a parent being mulcted in damages it will materially help the latter to reconsider the upbringing of his boy.

Altogether it impresses itself upon me very strongly that the Act, or certain provisions of the Act, could be extended to more than actual first offenders, with a wider use in the Magistrate's Court, where discretionary powers could be granted Magistrates, who should be men of sound common-sense and possessing a good knowledge of human nature.

Table A.
PRISON ACCOMMODATION AND PRISONERS.
TABLE SHOWING ACCOMMODATION, NUMBER OF PRISONERS, ETC., AT THE SEVERAL PRISONS OF THE DOMINION DURING THE YEAR 1916.

Name of Prison.	Number of Persons for whom there is Accommodation.						Number of Persons at Beginning of Year.			Number received during Year.			Number discharged or transferred.			Number in Prison at End of Year.		
	In Separate Cells for One Prisoner.			In Wards or Cells for more than One Prisoner.			M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.												
Addington ..	..	29	15	..	44	31	..	141	..	133	133	..	..	133	..	39	39	39
Auckland ..	304	35	..	318	35	221	243	1,210	1,118	115	1,233	203	..	17	220	17	220	220
Invercargill ..	91	1	..	95	1	39	39	108	96	4	100	97	..	..	..	..	..	98
Kangaroo ..	64	..	..	64	..	126	126	516	589	..	589	53	..	..	..	..	..	58
Lytelton ..	175	..	..	178	..	23	26	194	183	22	205	15	..	..	..	..	..	15
Napier ..	7	3	5	66	8	38	38	65	71	3	74	29	..	..	..	..	..	29
New Plymouth ..	53	4	..	54	4	24	24	81	64	..	64	41	..	..	..	..	..	41
Papara (Templeton) ..	51	..	..	51	..	49	49	43	47	..	47	45	..	..	..	..	..	45
Roto Aira (Waimarino) ..	53	..	..	53	..	54	54	82	46	..	46	90	..	..	..	..	..	90
Waikaria ..	100	..	..	100	..	30	30	18	48	..	48	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Waipa ..	33	..	..	33	..	23	23	185	180	181	1,409	144	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wellington ..	192	2	31	192	33	187	210	1,365	1,228	47	1,056	33	..	..	..	..	..	166
Minor prisons ..	90	42	20	136	41	82	38	1,054	1,009	505	5,041	82	..	..	..	..	..	36
Totals ..	1,213	116	71	1,340	166	916	998	4,933	4,428	505	5,041	82	..	..	..	..	..	890

Name of Prison.	Greatest Number in Prison at One Time.			Least Number in Prison at One Time.			Daily Average Number of Prisoners.			Sickness.			(e) Number of District Prisoners ill on One or more Occasions, with Number of Occasions, Total Number of Separate Illnesses, Total Number of Days, and Daily Average on Sick-list.						
	at One Time.			at One Time.			Daily Average Number of Prisoners.			Sickness.			(e) Number of District Prisoners ill on One or more Occasions, with Number of Occasions, Total Number of Separate Illnesses, Total Number of Days, and Daily Average on Sick-list.						
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	Once	Twice	Three Times	Four Times	Five Times	Six Times	Over Six Times	Number of Separate Illnesses.	Total Number of Days ill.	Daily Average on Sick-list.
Addington ..	..	47	47	..	30	30	39.49	30	30	30	8	3	1	..	..	..	17	60	0.16
Auckland ..	233	26	259	181	15	196	209.85	15	10	10	54	12	6	2	3	..	132	1,363	3.72
Invercargill ..	101	1	102	74	1	75	88.15	13	20	20	43	16	17	5	1	..	158	1,455	3.98
Kangaroo ..	58	..	58	24	..	24	36.00	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lytelton ..	130	..	130	49	..	49	85.82	2	1	1	28	6	1	..	..	..	43	326	0.89
Napier ..	33	5	38	13	..	14	23.30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
New Plymouth ..	48	1	49	27	..	27	36.85	3	3	3	5	3	1	..	..	..	11	324	0.88
Papara (Templeton) ..	51	..	51	23	..	23	32.43	3	1	1	6	4	1	..	..	..	13	164	0.45
Roto Aira (Waimarino) ..	61	..	61	38	..	38	49.23	3	1	1	7	..	..	..	..	..	7	39	0.11
Waikaria ..	98	..	98	50	..	50	71.50	4	..	..	10	2	..	..	..	..	14	134	0.37
Waipa ..	30	..	30	18	..	18	24.05	2	2	2	6	1	..	..	..	..	8	60	0.16
Wellington ..	191	28	219	122	13	135	169.39	6	7	5	38	2	1	..	..	..	8	27	0.07
Minor prisons ..	107	10	113	13	..	13	33.42	3	1	1	7	..	..	..	..	..	45	1,030	2.81
Totals ..	1,141	118	1,255	632	60	692	859.99	53	52	6	58	49	27	7	2	4	463	5,199	14.20

Table A1. TABLE SHOWING PARTICULARS, FOR EACH PRISON, OF PRISONERS AT BEGINNING AND END OF YEAR, AND RECEIVED AND DISCHARGED DURING YEAR 1916.

	Auckland.		Waipā.		Kaitiaki.		Waikeia.		New Plymouth.		Nelson.		Wellington.		Addington.		Lyttelton.		Paparoa (Templeton).		Invercargill.		Minor Prisons.		Totals.		Grand Totals.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		
(a.) In prison at beginning of year—																												
Sentenced to—																												
Simple imprisonment	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Under three months' hard labour	22	10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Three months' hard labour and under one year	45	9	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
One year's hard labour and upwards	93	2	21	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Habitual criminals in reformatory	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Criminals receiving reformatory treatment	24	..	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total criminals in prison under sentence	210	21	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
For trial or on remand	11	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total in prison for criminal offences	221	22	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Debtors	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lunatics	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total persons in respective prisons	221	22	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
<i>In transitu</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total persons in custody on 1st Jan., 1916	221	22	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
(b.) Prisoners received during the year—																												
Sentenced to—																												
Simple imprisonment	40	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Under three months' hard labour	513	40	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Three months' hard labour and under one year	112	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Twelve months' hard labour and upwards	24	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hard labour and reformatory detention	15	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hard labour and sent to industrial school	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hard labour and declared habitual criminal	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Habitual criminal without further sentence shown	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Death	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Under conviction for sentence	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Criminals for reformatory treatment only	40	15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total new prisoners received in gaol after conviction	752	82	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
On remand or for trial subsequently convicted but not returned to gaol	30	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total convicted criminal offenders received	782	82	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
On remand or for trial but not convicted during year	241	27	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total persons received (excluding debtors and lunatics)	1,023	109	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Debtors	22	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lunatics	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total new persons received	1,046	110	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
On transfer or <i>in transitu</i> (including habitual criminals sent to reformatory)	54	..	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Totals persons received at respective prisons	1,100	110	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Table B.
DETAILS OF THE EXPENDITURE OF EACH PRISON FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1917.

	Addington.	Auckland.	Invercargill.	Kaingarua.	Lyttelton.	Napier.	New Plymouth.	Paparua.	Roto Aira.	Waipa.	Waikeria.	Wellington.	Minor Gaols.	Total.
Daily average number of prisoners ..	41.21	229.85	90.01	40.10	70.66	23.59	29.0	37.73	46.67	24.05	76.0	177.20	34.08	920.15
Expenditure—	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Salaries and allowances (including uniforms)	788	8,121	3,788	877	3,224	1,175	1,411	1,173	1,422	723	2,843	7,379	1,298	34,222
Clothing, bedding, &c. ..	140	581	227	104	75	45	78	220	92	64	873	309	59	2,867
Fuel, light, sanitation, &c. ..	189	1,192	272	70	347	160	160	122	37	7	219	586	416	3,777
Medicines and medical comforts ..	26	280	42	17	86	13	16	13	19	4	42	100	22	630
Rations ..	399	3,006	1,254	765	864	276	357	513	1,350	424	1,872	2,179	1,124	14,383
Tobacco ..	..	202	43	53	48	11	28	35	74	19	102	92	2	709
Tools and materials and incidental expenses	43	230	359	241	50	37	112	78	931	72	299	699	24	3,175
Expenses in connection with brick-making	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	872	..	872
Expenses of prison farms ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,159
Gratuities and earnings paid to prisoners	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,216
Travelling expenses and conveyance of prisoners	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,961
Administration expenses, &c. not charged to individual prisons	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,565
Totals	1,585	13,612	5,965	2,127	4,644	1,717	2,162	2,154	3,925	1,313	6,250	12,216	2,945	69,536
Less credits, including transfers from other Departments	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9,867
Net total expenditure ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	59,669

Table C.

TABLE SHOWING THE OFFENCES AND DEGREE OF EDUCATION OF DISTINCT CONVICTED PRISONERS (EXCLUDING MAORIS) RECEIVED DURING THE YEAR 1916.

Offences.	Superior Education.		Able to read and write.		Able to read only.		Unable to read.		Totals.		
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Offences against the person—											
Convicted on indictment	66	3	..	..	7	..	73	3
Summarily convicted	67	2	..	..	4	..	71	2
Offences against property—											
Theft and deceit	4	..	456	19	4	1	6	..	470	20
Mischief	31	4	..	..	2	..	33	4
Miscellaneous—											
Vagrancy	1	230	99	1	..	2	2	234	101
Drunkenness	1	552	43	7	..	14	3	574	46
Others	2	671	63	4	1	28	4	705	68
Totals	8	2,073	233	16	2	63	9	2,160	244

Table D.

TABLE SHOWING THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF DISTINCT CONVICTED PRISONERS (EXCLUSIVE OF MAORIS) RECEIVED INTO PRISON DURING THE YEAR 1916, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO PRINCIPAL OFFENCE, BIRTHPLACE, AND AGE.

	Offences against the Person.				Offences against Property.				Miscellaneous.						Totals.	
	Convicted on Indictment.		Summarily convicted.		Theft and Deceit.		Mischief.		Vagrancy.		*Drunkenness.		Other Offences.		M.	F.
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		
Birthplaces—																
England and Wales ..	10	..	18	1	102	1	6	..	47	15	139	8	204	9	526	34
Scotland ..	1	..	7	..	17	..	2	..	21	4	88	1	55	3	191	8
Ireland ..	3	..	4	..	25	2	1	1	29	12	81	8	76	11	219	34
New Zealand ..	41	3	27	..	228	14	16	3	102	57	164	23	215	33	793	133
Australian States ..	8	..	6	1	55	2	3	..	16	7	41	4	59	7	188	21
Other British possessions ..	..	..	1	..	5	..	1	..	4	2	11	..	15	..	37	2
China ..	6	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	16	..	25	..
Other countries ..	3	..	8	..	35	1	4	..	13	4	50	1	64	4	177	10
At sea ..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	1	4	2
Totals ..	73	3	71	2	470	20	33	4	234	101	574	46	705	68	2,160	244
Ages—																
Under 10 years ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10 and under 12 years ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
12 and under 15 years ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
15 and under 20 years ..	6	..	3	..	51	4	6	..	5	6	..	..	9	3	80	13
20 and under 25 years ..	6	1	14	..	64	2	4	..	5	5	15	..	62	..	170	8
25 and under 30 years ..	12	..	11	1	73	3	2	..	25	13	43	4	88	5	254	26
30 and under 40 years ..	21	1	23	..	149	9	8	2	60	33	140	12	212	23	613	80
40 and under 50 years ..	19	1	11	..	90	1	6	2	47	26	177	12	168	20	518	62
50 and under 60 years ..	2	..	8	1	30	1	4	..	49	11	129	11	112	12	334	36
60 years and over ..	7	..	1	..	13	..	3	..	43	7	70	7	54	5	191	19
Totals ..	73	3	71	2	470	20	33	4	234	101	574	46	705	68	2,160	244
Totals, 1915 ..	73	7	97	1	557	19	31	3	296	106	766	61	830	77	2,650	274

* It must be remembered that drunkenness is punished more by fine than imprisonment, so that the figures in the prison tables do not represent the full number of persons punished for that offence.

Table E.

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF DISTINCT NEW-ZEALAND-BORN CONVICTED PRISONERS OF EACH SEX (EXCLUDING MAORIS) RECEIVED DURING THE YEAR 1916, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO AGES AND OFFENCES.

Offences.	Under 10.		10 and under 12.		12 and under 15.		15 and under 20.		20 and under 25.		25 and under 30.		30 and under 40.		40 and upwards.		Totals.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Offences against the person—																		
Convicted on indictment	6	..	6	1	9	..	9	1	11	1	41	3
Summarily convicted	1	..	6	..	4	..	10	..	6	..	27	..
Offences against property—																		
Theft and deceit	39	4	46	2	34	1	67	6	42	1	228	14
Mischief	6	..	3	..	1	..	4	1	2	2	16	3
Vagrancy	4	4	5	4	16	10	43	24	34	15	102	57
Drunkenness*	4	..	21	2	57	8	82	13	164	23
Other offences	3	2	21	..	39	3	84	19	68	9	215	33
Totals, 1916	59	10	91	7	124	16	274	59	245	41	793	133
Totals, 1915	57	6	128	9	175	31	390	65	271	39	1,021	150
Totals, 1914	2	..	75	4	157	6	216	31	416	58	268	47	1,134	146
Totals, 1913	1	1	81	7	172	10	183	20	391	58	200	30	1,028	126
Totals, 1912	1	1	92	4	197	7	197	25	354	48	176	32	1,017	117
Totals, 1911	4	..	59	3	158	13	189	17	333	44	173	30	916	107
Totals, 1910	2	..	75	3	199	9	249	35	331	51	182	28	1,038	126
Totals, 1909	2	..	66	4	174	15	236	28	298	53	192	28	968	128
Totals, 1908	1	..	5	..	71	4	190	17	203	24	287	43	118	22	875	110
Totals, 1907	2	1	79	5	181	23	213	33	256	44	113	19	844	125
Totals, 1906	2	..	82	9	189	20	219	26	249	39	120	18	861	112
Totals, 1905	1	..	76	8	172	25	196	27	195	38	99	17	739	115
Totals, 1904 ..	1	..	2	..	3	..	83	9	172	25	219	19	187	34	73	17	740	104
Totals, 1903	2	..	5	..	79	9	191	16	187	21	177	36	60	21	701	103
Totals, 1902	2	..	77	5	192	9	147	17	128	35	57	12	603	78
Totals, 1901	5	..	74	7	175	22	114	20	143	38	40	8	551	95
Totals, 1900	7	..	79	8	166	19	110	15	120	28	36	9	518	79
Totals, 1899	3	2	91	9	147	14	101	16	116	19	36	9	494	69
Totals, 1898	1	..	9	..	87	7	143	19	91	17	93	18	29	8	453	69
Totals, 1897 ..	1	..	1	..	3	..	82	11	129	15	85	17	77	13	26	5	404	61
Totals, 1896 ..	1	..	1	..	2	..	100	11	120	7	105	19	67	15	18	7	414	59

* It must be remembered that drunkenness is punished more by fine than imprisonment, so that the figures in the prison tables do not represent the full number of persons punished for that offence.

Table F.

TABLE SHOWING DISTINCT PERSONS (EXCLUDING MAORIS) IMPRISONED AFTER CONVICTION FOR EIGHT YEARS.

Year.	Prisoners.	Proportion per 10,000 of Mean Population.	Year.	Prisoners.	Proportion per 10,000 of Mean Population.
1909	3,159	32.51	1913	3,229	30.22
1910	3,242	32.66	1914	3,386	31.05
1911	2,877	28.35	1915	2,924	26.60
1912	3,023	29.10	1916	2,404	21.87

Table H.

RETURN OF PRISON OFFENCES AND PUNISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1916.

Prison.	Offences.			Total Offences.	Number of Prisoners punished.	Total Number of Prisoners in Custody during the Year.
	Against Officers.	Disobedience of Orders, and Idleness.	Other Breaches of Regulations.			
Addington .. .. .	..	2	12	14	13	172
Auckland .. .. .	..	67	166	233	191	1,453
Invercargill	5	72	137	214	171	198
Kaingarua .. .. .	..	1	..	1	1	95
Lyttelton	20	25	56	101	70	642
Napier	4	11	14	29	16	220
New Plymouth .. .. .	..	6	27	33	12	103
Paparua .. .. .	..	4	2	6	6	105
Roto Aira .. .. .	..	3	10	13	7	92
Waikeria	14	28	86	128	93	186
Waipa	1	2	1	4	2	49
Wellington	20	59	97	176	141	1,575
Totals	64	280	608	952	723	4,839

Table I.

VISITS OF THE VISITING JUSTICES TO THE LARGER PRISONS DURING THE YEAR 1916.

Prisons and Visiting Justices.	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total.
<i>Addington—</i>													
T. A. B. Bailey, S.M. . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	1	3
H. W. Bishop, S.M. . . .	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	3
<i>Auckland—</i>													
F. V. Frazer, S.M. . . .	3	..	4	2	1	1	2	1	3	2	2	2	23
Hon. W. Bechan	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	4
E. C. Cutten, S.M. . . .	..	2	..	..	1	1	1	..	..	2	..	..	7
J. H. Hannan .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
<i>Invercargill—</i>													
G. Cruickshank, S.M. . . .	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	3	1	2	..	20
W. A. Ott	2	3	1	1	2	1	..	1	1	1	..	1	14
F. G. Stone	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	1	1	1	7
W. Baird .. .. .	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	3
<i>Kaingarua—</i>													
R. W. Dyer, S.M. . . .	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	2
<i>Lyttelton—</i>													
C. Ferrier	3	..	2	1	1	2	1	1	..	1	..	2	14
F. W. Anderson .. .. .	..	4	3	2	1	..	4	2	2	2	1	..	21
H. W. Bishop, S.M. . . .	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
<i>Napier—</i>													
J. S. Large	5	3	4	3	4	5	8	4	4	..	1	5	46
A. L. Beattie .. .. .	..	1	3	2	3	2	3	4	5	6	4	5	38
<i>New Plymouth—</i>													
H. Weston	2	1	..	..	..	2	1	..	..	..	1	..	7
A. Croke, S.M. . . .	1	6	2	3	1	5	2	1	..	..	..	..	21
C. Abier .. .. .	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
E. Dockrill .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	2
<i>Paparua—</i>													
T. A. B. Bailey, S.M. . . .	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	3
<i>Roto Aira—</i>													
J. G. L. Hewitt, S.M. . . .	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	3
<i>Waikeria—</i>													
C. Richards .. .. .	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	1	3	..	1	1	8
J. B. Teasdale .. .. .	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	1	..	4
<i>Waipa—</i>													
R. W. Dyer, S.M. . . .	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	2
<i>Wellington—</i>													
E. Arnold	4	2	3	5	2	3	3	2	4	3	1	5	37
Henry Hume .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	4	6	2	3	16
D. G. A. Cooper, S.M. . . .	1	..	1	1	1	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	7
W. G. Riddell, S.M. . . .	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	3

Table J.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1908.

AGES AND TERMS OF PROBATION OF OFFENDERS PLACED UNDER THE ACT DURING THE YEAR 1916.

Ages.	Four Months and under.	Six Months.	Twelve Months.	Fifteen Months.	Eighteen Months.	Two Years.	Two Years and a Half.	Three Years.	Total.
Over 10 and under 15 years	1	..	..	..	..	..	1
" 15 " 20 "	..	5	13	..	5	17	..	7	47
" 20 " 25 "	8	..	..	2	..	11	21
" 25 " 30 "	..	1	5	1	..	3	..	3	13
" 30 " 40 "	..	1	11	8	..	5	26
" 40 " 50 "	3	..	2	2	..	2	10
" 50 " 60 "	4	3	7
60 years and upwards
Totals	..	1	8	45	1	7	32	31	125

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