

while of 345 with definite hard-labour sentences who were received at Waikeria, 7 men, or 2·03 per cent., have been reconvicted. If the three classes of offenders are grouped it is found that of the total of 775 men who passed through the Waikeria institution between the 6th May, 1916, and the end of last year, 30, or 3·87 per cent., have been reconvicted. The Invercargill figures show that between the 1st January, 1916, and the 31st December, 1923, there passed through the Borstal Institution 739 youths and young men who received terms of reformatory detention only. Of these, 47, or 6·36 per cent., have been reconvicted. Of those sentenced to combined terms of hard labour and reformatory detention 95 were received, and 11, or 11·58 per cent., were reconvicted. The best results were obtained from the inmates who received definite hard-labour sentences, the number received being 258, and the reconvictions only 5, or 1·94 per cent. A summary of all the figures for Invercargill from the 1st January, 1916, gives a total of 1,092 youths and young men who passed through the institution, the total reconvictions being 63, or 5·77 per cent.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the results obtained from both reformatories are exceedingly satisfactory. The comparatively better showing made by the Waikeria institution is explained by the fact that the worst offenders are not sent there, while at Invercargill the only restriction is the age-limit, which is now twenty-three.

Youths who have been drafted to Invercargill but are afterwards found to be incorrigible or to exercise a baneful influence over the other inmates are transferred to the general prisons, but, as they have "passed through" the "Borstal," their names appear on the records of that institution, and if they are reconvicted after eventual release, as almost inevitably happens, they are classed among the "Borstal" failures.

Among the tables appearing in the general statistics, but not annexed to this report, is one showing the number of persons sentenced in the Supreme Court for sexual offences. From this it appears that offences of this nature are steadily increasing, the total number being 48 in 1920, 67 in 1921, 73 in 1922, and 81 in 1923. Our own returns of sexual offenders committed from all Courts actually in custody on the 10th May, 1924, give the somewhat disturbing total of 206, or 17·273 per cent. of the total prison population, while if males only are considered it is found that 18·706 per cent. of all male prisoners are sexual offenders. The cases vary from the milder class to definite offences involving gross sexual perversion and interference with children of both sexes. Single offences of this class may in some cases be attributed to temporary mental aberration or irresistible impulse occurring only once in the lifetime of the individual concerned; but, unfortunately, we have quite a number of men in the prisons at the present time who have been guilty of repeated offences of the same class extending over a number of years. There are, in fact, men recently resented for sexual offences while on probation after serving terms from ten to twenty years for offences of the same class. The persistence through life of this form of abnormality has been proved beyond question, and it has been made perfectly clear that the unfortunates who are so cursed must be dealt with in some different way from those who offend against the law in other directions. Men of this class are not criminals in the ordinary sense of the term, but in their own interest and in that of the community they cannot be allowed at large unless some change can be effected in their mental condition.

The fluctuations in the prison population of the Dominion from 1891 to 1923 (inclusive) are shown in the table below:—

Daily Average, 1891 to 1923.

Year.	Daily Average of Prisoners in Dominion Prisons.			Year.	Daily Average of Prisoners in Dominion Prisons.		
	Males.	Females.	Totals.		Males.	Females.	Totals.
1891 ..	459·22	58·39	517·61	1917 ..	817·27	96·99	914·26
1911 ..	799·08	64·18	863·26	1918 ..	896·98	84·97	981·95
1912 ..	855·28	64·07	919·35	1919 ..	936·28	68·06	1,004·34
1913 ..	826·69	66·55	893·24	1920 ..	872·59	67·10	939·69
1914 ..	916·09	63·72	979·81	1921 ..	992·04	73·56	1,065·60
1915 ..	931·33	76·79	1,008·12	1922 ..	1,052·54	60·91	1,113·45
1916 ..	859·99	82·78	942·77	1923 ..	1,074·34	53·13	1,127·47

EXPENDITURE AND RECEIPTS.

The total expenditure of the Department for the last financial year was £131,609, as against £123,360 for the preceding year, an increase of £8,249, or 6·68 per cent. This increase was chiefly due to the greater amount of work done, and material, plant, and implements used and purchased in connection with our various works, industries, farms, &c. A larger number of prisoners had also to be provided for. While our expenditure grew to the extent shown, our receipts also increased in greater ratio, the cash returns for the year amounting to £53,178, as compared with £46,000 for 1922–23, a difference of £7,118, or 15·45 per cent. The net cost of the Department for the year was therefore £78,431, against £77,301 for 1922–23. The receipts on this occasion constituted a record for the Department, and when it is remembered that in addition to our cash receipts we are able to show a definite return of £23,486 as the actual value of prison labour employed on buildings and other public works in connection with the prisons for which no transfer credits were received, and a further return of £11,974 for farm and gardening work, it will be recognized that the Department is successfully working out its policy of the development of the public estate and of the individual. The figures quoted amount in the gross to £88,638, without taking into account a further £15,311 which is estimated to be the value of the labour employed in the various intramural industries, domestic work, &c., that