

successfully the schemes of improvement we have in hand the whole position should be reviewed and means provided for us to make employment in our service a more attractive proposition than it is at present. Under the older system prison warders were only required to be custodians or guards. We have now advanced far beyond that stage. Our officers are expected to assist us in the work of rehabilitation; and, consequently, different types of men are required from those who worked under the former regime. With improved conditions we should be able to obtain a better class of recruits than is available at present. This would inevitably add to the efficiency of the Department, and would, therefore, be of economic advantage to the State.

C. E. MATTHEWS,  
Controller-General of Prisons.

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INSPECTOR OF PRISONS AND DIRECTOR OF WORKS to the CONTROLLER-GENERAL OF PRISONS.

SIR,—

Prisons Department, Wellington, 11th June, 1924.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1923-24 dealing with the work of inspection of the prisons and institutions under the control of the Prisons Department. A further report is also supplied dealing with the various works and industries carried on during the year by prison labour. As in past years, my time has been fully occupied in the work of inspecting the various prisons and institutions above referred to, also in directing works and undertakings now being carried out by the Prisons Department. I have devoted as much time as possible, under the circumstances, to supervising and assisting in the development of the system which you have instituted in connection with the Borstal Institution at Invercargill. In view of the fact that you have again placed me in the position of Superintendent, it is necessary that I should continue to exercise, as far as possible, a controlling influence over the forces at work in that institution.

As you are aware, the discontinuance of the older policy of building large prisons in or near the centre of cities or towns, thereby making it practically impossible to properly utilize the labour of the inmates, either to the advantage of the State or with profit to the men themselves, has added to the difficulties of the work of inspection, but there cannot be any doubt as to the wisdom of the change. Prisoners have, to a large extent, been removed from the public gaze, and it has been found possible to employ them upon work that, while being most useful to the State, has at the same time a most beneficial effect upon the men themselves. At the present time, thanks to this more intelligent and humane system, men and women, instead of being unfitted to take up outside work on their release, are turned out capable workers. If the present system had resulted in nothing more than the removing of the degrading spectacle of men being marched daily through the streets of some of our largest cities and towns dressed in prison garb and guarded by officers armed with rifle, baton, and bayonet, then for that reason alone the changes instituted have been well worth while. In this connection I should like to refer to the vastly different attitude of the prisoners themselves. Formerly, owing to the unsatisfying nature of the work upon which the men and women comprising our prison population were employed, very little interest was taken in the work itself. This is all now changed, as with few exceptions the prisoners themselves take a keen interest in their work, and do their best to make it a success. Taken altogether, while the work of inspection has by reason of the altered conditions become more arduous, still one has the feeling that he is assisting in the bringing-about of a saner and more satisfying state of affairs.

#### WORKS AND INDUSTRIES: PROGRESS DURING THE YEAR.

In my capacity as Director of Works I have frequently visited the various institutions, farms, and camps where work is being carried on. Taken altogether, the results obtained continue to be satisfactory. In a number of cases especially so. The greatest difficulty which the Department is at present experiencing is that of obtaining the services of suitable officers. Latterly the position, owing to our losing the services of quite a number of our best instructors and senior officers, on retirement on superannuation of a number of the older men, and, in the case of the younger members, on account of their being able to obtain better positions at a higher rate of pay outside the Government service, has become somewhat unsatisfactory, and as during the next two or three years some of the controlling officers will have reached the age-limit the difficulty will be still further increased. From the reports of the controlling officers you will learn what is being done at the various institutions. Such reports, coupled with the fact that you yourself are in close touch with the whole of the work that is at present being carried out, and when to this is added the results of your own personal visits to all of the institutions mentioned, it is hardly necessary for me to repeat what has already been placed before you.

M. HAWKINS,  
Inspector of Prisons and Director of Prison Works.

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