

PRISONS AND PRISON INSTITUTIONS: EPITOME OF REPORTS OF CONTROLLING OFFICERS.

AUCKLAND PRISON.

At the commencement of the year there were 318 male prisoners and 16 female prisoners in custody. During the year 1,452 males and 90 females were received, and 1,417 males and 93 females discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving in custody at the 31st December, 1923, 353 males and 13 females.

Two male prisoners died in the prison during the year, the customary inquest being held in each case.

The daily average on the sick muster was—males 15, females nil. The large number of males is again accounted for by the presence of a goodly sprinkling of “derelicts,” who, while too old to be of any use, are in need of constant medical attention. With the exception of a few days’ sickness, inmates of the female division were free from illness throughout the year.

The Esperanto School continues under the immediate control of a prisoner, and the year’s work has shown marked success. All papers are forwarded to a prominent Esperantist in Wellington for correction, and the Department’s continued thanks are due to that gentleman for his unflinching interest.

One hundred and thirty breaches of regulations were dealt with by Visiting Justices during the year, a considerable number of minor breaches being dealt with by the Superintendent and cautions administered.

Two additional cottages, intended for occupation by officers, are being constructed at Clive Road, and, judging by the rapidity of progress, should be completed at no distant date.

The new female division, completed on modern lines with cubicles for the inmates, and furnished in accordance with your direction, has been in occupation for some months. A much-felt need in the shape of an infirmary was also added to this division.

Another innovation has been the erection of a store for the custody of the prisoners’ private effects, a feature being the inclusion of a drying-room and fumigator.

I have much pleasure in stating that the prisoners employed on these additions have shown interest in their work, and this fact, together with capable supervision, accounts for the excellent results obtained.

The garden continues to be a great asset to the institution, the supply being well maintained and the vegetables being of an excellent quality. I am pleased to be able to report that, with the exception of potatoes, no outside purchases have been found necessary throughout the whole year.

The bootmaking industry continues active. In accordance with your direction, modern machinery has been installed with very satisfactory results. The only drawback appears to be that the Departments receiving supply do not appear to appreciate the quality of the work and materials, and are consistently desirous of obtaining cheap rates.

In order to cope with growing demands in the tailoring branch it has been found necessary to install greatly increased machine power, with the result that there has been a great impetus in the output. This increase will become more marked as the men become experienced. It might be mentioned that one of the Official Visitors has rendered valuable service by giving the Department the benefit of his expert knowledge on many occasions. Arrangements have been made for the undertaking of further Government work in the near future.

When the mail-bag industry was commenced it was understood that the repairs would be on a limited scale. Events, however, showed that the industry was to become a large one, and to meet the added requirements it was found necessary to equip this department of labour with extra suitable machines. At the present time the whole of the Dominion repairs are being carried out with satisfaction, and in the near future I understand that it is intended to commence manufacture of the bags in addition to the repair work.

All stone for building operations continues to be produced from the prison stone-yard. Similarly, excellent tiles (roof and ridging) and concrete blocks are being turned out for use in the same direction.

Quarrying, which is the main prison industry, produced revenue to the extent of £15,558, an increase of about £1,000 on the previous year’s figures. The installation of new and modern plant has been fully justified, and a further increase in revenue may be anticipated during the current year.

Entertainments continue to be held periodically in the evenings, and also on most of the prison holidays. The programmes, which are arranged by Mr. J. Stewart (Official Visitor) and others, are always noteworthy for the high standard of entertainment provided for the prisoners, who deeply appreciate the organization of such functions on their behalf.

The several organizations responsible for the excellent Christmas gifts to prisoners (cake, fruit, &c.) are deserving of commendation for the spirit of self-sacrifice evidenced, and the gifts were highly appreciated by the inmates.

SCHOOLMASTER’S REPORT ON WORK IN PRISON SCHOOL.

I beg to submit for the year ended the 31st March, 1924, the following report on the work of the school, H.M. Prison, Mount Eden:—

Interest, that most potent factor in education, has, by various devices, been maintained throughout the past year, with the result that the several students have voluntarily focused their attention on the different problems set before them and have thus profited materially by the instruction. At