

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

AUCKLAND PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. J. Dickison.)

At the commencement of the year there were 423 males and 13 females in custody. During the year 1,683 males and 126 females were received, and 1,727 males and 115 females discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving in the prison on the night of the 31st December, 379 males and 24 females.

Twelve habitual criminals (males), 16 male prisoners undergoing reformatory detention, as well as 26 serving hard labour (male) were released on the recommendation of the Prisons Board.

The prison school continued to be controlled by Mr. H. G. Johnston, M.A., and his very capable tutorship produced excellent results. Five prisoners sat for their Certificates of Proficiency and four were successful, the high percentage of passes being a tribute to the Schoolmaster's keen and sympathetic interest in the advancement of those under his tuition. Details of the work carried out throughout the year have already been submitted to you in Mr. Johnston's annual report.

*Industries, &c.*—Garden: This continued to be an asset to the institution, the quantity and quality of the output being excellent. As in previous years, the only purchase made in the outside markets has been that of potatoes.

Bootmaking: This branch of the prison's industrial activities continues to furnish good results under the capable control of Principal Warder Lauder. Considering that a considerable percentage of the hands employed are learners the output is very satisfactory.

Tailoring: This industry continues to be operated with results satisfactory to the Department. Here again a number of the prisoners employed are inexperienced, but in spite of this the output is an excellent one, and the demands of other Government Departments as well as our own, are readily met. The officer in charge, Mr. Kinghorn, is to be complimented on the result of the year's working.

Repairs to Mail-bags: This industry is also operated in the tailors' shop under the control of Mr. Kinghorn, and repairs have been so expeditiously effected that a further reduction has been recently made in the rates chargeable to the Post and Telegraph Department, for whom the work is executed. The Department's action in installing additional machinery has been more than justified, as the whole of the repairs required by the Post and Telegraph Department can now be effected quite readily.

Laundry and Repair Work: This work continues to be carried on by the inmates of the female Division, and the small cost to the Department, as disclosed by the conversion vouchers rendered, is a tribute to the capable control of the Matron and Assistant Matron.

Quarry: This, the major prison industry, continues to thrive under the management of Mr. J. W. Meehan, and the detailed reports submitted to you periodically will no doubt have enabled you to form an opinion of the satisfactory standard of progress made. The return for the current financial year should compare favourably with that of 1925.

Concerts continue to be held periodically, the programme being arranged by Messrs. Stewart and Falls, assisted by other social workers interested in the welfare of the inmates. Thanks must also be expressed to Messrs. John Fuller and Son, Ltd., for their goodness in permitting professional artists to assist at the various entertainments, which are highly appreciated by the inmates as a welcome break in the monotony of prison life.

The several organizations responsible for the provision of additional comforts for the inmates at Christmas are deserving of commendation for the continued display of a spirit of self-sacrifice.

The thanks of the Department are due to the Prisoners' Aid Society, the Salvation Army, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Messrs. J. Stewart and S. Falls, and many others, who are ever ready to grant assistance to prisoners on release.

The conduct of the staff of this prison, as a whole, has been excellent, and since taking over control of the institution I have been impressed by the loyalty of the officers, senior and junior, in the matter of executing the duties allotted to them. The prisoners are tactfully handled, with the result that a high standard of discipline is maintained, and at the same time the various industrial activities are carried out expeditiously, and consequently with profit to the Department.

*Schoolmaster's Report on Work in Prison School.*

I beg to submit my report on the work of the Mount Eden Prison school for the year ending 31st December, 1926.

The average roll number was about 28, and the average attendance 24. The men were classified according to their qualifications in English and Arithmetic, the majority being placed in Standards III, IV, and V. Pupils of Standards I and II were usually retardates, sub-normals, or Maoris who had not received any State-school instruction. On the whole, a good spirit of work was maintained throughout the year, and excellent progress was shown by those men who were animated by a desire to make headway. This was most marked with the pupils of the upper classes, who were better fitted to make their own way under supervision. In the lower classes tutorial methods were employed with success in many cases, although it was obvious that little in the way of definite gain could be observed. Limited mental capacity proved too much even for individual tuition. Many of the lower-classified men made improvement in their writing and in their spelling, but made slow progress in elementary arithmetic. Four of the men in Standard VI elected to sit for Proficiency Certificates in December, and all were successful in gaining passes.

During the year I endeavoured to carry out my ideas along the lines of broader interests. I attempted to arouse interest in many problems and subjects which are more fitted for adult minds