

At Waikune Prison, where extensive motor transport is carried out, a bulk motor-spirits pump was installed, and the cost of motor fuel substantially reduced as a result. At other prisons bulk supplies are now obtained where possible, with distinct savings compared with cased fuel.

As an effort towards economy to the State in general, the question of utilizing prison labour for other Departments has been actively pursued. Efforts in this direction are seriously handicapped by the opposition met from private enterprise, and the Department has necessarily to carefully consider each enterprise in order that unreasonable competition is not set up in a market that already suffers from over-production. It sometimes happens that although the Department is loath to compete with private business the need for the prisoner to be employed in a vocation is of equal importance to the private traders' views on the question. Thus there are occasions when the Department must enter the traders' market to solve its own problem of unemployment. However, the industries are pushed in directions having a minimum of competitive friction, and as far as possible the work required for other Departments and local bodies are preferably followed up as unquestionably a legitimate market for prison labour. The adoption of this policy during 1927-28 saw the taking-up of laundry-work for the Defence Department at Auckland and Christchurch, and for other Government Departments in New Plymouth, Christchurch, and Wellington. A little new business has been obtained periodically through the Railway Refreshment Branch organization in the supply of potatoes and other vegetables to various Departments, and a scheme is now under consideration to undertake this more extensively throughout the Dominion during next season. The foregoing is related to show the factors to be considered in advancing the Department's activities on lines which are in accord with the Government's policy regarding State Departments in business.

In the financial and stores accounting further progress has been made during the year. This aspect of administration required more overhaul and standardization of system than any other feature, and requires reasonable lapse of time over which to establish a solid co-ordinating system. The improvements effected in the previous year have by now settled down to the simple routine which was aimed at. Revision of stores records has now been effected in all but a few of the minor prisons. Stores and accounts forms have in a number of instances been improved by modification, or dispensed with and combined, with a view to reducing work.

The Deposit Accounts of prisons and of probation officers was thoroughly reviewed during the year. From the 1st April, 1928, the forms and system have been improved and standardized as far as the separate features allow.

Opportunity was taken to revise the previously varying rates of maintenance charged by different institutions for prisoners remanded for medical treatment. All institutions now adopt similar rates, computed to cover actual expenses incurred.

A change in the incidence of hospital treatment of prisoners as far as institutions are concerned was brought in during the year. Previously an institution sending a prisoner to hospital bore the cost. This was usually not correct. The circumstances to which the illness was attributable were either not occasioned by his detention or not by the particular prison from which he was admitted to hospital. The present practice is that where a prisoner is injured during employment in an industry, that industry is charged with the cost of maintenance, as an equivalent charge to that to be met under the Workers' Compensation Act by a private business. All other hospital treatment is distributed *pro rata* over all the prisons.

A concession was given to prisoner smokers last year by the free issue of cigarette-papers. A number of prisoners had previously taken advantage of a concession to provide papers out of their earnings, but the clerical work occasioned by charging up many debits of a few pence was not worth the saving.

Provision has been made for more precise action in dealing with the survey and condemnation of unserviceable stores, a work which is a very important part of the stores system.

#### SOCIALIZING EFFORTS.

##### *Education, Morals, Religion, and Visiting.*

In recent years greater attention has been focused on the criminal, for the reason that his treatment is regarded from a more constructive angle than heretofore. Originally the retributive element of justice predominated. This was reflected years ago in the harsher prison methods and the occasional vicious sentences imposed. The protective and deterrent purposes of prison treatment are still, and must continue to be, important considerations; but the idea underlying society's right to remove an offender from its midst has given place to a realization that although society may be protected whilst an offender is in prison, if he emerges therefrom worse than when he entered, craftier than ever, embittered by his experience, or if he has been hardened by his treatment in prison rather than socialized in his attitude, he is a greater menace to society than before. Consequently the efforts to socialize and to stimulate an endeavour to reform are now regarded as factors of vital moment in the present-day treatment of offenders.

A study of the various groups of offenders shows that there are certain criminals who are practically abandoned to their criminal careers, and that reformatory efforts to influence them are more or less futile, but happily these do not constitute the great bulk of our prison population. For these an indeterminate sentence, involving in some cases lifelong detention, is the only safeguard to society.

It is because of the foregoing considerations that, in addition to attention being given to the physical welfare of prisoners, greater regard is had for their mental development, particularly in the case of young offenders where there is a reasonable prospect of training being turned to useful purposes.