

the question respecting lunatics and inebriates being placed in prisons or hospitals ought to be settled once and for all, for to his certain knowledge it has been, for the last ten years, a case of each institution refusing to take them in.

19. The gaolers have, as a rule, performed their duties satisfactorily, but some of them, having for a number of years past managed their respective prisons according to their own views and experience, subject to the supervision of the Visiting Justices, cannot, at their advanced age, be expected to bring themselves to work out a reorganization which, perhaps, may be to some extent deemed by them unnecessary, with the same zeal and energy that younger men would do, who would not have had the previous experience of almost uncontrolled sway over the prisons of which they had charge; and I feel, therefore, compelled to repeat what I stated in my last year's report, viz., that, in my opinion, some of the gaolers, by reason of age and infirmities, should now be superannuated. The important duty incumbent on gaolers of ascertaining, by personal inspection of the outside working parties, whether due effect is given to the mark system (on which a prisoner's remission depends), is frequently neglected, and the time which ought to be profitably spent by periodical visits to the works is too sedulously devoted to inside duties of less importance. I am convinced that, while internal duties need in no way be neglected, this inspection of the working parties should be regularly and systematically performed.

20. The subordinate officers have performed their duties, as a rule, with diligence and fidelity. It will be seen by the annexed return, marked B, that only at Lyttelton Prison has there been any increase of reports against officers during the past year; and this may be credited to the large number of temporary warders who were employed during the time the Maori prisoners from the West Coast of the North Island were detained in this prison. These officers—feeling, I presume, that their appointments were only temporary—did not attach the same importance to good behaviour as those permanently appointed do; and, again, the discipline carried out at this prison has been more strict in reference to the officers during the past twelve months than heretofore. At Dunedin there have been no reports against officers during the year, whereas sixteen are recorded for the previous twelve months. This satisfactory state of things I mainly attribute to the issue of the circular which directs that the particulars of all reports against officers adjudicated upon by the Visiting Justices are to be forwarded for your information. The discipline staff appointed during the year 1881, as well as many of the candidates whose names are noted for employment, are, I believe, calculated to make good custodians of prisoners; and they, to some extent, appear to realize the grave responsibility vested in warders, and the great power for good or evil which their influence may exert over prisoners. The new pay scale and general promotion system promise to be attended with better results than even I was sanguine enough to expect.

21. It is a pleasure to be able to report that, generally, the best possible feeling exists between myself and the Visiting Justices, and I feel called upon to state here that many of them have carried out their gratuitous labours with energy and efficiency, and have afforded me valuable assistance and support. There have, of course, been differences of opinion, but a good understanding has ultimately been arrived at. I am, however, still of opinion that a clearly-defined set of regulations should be issued stating my duties and responsibilities in reference to the Visiting Justices, in order that we may be the better able to co-operate and support one another in the performance of our several functions, and so establish and maintain discipline and good order in the various prisons. My aim has been, and shall continue to be, to work harmoniously with these gentlemen, whose labours and valuable assistance I most readily acknowledge. With few exceptions, the reports called for by clause 37, "Prisons Act, 1873," have not been furnished.

22. Divine service has been held at the prisons every Sunday, as directed by the regulations, and in most instances has been conducted by a clergyman, with the exception of one prison, where, I regret to say, no clergyman has officiated for nearly twelve months.

23. There has been very little sickness in any of the prisons, as will be seen from return marked C. At Addington there were two cases of typhoid fever in the female division, but both cases recovered, and, as they were isolated at the commencement of the attacks, the further spread of the disease was prevented. The Medical Officer having reported that the disease was communicated in the milk supplied, the contract for that article was immediately cancelled.

24. As a matter of precaution, and in accordance with the provisions of clause 138, "Public Health Act, 1876," all prisoners, as well as prison officers and their families, who in the opinion of the various prison surgeons required it, were re-vaccinated in September last.

25. The supplies of rations, fuel, clothing, and necessities, tendered for issue, have, with few exceptions, been good. It will be seen by return marked D that no tobacco is issued at Auckland and Wanganui prisons, and I am glad to report that the use of it is now being discontinued at Lyttelton. I believe it to be beyond argument that, to make imprisonment deterrent, the prison rations must be at least shorn of all luxuries. The total cost of tobacco used in prisons during the year was £437 18s. 11d.

26. There were three escapes during the year—viz., at Dunedin and New Plymouth from the works, and one at Wanganui by breaking out of prison. In each case the offenders were captured after a short absence.

27. One case of suicide occurred—at Lyttelton, where a Chinaman hung himself to his cell window. This prisoner had previously attempted self-destruction, but was prevented from carrying it into effect.

28. There have been nine deaths (not including the case of suicide)—seven males and two females. In each case a coroner's inquest was held, and a verdict returned of death from natural causes.

29. From the annexed returns marked E, D, it will be seen that in the year 1881 a total of 5,360 prisoners passed through the various prisons (large and small), viz., 4,386 males and 974 females, who are classified as follow: Criminals, 4,098 males, 951 females; debtors, 157 males and 5 females; lunatics, 131 males and 18 females. In the larger prisons there was a daily total average of 726.03, viz., 631.66 males and 94.37 females, at a gross total annual cost, per prisoner, of £43 2s. 1d., made up