

to the localities from which they were committed. The medicines, medical comforts, and tobacco at Lyttelton and Mount Cook appear very high as compared with Auckland, where the daily average number of prisoners is considerably larger. In the gross total cost per prisoner, New Plymouth is the highest, at £90 8s. 5d., and Mount Cook the lowest, at £41 9s. 11d. It will, however, be observed that, wherever there has been an increase on the previous year's totals of the gross cost per prisoner, in every case there will be found to be a corresponding falling-off in the daily average number of prisoners as compared with the year 1882. Two large items may be noticed under the head of "Furniture" at Dunedin and Addington; but in explanation of these I would state that at the former the new female quarters have been entirely furnished, and a prison-van has been purchased for the latter during the year.

23. As the falling-off in the number of prisoners throughout the colony still continues, and now appears to be steady, a considerable reduction in the staff at the various prisons has been and is still being made.

24. The receipts for prison labour, road-metal, needlework, maintenance of naval prisoners, &c., for the past year, amounted to £6,428 5s. 8d.: of this sum Dunedin is credited with only £94 14s., and against it there is a railway charge of £218 2s. 6d. for conveying prisoners to and from work. This small return as receipts is due to the inability of the Portobello Road Board, for whom the prisoners were working, to pay for the labour monthly as agreed upon, and at the close of the year that body owed the department some £300, which, had it been credited, would have materially reduced the net cost of each prisoner in Dunedin. At Hokitika and Wanganui, when prison labour is available, it is given to the Corporation without charge; and at New Plymouth and Mount Cook the prisoners are entirely employed in building new prisons: these establishments therefore show very small or no receipts.

25. The principal works carried on at the prisons during the year have been: At Auckland, building new prison and breaking up road-metal; at Dunedin, working for Portobello Road Board and Port Chalmers Corporation; at Invercargill, levelling for Corporation; at Lyttelton, reclaiming land at Sticking Point, where an embankment of about 34,000 cubic yards has been made, and an area of one and a half acres reclaimed; at Napier, quarrying and breaking road-metal; at Timaru, levelling for Corporation; at Wellington Terrace, excavating for Mount Cook buildings; at Mount Cook, brick-making and building (about one and a half millions of bricks have been made, a patent Hoffman's kiln built, and the foundations of the new prison as far as the damp course completed at this prison by the Mount Cook and Terrace prisoners).

26. The recommendations of the Committee of the House of Representatives last session regarding the introduction into some prison of the manufacture of New Zealand flax for export have not been lost sight of; but after careful consideration it was found that New Plymouth is the only prison advantageously situated for carrying on such an experiment, and, in consequence of there being no prisoners available for such labour, no further steps could be taken in this matter.

I have, &c.,

A. HUME, Captain,  
Inspector of Prisons.

The Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington.