

7. A reference to Table A shows that at the commencement of the past year there were 511 male and 78 female prisoners confined in the prisons of the colony, and at the close of the year there were 557 male and 68 female prisoners; giving an increase of 46 males and a decrease of 10 females. In the year 1885 there passed through the prisons 4,776 males and 1,059 females, while during the past year the numbers were 4,536 males and 1,056 females; being a decrease of 240 males and 3 females, giving a total decrease in cases dealt with of 243. These statistics are extremely satisfactory.

8. During the past year the daily average number of prisoners in gaols has been 532·05 males and 74·55 females, being a decrease of 22·4 males and an increase of 2·15 females, giving a net average decrease of 20·25 for the year as compared with the previous year. There is this satisfactory feature about the present condition of affairs: that the prison-population has for the last six years successively continued to decrease. Statistics, as far as my experience goes, usually show that the prison-population has generally risen and fallen alternately during periods of about three years: it might therefore have been reasonably expected that the fall which commenced in 1881 would have continued till 1884, and then be followed by a rise till 1887. But, as the numbers have continuously fallen during the six years, it certainly seems justifiable to infer that our penal reformatory system, though worked under great difficulties and not yet thoroughly developed, has been made effective, and that recent legislation has not only completely succeeded in its object of promoting uniformity, economy, and improved administration, but also in that which is the main object of all, the repression of crime.

9. According to figures obtained from the Registrar-General, the population of the colony was, at the end of the year 1886, 340,500 males and 290,694 females—total, 631,194 persons—while the number of prisoners at that date was 557 males and 66 females—623 persons. The average percentage of prisoners according to population was therefore ·098, being a very slight increase on the previous year, which showed a percentage of ·094.

10. During the past year 152 male and 2 female misdemeanants in default were detained in the gaols of the colony, and during the same period 83 male and 19 female supposed lunatics were detained in the various prisons; giving the same number of male misdemeanants in default as in the previous year, with a decrease of 3 females, and the large increase of 16 males and 5 females supposed lunatics.

11. In each of my annual reports I have protested against the prevailing practice of sending persons suffering from *delirium tremens*, and supposed lunatics, to the various prisons for treatment, and have pointed out that gaols are not designed for the cure of such diseases: the buildings are not adapted for the purpose, the officers are not trained to the work, and, in fact, all the essential conditions are wanting. A case which occurred in Addington Prison during the past year has afforded a striking illustration of the necessity of my repeated protests. A prisoner suffering from *delirium tremens* was received into Addington Gaol on the evening of the 12th February, 1886, and at once located in one of the largest cells, which contains 1,188 cubic feet of space, with ventilators in the ceiling and over and under the door. So bad was the attack from which the man was suffering that, as a means of precaution, it was deemed necessary to place two other prisoners in the cell with him. After remaining in the cell for two days, on the afternoon of the 14th of the same month he was removed to and placed alone in the padded cell, which contains 960 cubic feet of space, with a window 26in. by 18in., which is always open. He died the same night at 11·30 o'clock. At the Coroner's inquest the jury returned a verdict of "Death from excessive drinking," adding as a rider, "they trusted that the fact of the want of proper ventilation in the cells, and the necessity for a proper staff of nurses for such cases as the present, would be referred to the proper quarter for consideration." What the jury thought a proper amount of ventilation did not appear, but, as no cells in the prisons of the colony contain more space, or are any better ventilated than the ones in question, it follows that, if the practice of sending such cases to prisons for medical treatment is to continue, it is imperative that more spacious cells be constructed, and a regular staff of nurses be maintained at each prison, at a considerable expense. A reference to "The Licensing Act, 1881," section 145, subsection (2); "The Lunacy Act, 1882," sections 67 and 68; and to "The Police Offences Act, 1884," section 21, lead clearly to the conclusion that the intention of the Legislature when passing these Acts was that persons suffering from *delirium tremens* and suspected lunacy should be treated elsewhere than in prisons. The instructions recently issued from the Justice Department, to the effect that after the 31st of the present month no more such cases will be received for medical treatment into the prisons will, it is hoped, be strictly observed.

12. During the year 1886 416 males and 53 females were acquitted or discharged after remand, being a decrease of 70 males and 13 females on the previous year.

13. With reference to prisoners under sentence of penal servitude, there were at the close of last year in the several prisons 184 males and 3 females, being a decrease of 10 males and 1 female on the previous year.

14. As regards the financial table given under heading B, it will be found that the prisoners were maintained last year at a gross cost per head of £53 18s. 9d., as against £53 9s. 9d. for the previous year; and at a net cost per head of £33 5s. 11d., as against £41 7s. for the year 1885. The gross totals are made up as follows: Staff supervision, £34 11s. 1d.; maintenance, £15 3s. 10d.; incidental, £4 3s. 10d. It will be noticed that, while there are substantial reductions on the previous year's expenses under the heads of staff supervision and maintenance, there is an increase in the incidental expenses, which is accounted for by the heavy expenses incurred in connection with the sensational trials at Timaru and Dunedin, necessitating the removal of two prisoners under a strong escort several times from Addington and Lyttelton and back, and of one of them to Dunedin and back. Had it not been for the expenses connected with these trials, the gross and net cost per prisoner for the past year would have been very much less. I would here point out that every