

1942.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS

(REPORT ON) FOR THE YEAR 1941-42.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE to HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

Wellington, 19th August, 1942.

I HAVE the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report on the prisons and Borstals of the Dominion for the year 1941-42.

I have, &c.,

H. G. R. MASON,
Minister of Justice.

THE CONTROLLER-GENERAL OF PRISONS to the Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

I have the honour to present the annual report of the Prisons Department for the financial year ended 31st March, 1942, showing also the criminal statistics for the calendar year ending 31st December, 1941.

This report, on account of the shortage of paper and the present need for economy, is much abridged. The customary reports from officers controlling institutions have been omitted. They reveal that reclamation efforts have been progressively maintained and that energies have been focused on increased production to assist in the national war effort. It is satisfactory also to note the enthusiastic response of prisoners in these activities. The conduct of prisoners generally has been good, there being no untoward incidents of a serious nature reported during the year. Institutional Controlling Officers are appreciative of the helpful interest shown by the various voluntary organizations who have assisted in the work of the Department. Thanks are accorded to ministers of religion and others who, despite present difficulties in respect of transport, continue their ministrations and visits and help in the after-care work.

PRISON STATISTICS.

There has been comparatively little variation in the number of persons committed to prison for criminal offences. The tables appended to this report show that the aggregate number of receptions during 1941 was 3,656, the number of distinct prisoners involved being 2,369, which represents an increase of 168 on the number committed to prison during 1940. This increase, however, is almost entirely accounted for by the committals of persons to prison during 1941 for breaches of the National Service Emergency Regulations in respect of their military obligations. An analysis of the nature of the offences shows that, apart from this class of offence, there has been little fluctuation in the number of offences under other headings. Offences against the person show a very slight increase, offences against property no increase, and it is interesting to observe that the number of offenders committed to prison for drunkenness has substantially declined. Viewed from the point of view of nationality of offenders, it is to be noted that the ratio of New Zealand born is higher and the number of Maoris committed to prison again showed a small increase. The increase falls mainly in the age group between twenty and thirty years.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Health of Prisoners.—The general health of the prisoners throughout the year has been good. The daily average number on the sick-list was 16·31, representing 1·7 per cent. of the daily average number in custody.

Deaths.—There was one death recorded during the year, that of a prisoner held on remand at the Wellington Prison on a charge of murder, who committed suicide by hanging.