

The question of finding suitable avenues of work for prisoners while they are in custody is always regarded with the importance it deserves, and as far as possible the labour available is directed into channels where the individual will, or at least should, derive benefit from applying himself to a worth-while task. With this end in view, the majority of the prisoners are employed on industrial activities, such as farming work, quarrying, gardening, &c., and the fact that this work is performed out-of-doors and in a number of cases without direct supervision of an officer does help to encourage self-reliance and interest in the task. In the case of prisoners whose civilian occupation is in one of the recognized trades, every opportunity is taken to direct their work while in prison along that avenue.

During the past year no works of a major kind in regard to buildings construction were carried out, and attention was mainly directed towards the carrying-out of necessary maintenance work to the prison buildings and the staff cottages, as well as to the various structures on the prison farm and at the quarry. Certain repair and renovation work was also attended to at the Court buildings in Christchurch and at the Addington Women's Reformatory. The extensive electrical installations and plant at the prison have also received attention during the year and are giving satisfactory service. An abnormal fall of snow followed by severe frosts in the month of July was the cause of considerable damage, mainly to the power lines and to the water services, and this necessitated prompt attention in order to ensure that the services would be resumed with as little delay as possible. In this work a splendid effort was made by the staff and prisoners employed thereon.

The quarry industry, in which all grades of metal, shingle, and sand products were obtained, absorbs a large proportion of the prison labour. During the past year the industry has been working under difficulties, mainly brought about through the necessity for considerable repair and replacement work, and allied with unusually adverse weather conditions holding up the production of the various grades of metal and shingle. Production for 1945 amounted to a total of 14,108 yards and sales and transfers to 15,010 yards. The corresponding figures for 1944 were 15,325 yards and 17,731 yards respectively. It was expected that a mechanical loader would be available by the end of the year, but it seems that this unit has not yet been landed in New Zealand. When put into commission it will be a great help in maintaining a satisfactory turnover, and the present indications are that it will not be long before there is an active demand for quarry products both for roadmaking and for building purposes.

In the blockmaking industry very little progress has been made, although there is some business coming forward for concrete posts and for flagstones. The shortage of suitable reinforcing-steel for posts and the present shortage of cement are the main contributing factors, but I am confident that the position will be much improved before long.

The laundering of blankets for the Army, Air, and Police Departments resulted in a turnover of 38,464 articles during the past year. In previous years blanket-washing to full capacity of 50,000 articles per annum was carried out, but the demand is now decreasing as the necessity for this service is gradually diminishing.

In the garden industry, which provides employment for a number of prisoners not suited for heavier forms of manual labour, an area of 10 acres is under cultivation, and, in addition to the growing of vegetables, nursery trees are grown for planting out on the property, while the early crop of potatoes for ration purposes is also set in the garden. All classes of vegetables are sown and planted, and after meeting the requirements of the prison there is usually a substantial surplus available for disposal in the market. Some