

of their licenses, 94 have been rearrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, 1 committed suicide, 2 died, 1 was sent to a lunatic asylum, 36 absconded, and 102 remain fulfilling the terms of their licenses.

From the foregoing it will be seen that a percentage of 85.75 have done well, while only a percentage of 2.17 have eluded the vigilance of the Probation Officers and police and escaped, which speaks for itself. The Auckland Gaoler says it is not in any sense a deterrent Act, and requires the most careful administration, which to a certain extent is correct; but it is a reformatory and humane Act, giving those placed under it a chance of redeeming the first false step. That it has received, as it requires, the most careful administration is proved by results, and the consensus of opinion of Courts generally now appears to be, "The better it is known the more it is approved of"; and I take this opportunity of thanking those Gaolers and police who are Probation Officers for the assistance given and the discretion they have observed in their recommendations to the Courts.

I have, &c.,

A. HUME,

Inspector of Prisons.

GAOLERS' REPORTS FOR 1904.

AUCKLAND PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Auckland, 16th January, 1905.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the annual return for this Prison for the year ended 31st December, 1904.

The number of prisoners received during the twelve months was 1,029 males, 128 females, or a total number of 1,157, this being an increase of 249 males and 22 females on the number received in 1903. I believe the above total (1,157) to be the largest ever received in this prison in any one year.

The daily average was 176 males, 15 females, total 191; which is nearly 9 per diem less than in 1903. The reason for the lower daily average (notwithstanding the great increase in the number of prisoners received) is to be found in the fact of so many prisoners being sent to tree-planting camps.

The conduct of the prisoners has, on the whole, been good; but the punishments show an increase of nearly double those of last year, there having been 39 cases punished by Visiting Justices and Stipendiary Magistrates, but the actual number of individual prisoners dealt with was 24 only out of 1,341, several having been punished from two to four times each. A number of the worst-conducted men are ex-prisoners from Australia and elsewhere. Another cause of increased punishment is that all prisoners whose conduct at the tree-planting camps is so bad that they cannot be retained there are transferred to this prison; therefore all the worst prisoners are here, while those whose behaviour is better are drafted away.

There have been some attempts to escape. One prisoner, serving a month, ran from the quarry, but was immediately recaptured. The other cases were more serious, as they were endeavours to break out of the cells, made by long-sentence prisoners, and which might have been successful but for the vigilance of the officers on night duty. These cases were dealt with by the Stipendiary Magistrates in open Court, and offenders all punished.

The officers, as a body, have performed their duties satisfactorily; but, as I have before remarked, all men are not suited for this work, which requires great tact, self-control, and even temper.

The work done during the year has been of a most satisfactory nature. The central wing is now nearly ready for occupation by prisoners, and four bedrooms for single warders have been completed; the front portion of the wing comprising the administrative part of the prison and the chapel is now being pushed on as rapidly as possible. A large quantity (2,094 cubic yards) of road-metal has been supplied to the Railway Department and to various local bodies, but double as much could have been disposed of (and is wanted) but for the inability of the Railway Department to supply trucks. Twenty prisoners have been continuously employed at the fortification-works at Fort Cautley, and the Supreme Court and Police Barracks have been cleaned and grounds put in order by prison labour. The total value of the labour: Cash receipts, &c., amount to £5,068 10s.

The general health of the prisoners has been very good, although the daily average on the sick-list is much greater than that of the previous year, this apparently anomalous result being caused by the bad health of two men, one of whom was suffering from phthisis when convicted, and who has been on the sick-list during the whole year. In the District Hospital another similar case was treated, and those two are responsible for the far greater portion of the illness. There were two deaths only, one of which was a case of suicide by hanging, the other being from natural causes. Inquests were held in each case, and the verdicts returned in accordance with the medical evidence. When one considers the state of health of many prisoners on admission, worn out by drink and dissipation, the wonder is that there is not a far larger percentage of illness and death. In my opinion, this prison is one of the most healthy places in the world; the drainage and sanitary arrangements are perfect; the site being of volcanic formation, no water lies on the surface; half an hour after the heaviest downpour of rain the soil is quite dry; and, owing to its elevation above the sea-level and isolation from other dwellings, the surrounding air is perfectly pure. Another circumstance in this connection is the unusually large size and thorough ventilation of the cells. I know of no single cells in any prison which can compare with these in this respect.