

wasted in many cases. If tree-planting prisons are for good-conduct prisoners, as they are intended to be, then it seems the question for consideration before sending a person there is not so much his offence and previous history as whether he is trying to reform; and the only judges can be those who have been supervising him, who are invariably consulted before transfers are made.

27. The Department has during the past year been, by death, deprived of a really good, conscientious, and experienced officer in the person of the late Mr. F. E. Severne, Gaoler of Mount Eden Prison, who had served continuously since April, 1872, and his loss is much to be regretted; and, from the same cause, Dr. Burns, Gaol Surgeon, Dunedin, who had faithfully served the Department since February, 1877. The services of Mr. J. A. Torrance have also been lost to the Department through his having to retire owing to ill health. This gentleman, who served for upwards of forty years as agent of the Patients and Prisoners Aid Society, Otago, was indefatigable in his work, and many a discharged prisoner has to thank Mr. Torrance for his help in getting a fresh start in life. It is hoped this gentleman may live many years to enjoy the rest he has so ably earned.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

Table K shows that 111 persons were placed on probation last year, as against 101 in 1906. Of the 111, 23 have satisfactorily carried out the terms of their licenses and been discharged, 6 have been rearrested, 3 absconded, and 79 still remain under the supervision of the Probation Officers.

The amount ordered to be paid by the various Courts amounted to £471 19s. 1d., of which £258 17s. 4d. has been already paid. The approximate cost of keeping these offenders had they been sent to prison would have been £3,648 1s. 6d., which sum, added to the amount of costs actually paid, makes a total saving of £3,906 18s. 10d.

Of the 1,980 persons placed on probation since the passing of "The First Offenders Probation Act, 1886," 1,676 have been discharged after satisfactorily carrying out the conditions of their licenses, 110 have been rearrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, 1 committed suicide, 4 died, 2 were sent to industrial schools, 42 absconded, and 143 still remain faithfully fulfilling the terms of their licenses. It appears, therefore, that, while a percentage of 84.64 have done well, a percentage of only 2.12 have eluded the vigilance of the Probation Officers and police by absconding.

The class of persons placed on probation is somewhat on a par with the class of persons sent to the Elmira Reformatory; and while the judicious working of the Probation Act produces the good results above quoted, its continuance is much preferable, for the Dominion, to keeping persons in any reformatory, however well administered.

I have, &c.,

A. HUME,
Inspector of Prisons.

GAOLERS' REPORTS FOR 1907.

AUCKLAND PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Auckland, 9th February, 1908.

I was appointed Gaoler on the 17th May last, and commenced my duties in that capacity on the 3rd of the following month.

On the first day of the year there were 249 males and 15 females in custody.

The total number of prisoners received was 1,340—viz., 1,205 males and 135 females, which numbers represent 923 and 90 individual persons of the respective sexes.

The total number of persons dealt with, inclusive of those in confinement at the beginning of the year, was 1,454 males and 150 females.

Discharges during the twelve months numbered 1,259 males and 120 females, leaving in custody at the end of the year 195 males and 30 females; total, 225.

Ten male and 1 female debtor were received, also 6 lunatics. Of the latter, 3 were transferred to the Mental Hospital, and the remaining 3 discharged.

One death occurred at the District Hospital, that of a male prisoner who had been an inmate of that institution, with but one short interval, since the year 1905. He died on the 18th February from a complication of diseases, including lung trouble. During the year 9 male prisoners were transferred to the Hospital, and were successfully treated for pneumonia, hernia, cataract growth in nose, phthisis, epilepsy, morphiomania, eye-injury, and cancer; the prisoner suffering from the last-mentioned disease is still under treatment there. The health of prisoners generally was good until the last quarter of the year, when a number suffered from influenza, which was very prevalent in Auckland. As many as 15 were on the sick-list from that cause at the one time, and so continued for a considerable period; as compared with the previous year, there was an increase of the daily average sick of 1.50.

The several contractors for rations and other supplies have given every satisfaction, all articles being of excellent quality. A few days before the close of the year a few complained of the quality of the potatoes issued to them, but it was elicited that it was more of a protest than a complaint, owing to the non-issue of extras on Christmas Day.

Forty-three males and 4 females were punished for the commission of various minor prison offences. Of these, 30 males and 2 females were sentenced to bread and water diet for short terms, and the remainder to forfeiture of from eight to eighty-four marks. With these exceptions, and a few cautioned by myself, the conduct and industry of prisoners of both sexes has been remarkably good. There were no aggravated offences committed.