

There has been little sickness, and what there has been was nearly all brought into the prison. There was one death, and the unfortunate victim should never have been brought here. On the 4th November, at Shannon, a Maori named Tawa, who was in the last stage of tuberculous disease of the lungs, was brought before a Justice of the Peace charged with vagrancy, and sentenced to six months' hard labour. He was admitted to this prison on the 5th. I put the necessary machinery in motion and got him admitted to the hospital on the 6th, and he died there on the 9th. There is a consumptive hospital at Otaki and an ordinary hospital at Palmerston North, notwithstanding which this poor dying Native was haled to prison. Surely some one has blundered.

With one exception, the conduct and efficiency of the officers has left nothing to be desired.

Divine services have been held for the different denominations every Sunday.

For some years I wrote about the cruelty of sending delirium tremens prisoners to prison—cruelty to the patients themselves and cruelty to the other prisoners and the officers, who through no fault of their own have frequently this past year been kept awake night after night by the howlings of these men, and have to turn out next day to hard labour. As nothing was done in the matter, I desisted. Now I note that the Inspector-General of Hospitals wants the Boards to take charge of these cases. The Hospital Board here declined on the ground that their staff was composed "wholly of ladies"; but this does not appear to be a correct statement, as they have two men on the staff, besides the House Surgeon.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

There were only two first offenders admitted to probation by the Courts here during the year, and one remanded to Wellington for sentence, placed on probation, and sent back here. This last one did not seem to realise the seriousness of his position, but took it all as a joke; he was therefore rearrested and again brought before the Court. His friends then made good the stolen money, and he was readmitted to probation and transferred to the Auckland District, where his parents reside. One of the others absconded, and, although the police gave me every assistance in tracing him through both Islands, he eventually got away to Melbourne. The third was sent to his relations at Timaru.

After nearly nineteen years as a Probation Officer, and having passed through my books exactly 100 cases, I can say that as far as my district is concerned the Act has been a complete success, and I consider that those responsible for the Act conferred a boon on the Dominion. Of my 100 cases, only one absconded, less than 10 per cent. have been arrested, and at least 80 per cent. have turned out well, and, with the exception of the absconder, all have paid the various sums ordered by the different Courts. Lastly, the Dominion has been saved a large sum, and the working of the Act has cost nothing, for, although the Act provides for the remuneration of the Probation Officers, none of them have ever received any additions to their respective salaries, although in many instances it has meant a considerable increase of work.

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

R. T. NOBLE BEASLEY,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

WELLINGTON PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Wellington, 31st January, 1908.

THE number of prisoners received during the year was 1,042 males and 193 females, total 1,235; an increase of 30 males and 42 females over last year. The actual number of individuals received was 927 during the year, 308 prisoners having been received more than once. The daily average, 121.94 males and 23.43 females, is respectively 16.06 less and 2.43 greater than last year. The total average, 145.37 of both sexes, is 13.63 less than last year.

The contractors' supplies were good, and punctually delivered. The potatoes were very inferior in December, and rice was issued for a few days; on the 21st December new potatoes were supplied. No other cause for complaint.

The health of the prisoners was good. Three male prisoners were admitted to the district hospital and returned on recovery; 1 female prisoner who had been over twelve months in hospital suffering from an incurable disease had the remainder of her sentence remitted; and one male prisoner was sent to the mental hospital.

Thirty-eight males and 5 females for medical treatment, and 4 supposed lunatics, were received during the year. As this subject has been brought to notice year after year, I feel sure some steps will be taken to remedy the matter at an early date.

The increase in minor prison punishments is due to the persistent misconduct of three or four prisoners who were recently received on transfer from other prisons. They not only misconducted themselves, but induced other prisoners who were previously well-behaved to break the regulations.

Two prisoners escaped from Point Halswell Prison. Both were recaptured and sentenced to additional terms of imprisonment.

Four prisoners received indeterminate sentences during the year, and one was so sentenced at the end of 1906, but not mentioned in my report for that year: total, 5 sentenced under "The Habitual Criminals and Offenders Act, 1906."

Two officers incurred report during the year: one of them was permitted to resign, the other was fined and cautioned.

The increase to salary is highly appreciated by all the officers.

All the warders' cottages (nine) were repaired and painted, and one new cottage was built and occupied during the year. There are eleven officers still unprovided-for in this respect.

During the year a new cookhouse and shoemaker's shop was built, and the old cookhouse pulled down, and a bath-room containing five baths and a shower was erected on the site.