

Three male lunatics and 3 males suffering from the effects of drink were received on remand ; but I am pleased to state that, owing to the satisfactory arrangements which have been made with the Hospital authorities, all with the exception of one were at once removed to the Hospital for treatment. When a prisoner is received on remand either for lunacy or delirium tremens, he is at once examined by the Gaol Surgeon, who recommends his removal to the Hospital for curative treatment, which is done on a Visiting Justice's order. The results have been eminently satisfactory from every point of view. Certainly a prison is no place for the treatment of such cases. The old system of sending such unfortunates to prison for so-called curative treatment (and which, I regret to state, still obtains in some quarters) is positively cruel, and should be put an end to without delay. Certainly the Invercargill Hospital authorities are deserving of the greatest commendation, and the thanks of all right-minded persons.

The rations supplied have been excellent, and there have been absolutely no complaints regarding them. We grow all our own vegetables, and the supply is at all times abundant.

The conduct of the prisoners has been very good, only 7 prisoners having been punished for minor offences during the year.

One death occurred during the year, that of a prisoner who had been received for a term of twelve months for vagrancy. Shortly after his admission he was found to be suffering from heart-disease, and was removed to the public Hospital, where he died shortly afterwards.

Besides keeping the Post-office grounds in order, and doing necessary work at the Police-station as required, the prisoners have been constantly employed on the new prison building and site. The new prison building will be all roofed in by the end of March, 1909. This I am certain constitutes a record in prison building, and at once does away with the popular idea that prisoners are not capable of any useful work, or, at any rate, that no good work can be accomplished by prison labour. The quantity and quality of the work performed by the prisoners on this prison proves conclusively that under proper management prison labour can be utilised in almost any direction. This prison, when completed, will be the fourth largest in the Dominion, and it has been constructed entirely by prison labour, and the material for its construction (some 3,000 yards of shingle) has been obtained and prepared from the site. The prison I hope to have ready for occupation within four years from date of commencement.

In addition to the work of building the new prison, the prisoners have been employed market-gardening, some 5½ acres having been reclaimed and drained. Breakwinds have been erected, and what will prove to be a very valuable means of utilising prison labour has been discovered. This industry has now got beyond the experimental stage, and has proved both practicable and profitable, and only requires extension to ultimately make the prison self-supporting, besides providing a supply of wholesome vegetables to the community, and, what is most important, vegetables raised under proper sanitary conditions. I hope by next year to add another 2 acres to the present area under cultivation, making 7½ acres available for next season.

The old prison buildings have been kept in a good state of repair ; but as the white-pine grub has got into the timber, and the brickwork has started to crumble away, the sooner it is vacated the better. Besides, it is impossible to carry out a proper system of classification in a building that was never adapted for that purpose.

In connection with the new prison, I am pleased to state that instructions have been issued to light the building by electricity. This will be a great boon both to officers and prisoners—to the prisoners especially, as it will enable them to read under proper conditions, and will insure the cell being lit as it should be. From every standpoint this will be a decided improvement, and was the one thing required to make the new prison second to none in the Dominion, and one of the most up to date as regards conveniences and adaptability.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

There was only 1 person on probation at the beginning of the year. Two were received on transfer from other districts, while 12 males and 1 female were placed on probation. Of this number, 9 have completed their term of probation satisfactorily, 1 was transferred to another district, and 5 males and 1 female continue to carry out the conditions of their release satisfactorily.

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

M. HAWKINS,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.

LYTTELTON PRISON.

H.M. Prison, Lyttelton, 9th January, 1909.

I HAVE the honour to report on the working of this prison for the year ended 31st December, 1908.

In custody on 1st January, 1908, 119 males and 12 females ; received during the year, 571 males and 63 females ; leaving in confinement at the end of the year, 128 males and 7 females.

Three prisoners who were medically examined were removed to the Sunnyside Mental Hospital, one of whom died there. I am informed the other two have improved mentally, and will in all probability be returned to the prison at an early date.

Of the 5 prisoners sent to the Christchurch Hospital for treatment, 3 died, leaving 2 still under treatment, 1 of whom had his leg amputated ; the other man is suffering from consumption, but will be due for his discharge from prison on the 25th instant.

Prisoners have been employed at Ripa Island and at the Artillery Barracks, Sumner Road, having at the latter place built a very substantial retaining-wall and quarried the red stone for same.