

The contractors' supplies of rations and other articles were good, and punctually delivered, no complaints of moment being made.

The health of the prisoners was good generally. One male who was in delicate health on admission died in prison. An inquest was held, and a verdict returned of "Died from heart-disease and cerebral hæmorrhage." Four male prisoners were removed to the District Hospital: one met with an accident, necessitating amputation of the thumb, and eventually of the arm above the elbow, after which he made a quick recovery and was returned to prison; one was operated on for hernia, and returned cured. The other two cases (one individual) were in Hospital when sentences expired.

One male and 1 female were transferred to the lunatic asylum; the male is still there, but the sentence of the female expired while an inmate.

Two prisoners escaped, one from Point Halswell and the other from Wellington Prison; both were recaptured within a few hours, one by the police, and one by warders, and finally dealt with in the S.M. Court, each receiving a sentence of three months' hard labour. The second case mentioned was not finally dealt with till the 6th January, 1909, but is included in this report. Two male prisoners attempted to escape, but were detected, and finally dealt with in the open Court. One was mulct in marks equivalent to twelve months, and the other to one month.

A prisoner (one of a number) *en route* to a tree-planting prison was missed off the boat when nearing Onehunga, and nothing has been heard of him since.

Sixteen prisoners, for 27 minor prison offences, were awarded punishment by the Visiting Justices during the year.

I regret to have to report that when visiting the carpenters' shop on the 20th November, 1908, a prisoner stabbed me in the neck with a chisel. After investigation by a Visiting Justice, and rehearing by the S.M. in the open Court, the prisoner was committed to the Supreme Court for trial in February next.

More warders' cottages are urgently needed. At present most of the married officers are living in different parts of the city, rendering communication with them awkward in case of necessity.

Owing to the large number of male prisoners received, the cell accommodation was at times insufficient, and rooms intended for other purposes had to be used as cells.

The old prison is very inconvenient to work, having many angles and corners necessitating extra supervision, and does not afford much cell accommodation for the size of it. It is constantly requiring repairs, and the roof-slates get disturbed in windy weather, disclosing new leaks at every fresh rain. The south wing, an old wooden building, jammed as it is between the new south wing and old prison, is a source of danger and anxiety, as in the case of fire in it no person could get into the new south wing or do anything for the inmates (60) there until the fire was extinguished. The separate building is a very old structure of wood. The west wing is also a wooden building, and, although of more modern date, leaves much room for improvement. The female prison is bright and airy, but very old, and too close to (and excluding the light from) the bottom windows of the new south wing male prison; besides, the cells are all association cells, which is objectionable. I think the time has arrived for erecting new prison buildings, workshops, and shelter-sheds, and reconstructing exercise-yards. In regard to the male prison, I beg to suggest that a new one be built in the country, surrounded by plenty of land, whereon produce might be grown and stock reared, thus giving healthy and profitable employment to all long-sentence prisoners who cannot, for various reasons, be sent to a tree-planting prison.

There were 8 reports against 7 officers during the year, 3 of them in connection with the escape of prisoners, 2 for leaving doors of cells open in which prisoners were confined, 1 for not discovering open the door of a cell in which a prisoner was confined, 1 neglect of duty, and 1 absent from duty. Nevertheless, I thank the staff generally for the support afforded me in effectually carrying out the duties during the year.

The following changes in the staff took place: 5 officers were transferred to and 5 received from other prisons, 1 resigned, 1 probationer passed a satisfactory examination and had his appointment confirmed, and 1 probationer was appointed.

The prisoners were employed on the defence-works at Point Halswell, building magazines, and repairing and widening the road round the Military Reserve; brick-making at Mount Cook, cutting scrub on Battery Reserve, attending the paths at Mount Cook, and gardening.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

There were 11 males and 1 female on the register at the beginning of the year, 3 males received on transfer, 8 males were admitted to probation, 1 male absconded, 1 male received a sentence of imprisonment, 8 males were transferred to other districts, and 5 males completed their term of probation leaving 7 males and 1 female on the register at the end of the year.

The Inspector of Prisons, Wellington.

ALEX. ARMSTRONG,
Gaoler and Probation Officer.