

1910.
NEW ZEALAND.

A SCHEME FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF THE PRISON SYSTEM OF NEW ZEALAND,

PREPARED BY THE HON. THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

THE scheme is based upon the principles of modern penal science as those principles are expressed in the most efficient penal institutions throughout the world.

It is adapted to meet the present and prospective requirements of this country, and also to utilise as far as possible the buildings, equipment, and administrative machinery already existing.

Besides State institutions, official recognition is given to the work of private agencies, and their assistance requisitioned wheresoever available and adaptable.

The provisions of the indeterminate sentence are extended and made applicable to all proper cases. When the indeterminate sentence is applied, the release of the prisoner depends upon himself. When the prisoner has served any determinate sentence imposed upon him and is able to prove that he is in a position to support himself, and can give satisfactory assurances that he is no longer a menace to the peace and order of society, his release is granted. The questions and conditions of release are determined by a tribunal of suitable experts. Except that in the case of any person convicted of a crime punishable by hard labour for life, the power of release shall be exercisable by the Governor in Council.

The determinate sentence will still be retained in all proper cases.

The following institutions are provided for :—

Penitentiaries for male prisoners.

An institution for sexual perverts and criminals of unsound mind.

An institution for incorrigible drunkards.

Prison camps.

A reformatory farm.

A penitentiary and reformatory for women.

Most of the institutions existing at present will be used in this arrangement. Napier and Dunedin present so many difficulties on account of their situation, design, and the impossibility of installing necessary industries that, as soon as proper provision can be made, they will be closed.

By requisitioning the aid of private agencies, provision is made for :—

Extension of the probation system, and

Dealing with occasional and habitual drunkards.

Privileges are placed within the attainment of prisoners; but these can be gained only by industry and moral improvement.

Concessions are granted to those physically or mentally afflicted when such concessions are necessary in the interests of humanity.

Indulgences are never granted.

The discipline provides that throughout his whole waking time the prisoner is kept employed at industrial or educational work or at proper exercises. The standard of effort must compare favourably with that of the free labourer before any privileges or favourable recommendation for release can be gained. The hope of reward is the main stimulus to improvement.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF PRISONERS.

Prisoners are classified upon a double basis—firstly, as to type; secondly, as to conduct and improvement. According to the first classification, prisoners are distributed to the divisions of the various institutions and agencies; according to the second classification, they are graded within those institutions.