

THE FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

On the 1st January, 1911, there were 4 males on the register of this district. During the year 8 males and 1 female were placed on probation; 1 male was transferred from another district, making 14, the total number dealt with—viz., 13 males, 1 female. For the same period 3 males completed their terms satisfactorily; 4 males were transferred to other districts; 1 male for the commission of a fresh offence received a sentence of three months' hard labour; and 1 male for failing to comply with the conditions of his release was sentenced to detention for reformatory purposes for twelve months. Nine males were accordingly struck off the register, leaving 4 males and 1 female on the books on the last day of the year. The habitual criminal released on probation, referred to in the annual report for the year 1910, absconded.

I have, &c.,

T. R. POINTON,

Gaoler and Probation Officer.

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

HANMER SPRINGS PRISON.

SIR,—

H.M. Prison, Hanmer Springs, 3rd January, 1912.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the working of this prison for the year ended 31st December, 1911.

There were 16 prisoners in custody on the 1st January; 34 males were received, and 15 discharged during the year, the average number in custody being 21.29.

Seven prisoners were transferred during the year, 1 to the prison camp for first offenders at Waipa, and 6 to Lyttelton. Four of these latter had been reported for minor prison offences, and were generally unsuitable for this place; the other two were sent for surgical treatment.

With the few exceptions mentioned above, the conduct of prisoners has been very good, and the work done on the plantations exceeds, on an average, that of any previous year, although many days were lost owing to the weather, which was exceptionally bad throughout the year.

The general health of prisoners has been very good. There was practically no sickness, except of a very slight nature, during the year.

The new common room proved a great comfort, and was very much appreciated by the prisoners, especially during the winter, which was very cold, there being hard frosts and heavy falls of snow.

The rations have been of the very best quality and regularly supplied.

One officer was transferred to Lyttelton Prison during the year.

The prisoners carried out the following work during the year: Cleared 220 acres; pits dug, 440,475; trees planted—*Larix europæa*, 111,000; *Pinus austriaca*, 379,740; *Pinus ponderosa*, 11,725; *Pinus muricata*, 5,500; *Alnus glutinosa*, 440: total, 508,405.

I have, &c.,

W. AYLING,

Acting-Gaoler.

The Under-Secretary for Justice, Wellington.

INVERCARGILL PRISON.

SIR,—

H.M. Prison, Invercargill, 25th March, 1912.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the working of this prison for the year ended 31st December, 1911.

There were in custody on the 1st January, 1911, 65 males and no females; received during the year, 102 males and 2 females; total, 167 males and 2 females. Discharged during the year, 106 males and 2 females. In custody at the end of the year, 61 males.

The conduct of the officers has been good, only 2 having been reported for neglect of duty. In the first case, that of a temporary officer, you decided that his services should be dispensed with. In the other you considered that a severe reprimand would meet the case.

There were 3 male lunatics received during the year, and several other prisoners who were suffering from the effects of drink, but under the existing arrangements all were removed to the hospital for treatment, on the recommendation of the Gaol Surgeon and by Visiting Justices' warrant. This arrangement continues to work most satisfactorily, and is in the best interests of all concerned. The quality of the rations supplied has been good, consequently there have been no complaints. The system you have recently introduced of purchasing in bulk tends towards economy, and also ensures a better article being supplied.

The conduct of the prisoners has, as a whole, been good. All punishments, with one exception, were for minor prison offences. In nearly every case the misconduct took place shortly after reception, but when a youth realizes that punishment for offending is certain he speedily recognizes the necessity of strict obedience, and seldom offends again.

The Crimes Amendment Act is having a decidedly good effect. Prisoners sentenced thereunder recognize that the term of their detention depends largely upon their conduct and industry, and that in the event of their misbehaving themselves such conduct will be regarded as an indication that they have not acquired the habit of self-control, and consequently are not fit to be released. This has a marked influence upon conduct, and it is very rarely that a prisoner in this class has to be punished. I am quite certain that, as the provisions of the Act become better known, even better results will be obtained.