

The fluctuations in the prison population from 1881 to 1917, inclusive, are shown in the table below :—

Daily Average, 1881 to 1917.

| Year. | Daily Average of Prisoners in Dominion Prisons. | | |
|--------------|---|----------|----------|
| | Males. | Females. | Total. |
| 1881 | 631.66 | 94.37 | 726.03 |
| 1891 | 459.22 | 58.39 | 517.61 |
| 1911 | 799.08 | 64.18 | 863.26 |
| 1912 | 855.28 | 64.07 | 919.35 |
| 1913 | 826.69 | 66.55 | 893.24 |
| 1914 | 916.09 | 63.72 | 979.81 |
| 1915 | 931.33 | 76.79 | 1,008.12 |
| 1916 | 895.99 | 82.78 | 942.77 |
| 1917 | 817.27 | 96.99 | 914.26 |

Prisoners sentenced by Military Courts-martial.

At the time of writing (31st August) there are in the prisons and prison institutions of the Dominion 212 men who have been sentenced to terms varying from six months to seven years by courts-martial. Of this number 200 have been committed to prison on the charge of "disobeying the lawful command of his superior officer." The only man who is serving a term of more than two years is a soldier who was sentenced for "desertion while on active service" at Moascar, Egypt. The other military prisoners are all men who have declined to serve in the Expeditionary Forces in any capacity whatever. Some are "religious" or "conscientious" objectors; the rest have objected to serve on various grounds, personal and otherwise.

The advent of such a number of prisoners who, whatever their faults, were not criminals presented a somewhat difficult problem to the Department, which has hitherto had to deal only with offenders against the civil law. The position was met, however, by effecting a complete separation, wherever possible, between the civil and military prisoners, and when the number of the latter class increased sufficiently the sanction of the Minister was obtained to their being drafted to the afforestation camp at Kaingaroa, to the roadmaking camp at Waimarino, to the Waikeria Reformatory Farm, to Paparua (Templeton), and the younger men to the Invercargill Borstal Institution. The method of drafting enabled all the men to be employed on useful outdoor work under the best possible conditions. Incidentally their labour has been retained in productive channels instead of becoming a wasted asset, as every military prisoner is now farming, tree-planting, roadmaking, building, or doing something to assist in improving or adding to the property of the State.

In each prison, camp, or institution to which the military prisoners have been sent they are kept entirely to themselves, and are not allowed to mix with the criminal prisoners.

With few exceptions they have worked well and conducted themselves well, but in the few cases where these men have proved recalcitrant we have found our officers quite capable of coping with the situation. Men who decline to work or who are agitators and foment discontent among their fellows are returned to the central prisons and treated as ordinary prisoners.

The number of military prisoners at present confined in each of our institutions is shown in the table below :—

Number of Court-martialled Prisoners confined in the Prisons on the 31st August, 1918.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Auckland | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 |
| Invercargill | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 35 |
| Kaingaroa | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 31 |
| Lyttelton | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Paparua | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 57 |
| Roto-aira | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 19 |
| Waikeria | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 54 |
| Wellington | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 |
| Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 212 |

EXPENDITURE AND RECEIPTS.

The gross expenditure for the financial year under all heads amounted to £81,363, against £69,536 for the previous year, an increase of £11,827. The largest increases were on the following items, viz.: Salaries and uniforms, £1,829; prisoners' clothing, £2,542; prison farms, £1,849; rations, £866; miscellaneous expenditure, £3,986; tools and materials, £661. In regard to the first item, "Salaries and uniforms," the additional amount expended is accounted for by scale increases under the classification schedule and by the enhanced cost of material purchased for uniforms that have been supplied to prison officers. The increased cost of material also accounts for the much higher expenditure on the item "Prisoners' clothing." The opening-up and development of prison farms naturally required somewhat heavy disbursements in the purchase of stock, implements, &c., but it may be noted that the cash received from the sale of stock, produce, &c., practically balanced the expenditure. The increase in the cost for the year of rations and of tools and material requires no explanation. The principal increase is under the heading