

This entails a large expenditure of labour that has a definite value to the State. On a low assessment the total value of such labour in each institution is as shown in Table 3 below :—

TABLE 3.—Value of Prison Labour employed on Prison Works and Industries, for which Cash Credits are not obtained, for the Year ended 31st March, 1921.

Prison.	Boot- making for Officers and Prisoners.	Tailoring (including Repairs) and Red Cross Work.	Gardening and Farming.	Building- work (Mainten- ance, &c.).	Quarrying, Levelling of Reserves, &c.	Domestic Employ- ment.	Totals.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Addington .. ..	..	341	320	11	..	560	1,232
Auckland	469	319	319	..	153	2,276	3,536
Invercargill	90	75	2,603	..	..	1,675	4,443
Kaingaroa	15	11	34	..	..	125	185
Napier	10	..	36	..	120	240	406
New Plymouth	81	92	163	40	..	420	796
Paparua	750	..	1,874	..	..	1,164	3,788
Roto-aira	35	..	114	75	..	421	645
Waikeria	103	..	2,784	..	..	1,174	4,061
Wellington	177	1,048	653	..	1,863	1,896	5,637
Wi Tako	29	..	595	..	..	380	1,004
Minor gaols	18	24	72	12	..	170	296
Totals	1,777	1,910	9,067	138	2,136	10,501	26,029

Summary.

	£
Cash and financial credits for the year 1920-21	39,136
Estimated value of prison labour employed on public works for which neither cash nor financial credit was received	20,243
Estimated value of prison labour employed on farms, industries, or domestic work, &c.	26,029
Total value of prison labour, 1920-21	£85,408

The above figures show that, while the gross expenditure for the past financial year was £127,444, the total value of prison labour during the same period was £85,408.

TREE-PLANTING.

Last year's report referred to the cessation of tree-planting by prison labour, and gave the final figures covering the operations of the Department in this direction since the scheme was first launched in 1901. Our last afforestation camp on the Kaingaroa Plains was finally abandoned on the 31st July, 1920. The huts, buildings, plant, and material of all kinds were taken over by the Forestry Department, the sum of £2,000 being credited to the Prisons vote to recoup the Prisons Department to some extent for the expenditure incurred during the period of its occupation.

EMPLOYMENT OF PRISON LABOUR.

From the preceding tables it will be seen that the works organization of the Department has shown tangible results, and that the high level attained last year has in no way been reduced. The various works in progress when the 1919-20 report was written have been much advanced, and in some cases completed, while other undertakings of considerable magnitude have been entered upon. The report of the Inspector and Supervisor of Works sets out in detail the volume of work carried through during the year at each of the institutions, prisons, or camps.

The breaking-in and improvement of our different properties has proceeded so satisfactorily that the time is fast approaching when it will be necessary to acquire other and larger areas of unimproved land if the Department is to continue its policy of developing the public estate in the interest of production and settlement. It is perfectly obvious that when our properties are fully developed and have become cultivated farms there will not be sufficient employment in connection with ordinary agricultural work to provide full and profitable occupation for all the men at present available. This position has already had the attention of the Department, and a proposition has been placed before the Government that, if accepted, will result in much useful work in the interest of settlement being carried out within the next few years.

PAYMENT OF WAGES TO PRISONERS WITH DEPENDANTS.

In terms of the announcement made in last year's Budget, regulations were gazetted in December, 1920, providing for the payment of wages to prisoners with necessitous dependants, the new system operating as from the 1st January, 1921. The rates of pay were fixed on a sliding scale, rising from 6s. to 8s. per day for labourers, and from 7s. 6d. to 10s. per day for skilled workers, a deduction of one-half the total weekly earnings being made to meet the cost of maintenance and