

care and attention they require in their earlier years, and until some great combined effort is made to give the youthful mind some natural, proper, and healthy outlet, the present regrettable increase in the number of juvenile offenders is likely to continue. It is in this direction that organizations like the Young Citizens' League are doing a great work for the community.

In crime, as in disease, "prevention is better than cure." Preventive measures must naturally be applied before the disease has developed. In crime, as in disease, the application of a cure is a doubtful, difficult, and lengthy process. The percentage of complete recoveries in the case of confirmed criminals is probably as small as in the case of sufferers from malignant disease who have received no medical attention until the disease has become well established.

The fluctuations in the prison population of the Dominion from 1881 to 1921 (inclusive) are shown in the table below:—

Daily Average, 1881 to 1921.

Year.	Daily Average of Prisoners in Dominion Prisons.			Year.	Daily Average of Prisoners in Dominion Prisons.		
	Males.	Females.	Totals.		Males.	Females.	Totals.
1881 ..	631·66	94·37	726·03	1916 ..	859·99	82·78	942·77
1891 ..	459·22	58·39	517·61	1917 ..	817·27	96·99	914·26
1911 ..	799·08	64·18	863·26	1918 ..	896·98	84·97	981·95
1912 ..	855·28	64·07	919·35	1919 ..	936·28	68·06	1,004·34
1913 ..	826·69	66·55	893·24	1920 ..	872·59	67·10	939·69
1914 ..	916·09	63·72	979·81	1921 ..	992·04	73·56	1,065·60
1915 ..	931·33	76·79	1,008·12				

PRISONERS SENTENCED BY MILITARY COURTS-MARTIAL.

There have been only two prisoners of this class—one a Maori and the other a European—in the prisons during the year. Both were sentenced to long terms for very serious offences outside the Dominion. One has recently been discharged.

EXPENDITURE AND RECEIPTS.

The gross expenditure of the Prisons Department for the financial year ended 31st March last was £129,411, compared with £127,444 for the previous year. The cash receipts and cash credits totalled £49,866, against £39,136 for 1920–21, leaving the net expenditure for 1921–22 at £79,545, compared with £88,308 for 1920–21.

Although the net expenditure of the Department has increased considerably during the past ten years, the causes of that increase are easily found. Salaries of staffs are now costing us £40,000 per annum more than in 1912. This is partly due to the increased number of officers required for the larger prison population; but in regard to the bulk of the increase we are, of course, in the same position as other employers of labour. The pay of our officers has necessarily had to keep pace with the increased cost of living, with the natural result so far as our annual balance-sheet is concerned. Another considerable item in our increased costs is the growth in the cost of rationing the prisoners, which from the table given below is shown to have been £10·23 per head for 1912, compared with £16·70 for 1921–22. This means that during the past financial year we had to expend approximately £7,000 more than it would have cost us to ration the same number of prisoners in 1912. In actual fact the total cost of rations for 1921–22 was £17,962, against £9,405 for 1912. There were, of course, many more prisoners in our institutions in the period now under review than in the earlier year.

In 1912 we had no expenditure on prison farms; last year we expended £6,490 in this direction, while in 1920–21 the expenditure under this head was £7,339. The policy of opening up and developing new country by prison labour commenced in 1912–13, and has been pursued vigorously ever since. Irrespective of the substantial revenue now being derived from our farms, as shown in Table I below, we have increased the value of the lands of the Dominion by fully £112,000 since the inauguration of our agricultural policy, and it is therefore apparent that the expenditure that has led to this increase is more properly chargeable to the land-development vote than to the Prisons vote.

Average Cost per Head of Prisoners' Rations from 1909 to the 31st March, 1922.

Year.	Total Expenditure on Rations.	Number of Prisoners.	Cost per Head.	Year.	Total Expenditure on Rations.	Number of Prisoners.	Cost per Head.
	£		£		£		£
1909 ..	8,544	809·84	10·55	1916–17 ..	15,092	920·15	16·41
1910 ..	9,322	901·73	10·33	1917–18 ..	15,522	941·11	16·64
1911 ..	8,494	863·26	9·83	1918–19 ..	16,473	1,003·43	16·41
1912 ..	9,405	919·35	10·23	1919–20 ..	17,294	965·07	17·93
1913 ..	9,754	893·24	10·91	1920–21 ..	18,766	965·03	19·44
1914 ..	11,555	979·81	11·79	1921–22 ..	17,962	1,075·34	16·70
1915 ..	15,099	1,008·12	14·97				