

1924.

## NEW ZEALAND.

## PRISONS

(REPORT ON) FOR THE YEAR 1923-24.

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

The Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONS DEPARTMENT to His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

MY LORD,—

Wellington, 13th August, 1924.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Prisons Department for the year 1923-24.

I have, &amp;c.,

C. J. PARR,

Minister in Charge of Prisons Department.

The CONTROLLER-GENERAL OF PRISONS to the Hon. the MINISTER IN CHARGE OF PRISONS DEPARTMENT.

SIR,—

Prisons Department, Wellington, 31st July, 1924.

I have the honour to present the forty-third annual report of the Prisons Department, covering the financial year 1923-24, together with the report of the Inspector of Prisons, extracts from the reports of the controlling officers of the different prisons and prison institutions, and the criminal statistics for the calendar year ended 31st December, 1923.

## PRISON POPULATION : COMPARATIVE FIGURES.

The criminal statistics for the year ended 31st December, 1923, show that 4,685 distinct persons were received into the prisons of the Dominion, as against 4,659 for the previous year, an increase of 116, or 2·5 per cent. The numbers for 1922 were less than those for 1921 by 426, so that the variation over the past three years has been slight. The daily average number of prisoners in custody increased from 1,113·45 in 1922 to 1,127·47 in 1923, or 1·2 per cent., so that for statistical purposes it may be said that the gross figures for the two years were practically the same.

An analysis of Table A1 annexed indicates that the slight increase in receptions is chiefly accounted for by the greater number of short-sentenced prisoners, there being 1,893 committals for terms of three months and under in 1923, compared with 1,620 in 1922. The number of youthful offenders between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five received into the prisons and prison institutions during the year was 293, a decrease of 47 on the figures for the previous year. This number does not, however, include Maoris, 37 of whom between the ages mentioned were received, compared with 29 in 1922. It must be recorded, however, that Maoris of all ages received into prison numbered 114 in 1923, against 139 in 1922. The increase in crime among the younger Maoris is regrettable, but it is hoped that the decrease shown in the number of commitments among the older men indicates a diminution in the number of reconvictions of those who have previously served sentences. Possibly the majority of the younger men have learnt their lesson after serving one sentence.

While dealing with the question of our criminal statistics, as shown by the tables accompanying this report, I desire to publish for the first time the results, as indicated by the number of inmates reconvicted, of the working of our two reformatories for men—viz., the Waikeria Reformatory, near Te Awamutu, and the Borstal Institution, at Invercargill. We have only been able to keep detailed records of individual cases since the beginning of 1916, but, as the information now covers a period of eight years, it may be considered a reasonably fair index of the position. It must be remembered, however, that the two institutions are distinct in character, Waikeria being a reformatory farm for men of all ages drafted from the general prisons, and “the Borstal” being a special institution for young men and boys whose maximum age in 1916 was twenty-five (afterwards reduced to twenty-three). The Waikeria returns show that of 306 men sentenced to terms of reformatory detention only who were received into the reformatory between the 6th May, 1916, and the 31st December, 1923, 13, or 4·25 per cent., have been reconvicted; of 124 men who were given a hard-labour sentence followed by a term of reformatory detention during the same period, 10 men, or 8·07 per cent., have again offended;