

the lesser number of prisoners would in the ordinary course have reduced the bill by £750. A slight increase of 3 per cent. in the average of wholesale food-prices for the year compensated for this reduction to the extent of £450. The increase in cost per head amounted to merely 3d. per head per week.

A reduction in the cost per head in the last three years compared with years preceding will be observed. This is the result of the policy of increasing the ratio of prison-produced food to purchased food, including meat, vegetables, and bread. The cost per head is at present approximately £3 per head lower than four years ago, and the total saving being maintained is no less than £4,000 per annum.

#### NET COST OF FOOD RATIONS (NOT INCLUDING TOBACCO).

Year.	Daily Average Number of Prisoners (Twelve Months to 31st March).	Net Cost of Foodstuffs.	Annual Cost per Head.	Annual Cost per Head converted to 1914 Price Basis.
		£	£	£
1914 .. .. .	979·81	11,555	11·79	11·79
1919-20 .. .. .	965·07	17,294	17·93	..
1924-25 .. .. .	1,227·50	18,332	14·93	10·58
1925-26 .. .. .	1,340·13	19,547	14·58	10·19
1926-27 .. .. .	1,397·25	19,389	13·88	10·60
1927-28 .. .. .	1,489·62	15,736	10·57	8·09
1928-29 .. .. .	1,501·82	15,363	10·23	7·35
1929-30 .. .. .	1,425·54	15,526	10·89	7·59

#### Prison Labour.

Reference has been made in an earlier portion of the report to the utilization of prison labour in agriculture and industry. In Table B1, at the conclusion of the report, is shown a detailed statement of the value of labour applied to each class of work at each institution. Following the decreased prison population, the aggregate valuation of labour for 1929-30 was £82,535, compared with £86,850 for the previous year. The value per head was almost similar at approximately £57 17s.

The decrease in value of labour expended in erection of prison buildings has been very marked in the last two years. The value of £4,500 in 1929-30 was approximately half the value of the previous year, and approximately one-third of the value of each of the two preceding years. This result follows upon the halt in building programme of the Department, which is dealt with more fully in the Public Works Statement submitted by the Hon. the Minister of Public Works.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

During the past four years many opportunities have been taken to institute improvements in industry management, stores and accounts control, economies, housing, attention and feeding of prisoners, and general matters. It has been usual to refer to such matters in each year's report. It is not proposed to here recapitulate the alterations and changes made in previous years. The Department's officials are at all times invited to bring forward for consideration suggestions having efficiency, economy, and general improvements as their aim. Apathy between periods of energy does not make for real efficiency, and the Department always aims at steady and continuous improvements. Matters which when instituted have then proved or been considered improvements may not necessarily continue to be so indefinitely, or in practice may not constitute real or unqualified advantages. Subsequent conditions may at times call for reversion to earlier methods in some of the multifarious details of prison organization.

The following outlines a few of a number of matters of interest occurring in the Department and relating to improvements effected during the year:—

*Damage caused wilfully by Prisoners.*—Authority was provided last year to enable inmates to be debited with losses of property caused by wilfulness or negligence, this necessarily being operative only where an inmate has earnings. Careful perusal of debits made under this scheme over a period of fifteen months indicate that the step has had a good effect in minimising the wanton destruction of public property.

*Dental Treatment Contracts.*—During the year all existing dental arrangements were reviewed, and two-year contracts entered into with various dentists, all institutions being provided for. In most of the cases the terms arranged gave decided improvements upon the existing ones. In others where the existing arrangements were good they were embodied into definite contracts on similar terms.

*Dental Treatment, Payment of.*—In order that all institutions should be brought into line in respect of the above, the respective liability of the Department and of the inmate to defray cost of dental attention, was also reviewed and the following provisions made—viz., that an inmate pays for all dental attention, except where extractions are required to relieve pain or where the Medical Officer considers extraction for health reasons cannot be deferred until release. Where it is desirable that dental attention other than extractions be given to a prisoner who has no earnings to meet same, the Department will consider such case on its merits, and if necessary defray the cost.