

The curriculum of the school includes English, spelling, arithmetic, geography, interspersed with odd evenings on social subjects and lectures on the current topics of the year. The majority of the men attending the classes are equal to the Fourth Standard of education, and the above subjects for Standards III, IV, V, and VI are studied in the classes. Most of the students take a very keen interest in the work—this phase was very surprising at the outset—and some have progressed from Standard IV to Standard VI work during the year; others again have maintained but steady progress, these being men who look upon the evening classes as more a part of their punishment than an opportunity to improve their knowledge. Again, there are others whose mentality is subnormal, and who, although anxious to progress, have not the mental capacity necessary for study past the Third Standard. Four hours per week are given to the classes. On a few occasions during the year the men were allowed debates amongst themselves on various subjects—non-sectarian and non-political. These evenings have been allowed as a reward for keenness and progress, and have helped materially to overcome the individual self-consciousness so apparent in the majority of the men.

The discipline throughout the year has been excellent, the older students very quickly remonstrating with any new student of the larrikin type. The discipline officer has carried out his duties very satisfactorily, and has been a great help with the backward students in routine work.

A Chinese prisoner unable to speak any English is making quite good progress with our language, and in this I have been fortunate in obtaining assistance from another Chinese prisoner well versed in the subject.

WAIKUNE PRISON (ROAD-CONSTRUCTING CAMP), ERUA.

(Officer in Charge, Mr. H. W. GLYNN.)

There were 92 prisoners in custody at the beginning of the year; during the year 89 were received from other prisons, whilst 93 were discharged or otherwise disposed of, leaving in prison on the night of the 31st December, 1929, 88 prisoners.

The general health of the prisoners has been good; most of the illness has been of a minor nature and dealt with by the Medical Officer locally.

The conduct of the prisoners on the whole has been satisfactory. Seven prisoners escaped during the year; six were recaptured after one or two days' liberty, whilst the seventh escapee returned to camp of his own accord. The six who were recaptured were taken before Court and punished.

The food-supply has been very good; no complaints of any importance were received. The meat supplied by the contractors was of good quality, and the pork supplied was grown at the prison. Wholemeal bread is now issued to all prisoners on three days per week, with a view to keeping more evenly balanced food values, and is relished by the prisoners.

The spiritual welfare of the men was well cared for during the twelve months under review. Divine service at regular intervals was held at the camps by ministers representing the Church of England, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic faiths. The Raetihi Branch of the Salvation Army visited the camps on several occasions and rendered a musical programme.

Reviewing the industrial side of Waikune Prison, I consider the standard of progress of past years was maintained. Our activities on the main highway between Raurimu and Horopito continue. During the year a deviation 2 miles 28 chains between Pokako and Horopito was formed and metalled. The task itself was very trying, but now that the job has been finished, and the new road open for vehicular traffic, it has reduced the distance by road between Pokako and Horopito and eliminated two dangerous railway-crossings. We were also called on to put through another deviation between Oio and Raurimu. The work was accomplished and the section metalled. A bridge 120 ft. long was constructed over the Makatote Stream. The structure was erected on three solid concrete piers, with huge steel girders spanning the gap, and the decking, which is of concrete with a bitumen surface, is 40 ft. above the level of the stream. In all 5 miles 29 chains of the main highway was formed and metalled. The construction of the bridge over the Makatote Stream, and general maintenance of the whole section of road between Raurimu and Horopito, was carried out on the Te Kuiti-Bulls (via Taumarunui) section of the main highway.

General maintenance work on the National Park—Tokaanu Road was carried on throughout the year. Although the greater portion of this road is unmetalled and at the present time is carrying the maximum of tourist and heavy traffic, I am pleased to report that our efforts were successful in keeping the road open for traffic throughout the year.

The contract for supplying metal to the Kaitieke County Council for metalling the Erua Road was recommenced during the latter part of the year. Up to the present we have supplied sufficient metal to enable one mile of the road to be metalled. The supply and delivery of crushed metal and sand to be used in the construction of the hostel at National Park was supplied as required. This contract alone called for the supply of approximately 3,500 cubic yards of metal and sand. An agreement was also entered into between the Waimarino County Council and the Prisons Department for the supply of metal for use on roads under the jurisdiction of the county, and approximately 2,500 cubic yards of grit was supplied for that purpose.

A new vulcanizing plant was purchased during the year, and such has been the cause of a great reduction in the cost of tires and tubes replacement, and is earning further revenue by effecting repairs to rubber goods for other prison institutions and Government Departments.

Our special thanks are due to the National Tobacco Co., Ltd., the Howard League for Penal Reform, and the Revs. J. W. Burley and R. J. Boyt, for providing cheer for the men at Christmas time; to Miss B. E. Baughan for her efforts in obtaining a gramophone and records for use at the camps; also to Mrs. L. Swallow, of the W.C.T.U., Christchurch, for several lots of gramophone records despatched for use at this prison.