

1931.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS DEPARTMENT

(REPORT ON) FOR THE YEAR 1930-31.

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.

Wellington, 6th August, 1931.

I HAVE the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Prisons Department for the year 1930-31.

I have, &c.,

JOHN G. COBBE,
Minister in Charge of Prisons Department.

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

SIR,—

I have the honour to present the annual report of the Prisons Department for the financial year ended the 31st March, 1931, together with extracts from the reports of Controlling Officers, and the criminal statistics for the calendar year ended the 31st December, 1930. The institutional reports have been considerably abridged on account of the present need for economy.

PRISON POPULATION.

The general depression through which the Dominion has been passing shows, as might be expected, its reflex in the criminal statistics for the year, tables of which are appended hereto.

The total number of prisoners dealt with last year shows a marked increase, the total new admissions being 4,909 (representing 2,864 distinct persons), as compared with 4,357 (2,596 distinct persons) for the previous year. It is interesting to note that during the depression of 1921 there was an almost identical increase in the number of prisoners received into custody over the number for 1920.

Although the prison population last year was higher than it has been for a few years, it is satisfactory to observe that the general trend is downward. The number of prisoners committed to prison for the last few years has shown a steady declining tendency, and it is interesting to note that in 1929 the number of persons sentenced to imprisonment in New Zealand was 50 per cent. less per 10,000 of the general population than it was twenty-five years ago. The drop since the immediate pre-war years has been from 31 per 10,000 to 19 per 10,000 last year.