

The Medical Officer has made regular weekly visits, and he has also been very prompt in attending to any emergency calls. There has been no serious illness during the year, and the health of the prisoners has been generally good.

Generally speaking, the conduct of the prisoners has been good. No punishments were inflicted by the Visiting Justice during the year. One prisoner escaped from the train during his transfer from here. He was recaptured by the police after twenty-four hours liberty, during which time he had not committed any further crime.

A much appreciated change in the ration has been the addition of 2 oz. of butter per day for each man.

The introduction of a 42-hour week for the staff has resulted in a forty-hour (five-day) working-week for the prisoners. To enable this routine to be carried out without increasing the time that the prisoners have to spend in their cells, Saturday work has been discontinued. In order to provide recreational occupation for the men during their increased leisure hours a plot in the main exercise yard has been sown down in grass to enable them to play basket-ball, badminton, and other suitable games. Many of the men who, through physical disability, are unable to take part in action games spend a great deal of their idle time in the playing of draughts and chess in the yard during the week-ends.

We are indebted to the president and members of the New Plymouth Chess and Draughts Club for the interest they have manifested in coming to the prison one night every month to play these games in competition with the prisoners. These evenings have created a fresh interest in the minds of many prisoners, and must have a helpful influence over them.

Once a week a debate is held in which every man is encouraged to take part, and in this sphere, too, the New Plymouth Debating Society have been very helpful. Members of the society have taken the chair at many of the meetings, and occasionally the society has held debates at the prison.

Moving-pictures have also been shown, and lantern lectures given during the year.

With the assistance of Toc-H, Mr. G. Wigley, a member of the society, has introduced to prisoners interested in this class of work the art of modelling leather into various articles. About six prisoners have taken up this very interesting and useful hobby, and some very fine pieces of work have been produced. This work is done by the men while locked in their cells in the evenings, and must prove of untold value in occupying their minds beneficially during these hours.

Mrs. Eason has continued her active interest in the welfare of the prisoners, and her annual tea given at the end of the year is an event appreciated and anticipated by all the prisoners, and although the anticipation is great the realization is greater. One of the gratifying features of the event is the fact that many of the ex-prisoners, some of whom have even left New Zealand, remember it and send tokens of their appreciation.

The ministers of the different denominations continue to attend on Sundays, and the spiritual welfare of the prisoners is well-cared for.

We have been greatly assisted during the year by the Rev. F. Hart, an Anglican minister, who has given much time to coaching and conducting the prison band. With his help the band has been able to give many recitals, and when donations have been received with which to purchase new music, &c., the moneys have been banked in a trust account operated by Mr. Gilmour-Smith, J.P., and the Rev. Hart.

The thanks of the Department are also due to the many citizens who came along at different times so as to provide an audience for the prison concerts. Most of the performances are of sufficient merit to warrant the attendance and approbation of an audience, but some men are highly strung and nervous, and require the tactful demonstration of approval by an audience to help them overcome their nervousness.

#### PAPARUA PRISON.

(Superintendent, Mr. C. E. SPITTAL.)

On the 1st January, 1937, there were in custody 101 male prisoners. During the year the admissions totalled 473, while 486 were discharged or otherwise disposed of, thus leaving a total of 88 prisoners in custody at the end of the year. The greatest number in custody at any one time was 119, the least 77, the daily average being 96·8.

The health of the prisoners throughout the year was uniformly good, sickness being in the main confined to minor ailments and to epidemics of seasonal nature, such as colds. Regular hours of work mainly carried out in the open air, a well-balanced and adequate dietary scale, and ample rest and opportunity for relaxation are all factors which contributed towards a noticeable improvement in the health and general appearance of the prisoners after reception for disciplinary treatment, thereby enhancing the prospects of obtaining employment at suitable vocations upon release. The Medical Officer, Dr. A. C. Thomson, made regular visits to the institution, and in the course of his duties made periodical inspections of the cooking and of the sanitary arrangements, satisfactory reports being given in each case.

Cases of venereal disease treated during the year totalled 8, while in 4 cases prisoners were transferred to the control of the Mental Hospitals Department for appropriate treatment and care.

The conduct of prisoners throughout the year was very good, such breaches of the disciplinary regulations that did occur being mainly confined to offences of a more or less minor nature. In 8 cases the misdemeanants were dealt with by Visiting Justices, the remaining 10 cases being dealt with by myself. Three prisoners escaped during the year. Two of these escapees absconded together, but their period of liberty was comparatively brief, recapture being effected within a few hours from