

obey the rules. Punishments range from the reduction or loss of these privileges and the stoppage of daily pay, imposed by the Prison Superintendent, to bread and water and solitary confinement, imposed by a Justice of the Peace or Magistrate. Loss of privileges means much to a man engaged in the many activities found in prisons today, and in practice the new liberties have not degenerated into license. There have been fewer offences against prison officers, and on the whole the visiting Justice has been called on much less frequently than in the past. But for those who feel tempted to try their strength the solitary cell waits—a cheerless stone cubicle with a hard wooden pallet for a bed, without mattress or blankets during the day.

Prisoners return to the community either on remission of part of their sentence, when they are free from further supervision, or—on the recommendation of the Prisons Board—on licence, under the supervision of a Probation Officer and liable to recommittal if their behaviour is unsatisfactory. The main task of the Probation Officer is to help the discharged prisoner resettle in the community.

More and more pre-release work is being done with prisoners. Starting some time before discharge, this includes advice and assistance with employment. Prison Welfare Officers are doing most of this work in three institutions, and local Probation Officers in two others.

Welfare Officers were appointed at Waikeria and Invercargill some years ago, but the scope of their work was much narrower then than now, there was no real link between it and the work of the Probation Service, and they had little guidance on their duties. Now, both Welfare and Probation Officers are spending much more time on individuals' problems. For one thing, courts now ask more frequently for reports before sentencing offenders. If the development of pre-release work continues as the department hopes, it will soon be carried out in all institutions. This work, which is a development of the last few years, is closely related to post-release work. If, for example, a man released in Inver-

cargill is returning to Hamilton, the Probation Officer there will have a full report on him, and the released prisoner will know that the Probation Officer is there to help him, and that he has some idea what sort of man to expect.

A man just out of prison usually has four main problems—employment, accommodation, finance and association. Employers are frequently not very willing to give him work, though officers of the Justice Department believe people are becoming more open-minded about this. Helped by Probation Officers, they meet individuals and groups and do what they can to encourage a more humane attitude. A prisoner's future work is kept in mind throughout his sentence, and before his release the Welfare Officer or local Probation Officer talks to him, notes his wishes, judges his capabilities and takes his past associations into account. Then he tries to find employment within a man's capacity in a neighbourhood where he is unlikely to get mixed up with undesirable company.

Accommodation is not, of course, a problem peculiar to ex-prisoners, but it tends to be worse for them because so many of them have no real home life. Every effort is made to find suitable accommodation for released men and to keep them out of bad accommodation. Accommodation problems also affect association, for men will sometimes "team up" when they find it hard to get living quarters.

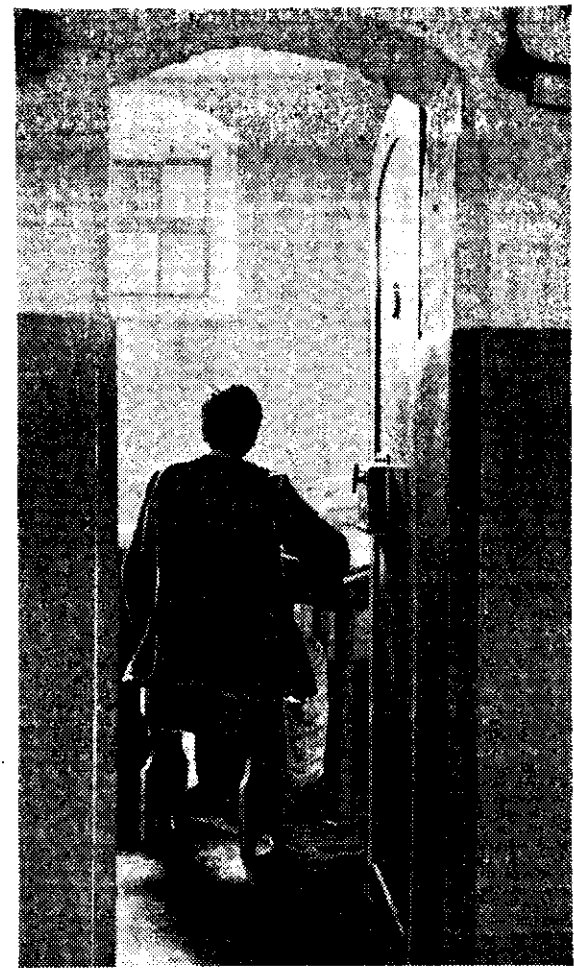
Finance is not as great a problem as it used to be, since 60 per cent. compulsory savings of prison wages should give most prisoners at least 3/6 a week savings. A long-sentence man should have up to £20 on release—enough for board for a week and perhaps some necessary clothes. If a prisoner is "hard up" on release and has no clothes he may be helped with clothes or (under a new scheme) a loan from the Probation Officer on a promise to repay at regular intervals.

In any prison policy much depends on the men who put it into effect, and re-

cently there has been a greater emphasis on selecting the right type of prison officer. There are still too few, but more applicants are coming forward, and incentives such as better uniforms and more houses and amenities are being offered. The Assistant Secretary for Justice (Prisons), Commander H. R. Sleeman, told *The Listener* that men selected as prison officers must have a sincere interest in the work—it mustn't be "just a job." Good versatile men of integrity, reasonable education and good physique were wanted. With more evening activity to supervise, a prison officer must be versatile and interested. He had found that ex-servicemen, who had a better idea of good discipline, made the best officers.

Training courses for prison officers were begun about three years ago at Mt. Crawford Prison under a specially selected Chief Officer. Every new entry officer takes a month's course as soon as possible after entry very many officers have had junior or near-senior courses, and courses for very senior officers are proposed. Mr. Sleeman described the training courses as "an undoubted success." Prison Superintendents also meet in Wellington fairly frequently to hear details and developments of prison policy, air differences and exchange views. All prison officers are encouraged to read and study, and they have the use of all the best books on modern penological practice and treatment.

The establishment of a National Prison Centre on the big estate at Waikeria is among major proposals for the future of the prison system in New Zealand. The Centre would include up to five institutions, from a maximum security prison replacing Mt. Eden to an open bungalow-type institution, as well as a women's borstal off the estate. These would be dispersed but still close enough to allow for greater co-ordination of effort. Administration, medical service, bakery and laundry would be centralised, and a full-time medical officer and chaplain would probably be appointed. All this would make for more economical staffing and

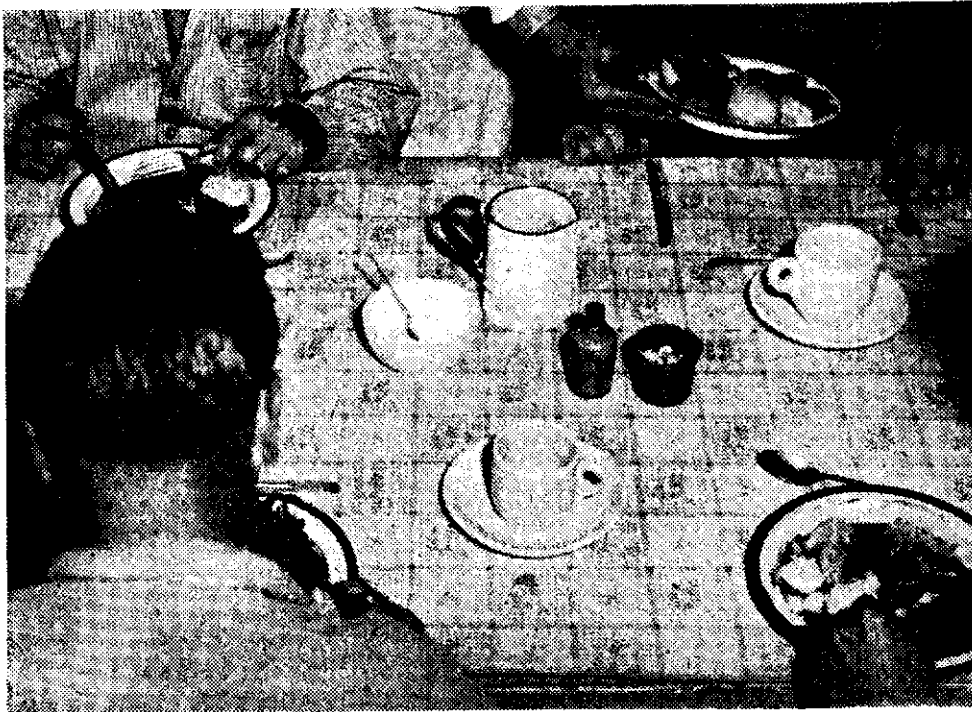


*Analogue Studios photograph*  
"Prisoners are still deprived of the greater part of their freedom"

better staff training, and allow for staff interchange and relief and for a much bigger body of men to become used to dealing with many different types of prisoner.

Proposals for the future treatment of prisoners show that an interest in reform goes hand in hand with a belief in the value of severity in Justice Department policy. In his last annual report the Secretary for Justice, S. T. Barnett, suggested that reformatory detention should in future give a corrective training for offenders up to 35 years of age who are comparatively inexperienced in crime, and that those sentenced to either borstal training or corrective detention should be imprisoned for an indefinite term with a maximum of three years. This would mean that a prisoner could be released just as soon as the Prisons Board decided he was again fit to take his place in the community.

For habitual offenders the report proposed a system of preventive detention—long fixed sentences—which it suggested would give the community fuller protection than the system of declaring offenders to be habitual criminals; and at the other end of the scale it put forward a plan for a detention centre for young offenders who are unlikely to respond to probation but do not need the long-term training of a borstal institution. There, it is thought, they might come to their senses under a short, sharp sentence—three months under a spartan regime with very few privileges.



THE EVENING MEAL at Wi Tako prison

*N.P.S. photograph*