

A/CONF.6/C.2/L.15

FIRST UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION
OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS
GENEVA 1955

OPEN INSTITUTIONS

OPEN INSTITUTIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

by Samuel T. Barnett,
Secretary for Justice,
Department of Justice of New Zealand, Wellington



UNITED NATIONS

Statements of fact in this report are the responsibility of the author, and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of organs or Members of the United Nations.

In accordance with the tradition of past Congresses, it has been possible to secure the co-operation of certain national prison administrations for the printing of documentation for the First United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, which is from an historical point of view the Thirteenth International Penal and Penitentiary Congress. Thus the present report has been generously printed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons of the United States of America, in the prison printing plant at Leavenworth, Kansas.

A/CONF.6/C.2/L.15

9 January 1955

OPEN INSTITUTIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

by Samuel T. Barnett,

Secretary for Justice,

Department of Justice of New Zealand, Wellington

1. At present there are in New Zealand two open institutions. A third is semi-open, but it is being established as a "Star" class prison and in the course of its development it will become progressively "open".
2. The open institutions are Tongariro Prison Farm (on the shores of Lake Taupo) and Waikune Prison Camp (National Park). Tongariro Prison Farm comprises two camps (Hautu and Rangipo) which are approximately ten miles apart by road but under the control of one Superintendent. At both institutions the men are accommodated in single huts arranged in the form of a square. The institutions are situated in the centre of the North Island and are approximately 30 miles from the nearest town of any size. The climatic conditions are rigorous, particularly in winter.
3. In selecting inmates for these institutions, their reliability and the risk of escape must primarily be considered. They are selected not on the basis of their crime but rather on the basis of a study of the individual, of their capacity for strenuous rural work and a belief that they will benefit from the open air conditions under a disciplinary system allowing for considerable trust and responsibility. Men who are serving a sentence of two years or under or who have served a portion of a longer sentence and can be regarded as good security risks are usually sent to these open institutions, but sometimes long sentence men who are near the end of their term are included. Because of the remoteness of the camp it is essential that the men should not require the attention of a physician or a dentist. They are not committed for any specific period, but are sent there to stay for the remainder of their sentence.
4. The supervising officers are encouraged to work with the men so far as is possible. Supervision is not as strict as in other institutions and it is often necessary to have men working in isolated areas with only occasional visits from their officers. The men are, of course, locked into their huts at night.

Because of the nature of the camps we will not tolerate attempts by individuals to disrupt harmony and inmates who are troublesome are immediately sent to security prisons.

5. Although a number of facilities are available, they are restricted, to some extent, by the nature and location of the institutions. There is communal dining and the dining-room is also available as a recreation hall. Sports and games are arranged internally but again, because of isolation, competition with outside teams is difficult. Hobbies are encouraged but there is always a problem in locating good and willing instructors in the vicinity of these institutions. At Waikune there is a part-time high school teacher who, for convenience's sake lives in the prison, but at Tongariro, school activities must be by correspondence, conducted by the national correspondence schools. A welfare officer, who will have the responsibility for welfare and pre-release work at Waikune and Tongariro, is to be appointed soon. He will be stationed at Waikune but will spend part of his time at Tongariro.

6. The following paragraphs give an idea of the size and industries of these institutions:

(a) *Waikune* has accommodations for 84 but normally receives between 60 and 70 offenders. The principal industries are quarrying and road work which are done for the Ministry of Works, and house building for prison officers. The men work in the quarries and on the road in small gangs and a number of them drive the trucks and tractors used for this work. There is also a small farm of 125 acres, comprising 56 head of cattle (including 42 dairy cows), 19 pigs and a vegetable garden. More land is shortly to be developed.

(b) *Tongariro Prison Farm* has accommodation for 95 inmates and normally receives 80 to 90. Attached to the institution is an area of 20,000 acres (mainly bush) of which 4,000 acres have been developed. On this land, there are 1,335 head of cattle (including 104 dairy cows and 334 breeding cows), 5,000 sheep (including 2,850 breeding ewes) and 180 pigs. In addition to running the farm and the elimination of a rabbit pest, the inmates are gradually developing large areas. There is also a very good vegetable garden. These institutions are, of course, largely self-contained as far as the supply of foodstuffs is concerned.

(c) It is difficult to provide special treatment for the inmates of these institutions because of remoteness and if any individual is likely to benefit from special treatment or special training, he is not usually sent to the open camps. We concentrate on sending to them those offenders who will benefit from the open air life, the somewhat strenuous farm work and the comparative freedom. It may be of interest to note that fifty inmates at Tongariro and twenty at Waikune work under very limited supervision. Results have been good. The prisoners sent to these institutions work hard and the number of escapes is remarkably low. At Waikune some ten prisoners drive trucks and vehicles on public roads and these inmates generally respond well to the trust placed in them.

7. *Wi Tako* is a semi-open institution. The inmates are housed in single cubicles within cell blocks. It is laid out in the form of a square with the buildings providing the outside walls. The administration block constitutes one side of the square.

8. *Wi Tako* is approximately twenty miles from Wellington, in a closely populated area, and is adjacent to a military camp. Attached to the institution is a 400 acre farm with 343 breeding calves, 123 head of cattle (including 75 dairy cows) and 400 pigs (including 38 breeding sows). The inmates sent there are first offenders, generally from 25 to 35 years of age, who are suitable subjects for reformation and rehabilitation, but long sentence prisoners sentenced for very serious types of crimes are excluded. Subject to good conduct, they are sent to *Wi Tako* for the entire period of their sentence. The supervision is similar to that at Waikune and Tongariro. There is no room for trouble-makers and if prisoners become difficult they are sent elsewhere and regard it as a privilege to be in this institution. The facilities vary between good and very good and are continually being improved. There is a full-time welfare officer who has the responsibility for welfare, recreation and pre-release work.

9. There are outdoor sports and games, debates, lectures on current affairs and other topics, and discussion groups. Whenever possible civilians are invited to lead the various groups. Work is available on the farm, the buildings, the new building of residences for officers and in the garden. There is a good workshop with wood-working machines and it is intended to

start a scheme which will provide for proper training in one or more trades. Under this scheme the aim is to provide a trade for selected prisoners who, because of their offences, will be unable to return to the profession or work which they followed prior to conviction, as well as for those who are likely to benefit from such training. Some treatment is available as the institution is close to a city which provides psychological services and psychiatric treatment. One of the discussion groups is led by the departmental psychologist who meets regularly with the group and uses the occasion to test their attitudes and reactions.

10. This institution is in the early stages of its development as a star class prison and it is not yet possible to measure results. It may be said, however, that the inmates are working well, that their morale is high, the number of escapes negligible, and that there is every indication that the final result will be satisfactory.

Résumé

Il existe actuellement en Nouvelle-Zélande deux établissements ouverts, *Tangariro Prison Camp*, d'une capacité de 95 détenus, et *Waikune Prison Camp*, d'une capacité de 84 détenus. Un troisième établissement, *Wi Tako*, à présent semi-ouvert, sera graduellement aménagé en établissement ouvert.

Les deux premiers de ces établissements sont situés dans des régions isolées. Les détenus y sont en général placés en raison non pas du crime qu'ils ont commis, mais plutôt de leur aptitude au travail agricole et du bénéfice qu'ils peuvent tirer d'un régime dans un tel établissement. Ils y sont d'habitude renvoyés pour le reste de la durée de leur sentence. Pendant la journée, la surveillance n'est naturellement pas aussi sévère qu'elle ne l'est dans d'autres établissements. Les détenus travaillent dans des fermes qui sont rattachées aux établissements, à la construction de routes ou à l'exploitation de carrières. La nuit, cependant, les détenus sont enfermés dans leurs cabanes. Un professeur de l'enseignement secondaire réside à Waikune et consacre une partie de son temps à l'instruction des détenus. A Tangariro, en revanche, toute l'instruction se fait au moyen de cours par correspondance. Il est prévu de nommer prochainement un assistant social qui résidera à Waikune, mais partagera son temps entre les deux établissements.

Wi Tako, auquel est rattaché une ferme de 400 acres, se trouve à environ vingt milles de Wellington. La plupart des détenus qui y sont renvoyés sont âgés de 25 à 35 ans, et sont des délinquants primaires dont on peut attendre la réadaptation. En plus de l'exploitation agricole, l'établissement possède notamment un bon atelier de menuiserie. Wi Tako dispose d'un assistant social à temps complet. En raison de la proximité relative d'une grande ville, il est possible de pourvoir dans une certaine mesure à un traitement psychologique et psychiatrique des détenus.

This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at CJSmithphd@comcast.net or Emil Wandzilak at emil.wandzilak@unodc.org.