

be successfully carried out, it is considered advisable that the larger prisons should be inspected quarterly, if possible, or at least three times a year, and the smaller ones half-yearly.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

A reference to Table L shows that 51 persons were placed upon probation last year as against 72 in 1891. Of these, 22 satisfactorily carried out the conditions of their licenses, and were discharged; 3 were rearrested and committed to prison, 26 still remaining under the supervision of the Probation Officers, completing their respective terms of probation.

The amount of costs ordered to be paid by the various Courts before whom these offenders were brought was £212 7s. 1d., of which sum £63 17s. 7d. has been actually paid, and the remainder (the greater part of which is not yet due) is being paid by instalments. The approximate cost of keeping these offenders, had they been sent to prison, would have been £1,260, which, together with the amount of costs actually paid, gives a saving of £1,323 17s. 7d. to the colony.

Of the 499 persons placed on probation since the Act came into force in October, 1886, 420 have been discharged after satisfactorily carrying out the terms of their licenses, 25 were rearrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, 2 have died, 11 have eluded the vigilance of the Probation Officer and absconded, and 41 still remain on probation. From these facts it may be gathered that the Probation Officers continue to carry out their duties conscientiously and fearlessly, with tact and discretion. In all respects this most valuable statute is working most satisfactorily, and has saved many a trivial offender from becoming a confirmed criminal.

I have, &c.,

A. HUME, Inspector of Prisons.
