

NATIONALITY OF OFFENDERS

The following table covering the receptions over the past eight years, classified on a nationality basis, shows a continued increase in the number of Maori offenders. There has been an increase in the number of young Maori girls committed to prison and Borstal as a result of their association with servicemen.

Year.	New-Zealand-born (excluding Maoris).	Maoris.	British and Foreign.	Total.
1943	1,401	523	558	2,482
1942	1,880	450	699	3,029
1941	1,402	346	621	2,369
1940	1,257	330	614	2,201
1939	1,427	310	768	2,505
1938	1,248	252	724	2,224
1937	1,383	257	351	1,991
1936	1,022	199	569	1,790

AGE OF OFFENDERS

Hereunder is set out a table showing for the past eight years the number of offenders classified in age groups. The steady increase in the number received into prison and Borstal under the age of twenty is disquieting. As by far the great majority of the 354 in this group committed in 1943 made their debut to Borstal or prison that year, their swelling ranks would seem to point to the need for greater emphasis on preventive measures before incarceration, rather than on corrective measures afterwards. In the existing state of affairs no effort can be spared if it is designed to convert a State liability into an asset. The Department strives to implement a reclamative policy, especially with regard to young offenders, and it can claim to do so with a fair measure of success, the number who relapse into crime after release from Borstal being only approximately 18 per cent. In so far as the young women committed to Borstal are concerned, even a lesser percentage again appear before the Courts, but notwithstanding these satisfactory results, if greater attention were given to prevention and to causative factors, the most potent of which are a lack of wholesome parental care and early discipline and lack of moral and spiritual guidance, the initial problem, if not reduced to the sporadic cases of mental defect, might at least be brought within dimensions that would reflect more creditably upon our social standards. It has been truly said that the extent of crime, especially among the youth of a community, mirrors the state of the civilization in its setting.

Age Group.	1936.	1937.	1938.	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.	1943.
Under 20	96	115	123	178	203	201	308	354
20-25	185	303	362	424	348	478	749	639
25-30	254	282	321	413	322	405	531	396
30-40	437	456	555	612	492	533	709	490
40 and upwards	715	831	861	875	833	745	732	603
Not stated	3	4	2	3	3	7	..	..
Totals	1,790	1,991	2,224	2,505	2,201	2,369	3,029	2,482

MISCELLANEOUS

Deaths.—There were 4 deaths recorded during the year—2 from pneumonia, 1 from heart-disease, and 1 from peritonitis.

Escapes.—During the year 9 prisoners and 32 Borstal detainees escaped from custody. All were recaptured. Of the 32 Borstal escapees, 21 absconded from the Point Halswell Borstal Institution. This large number of escapes was mainly due to the lack of facilities for employment and to the close proximity of a military encampment and its distracting influence. The early prospect of a shift to the new institution nearing completion at Tawa Flat (Arohata Borstal) is a source of great comfort to a much-harassed staff. The new institution will provide better facilities for diversified employment and training of inmates.

Borstal Receptions.—A total of 175 male and 37 female Borstal detainees were received direct from the Courts, while 3 males and 1 female were transferred from Child Welfare institutions. Two males were transferred from reformatory to Borstal.

Mental Defectives.—An aggregate of 20 persons were transferred to mental hospitals from prisons and Borsstals during the year—2 under section 34 of the Mental Defectives Act, 1911, 4 under section 37, and 14 after sentence under section 38.

HEALTH OF PRISONERS

The general health of prisoners throughout the year has been good. The daily average number on the sick-list was 24, representing 2.9 per cent. of the daily average number of prisoners in custody. Under the ordered conditions of living and the simple wholesome diet prisoners almost invariably improve in physical condition during their period of detention. The allowance of butter, sugar, and tea has been reduced to bring it into conformity with the ration allotted to the civil population, but with regard to meat, on account of the general limitation