

129. The Number of Defaulters dealt With.—Up to the 31st March, 1946, 803 defaulters have been dealt with in the detention camps. These have been disposed of as indicated hereunder:

Remaining in the camps at 31st March, 1946	132
Detained in prison at 31st March, 1946	26
Transferred to Armed Forces (of their own volition)	69
Specially released on medical or compassionate parole	23
Transferred to mental hospitals (5), less 1 deceased and 2 discharged	2
Escapees still at large	11
Discharged medical Grade IV	23
Discharged for special reasons	3
Released on parole by Revision Authority	283
Temporarily released under Regulation 44A (5) (b), being over age, medically down-graded, or in detention over four years	226
Deceased	5

Table 12 is an analysis of all persons who have passed through defaulters' detention camps.

130. The Conditions of Defaulters' Detention.—In accordance with the regulations, defaulters were detained "in such place of detention and under such conditions as the Minister from time to time thinks fit." The conditions of detention were not as severe as those which necessarily apply to established penal institutions, but the camps were designed to be substantially less attractive than Army life, and certainly not open to the inference that defaulters' detention provided an attractive alternative to those who refused military service. Possibly the most valuable result of the detention camps has been their deterrent effect upon others. Within the regulations the detention of defaulters proceeded during the year in accordance with the following principles, which were established at the beginning of the detention scheme: (a) segregation, (b) useful occupation, (c) strict discipline, and (d) provision of social amenities providing for an orderly community maintaining the essentials of decent healthy living and mental and physical occupation.

131. The work performed by defaulters in detention at times has been compared more than favourably with that performed by normal paid labour. In other instances it has not been so good. It was found on experience that work involving individual interest and creative activity speeded up the tempo and output of the inmates' efforts. While the work performed by defaulters in the camps has not been arduous, it has, in some instances, been performed in remote places and involved the normal effort of field, farm, and forest employment. A large proportion of the inmates of the clerical and sedentary types were quite unsuitable and not readily adaptable to the manual work they were required to perform. Defaulters received a maximum of 2s. 6d. per day, representing industry and good conduct marks.

132. There have been no serious accidents during the year, and only two or three minor ones, while the incidence of physical illness carrying any degree of seriousness has not exceeded 7 per cent. of the total inmate personnel of the camps. It was found, therefore, that, physically, most of the men during the year were standing up well to the conditions of detention, but in the morale aspects there were indications of progressive deterioration in some cases. This was doubtless due to the irksomeness of the detention restraints (notwithstanding the parole system introduced in the previous year), the continued indeterminate nature of the sentence, and the tendency on the part of many of the inmates to magnify their troubles out of all proportion to reality.

133. The conduct of the inmates during the year was generally good. The majority of the defaulters in detention responded to the disciplinary requirements quite of their own volition. At times, led by men of the recalcitrant type, some joined in expressions of protest against their continued detention, while others sought to slow down the work. At no time, however, did these mass efforts reach serious proportions.