

although in some cases the restrictions on liberty may be irksome, they are imposed not so much as punishment as with the object of assisting the probationer in habituating himself to a more ordered and disciplined mode of living. Right living is largely a matter of acquiring good habits.

Probation best serves the community when it deflects an incipient criminal trend towards a more socially desirable course of conduct. To obtain this objective it is necessary for the Probation Officer to gain the co-operation of the probationer. Probation is not a general panacea that can be applied indiscriminately, nor are the beneficial results entirely derived through the force of authority. The system calls for a play of personality upon personality involving careful study and great patience on the part of the Probation Officer. The probationer himself must evince a desire to change his ways, and, under the benign influence and suggestions from the Probation Officer, in the majority of cases success is achieved.

The conditions under which a probationer is released are exacting. He must report once a month or less if the Probation Officer so prescribes; he must not change his address without leave; if he moves to another district, he must report to the Probation Officer of that district; he must take up approved employment; he must be of good behaviour and not associate with criminals or any forbidden person. In addition, he must comply with any special conditions applied by the Court—for example, if drink is a contributory factor he is frequently required to take out a prohibition order.

The probation system affords an opportunity for public-spirited persons to assist in the reclamation of persons who have fallen by the wayside. Several years ago a system of voluntary Committees was arranged and the Department had some 300 voluntary helpers who undertook to befriend, assist, and shepherd probationers. This proved an invaluable help when unemployment hampered the rehabilitation of the probationer. In recent years the Employment Officers and officers of the National Service Department have effectively co-operated in the placing of probationers in employment. The Committees were also largely engaged in various forms of war work. Steps are being taken to revive the interests of these voluntary workers, and it is of interest to note that last year at Christchurch a Voluntary Rehabilitation Committee was re-established at the instance of Mr. Justice Northcroft, and at Wellington the Voluntary Probation Committee is being revived. The various Prisoners' Aid Societies always work helpfully in close liaison with the Probation Officers.

PAROLE

This group comprises persons released on license after serving a term of imprisonment or Borstal detention, as distinct from those admitted to probation by the Courts. The statistics show that 498 persons were released on probation during the year on the recommendation of the Prisons Board. During the year 14 were recommitted to detention for breaches of their licenses, and 27, including 5 habitual criminals, had their licenses cancelled for further offences. Considering the obvious handicaps which beset a person under the stigma of having been imprisoned in re-establishing himself in the community, the small percentage of failures must be regarded as very satisfactory. The effectiveness of the method of supervision and after-care (and also of the in-care reformatory influences) may be judged from the fact that during the five years ended 31st December last 1,745 persons (excluding habitual criminals) were released on probation, and during that period 173, or 9.8 per cent., were returned to prison for failing to comply with the conditions of their license or for other offences whilst on license and only 25.1 per cent. have again been convicted subsequent to discharge.

STAFF

During the year Mr. J. Anderson, who functioned as Probation Officer at Auckland for ten years and as Assistant Probation Officer for several years prior to that, retired on superannuation. Mr. Anderson commenced his career in the Prison service. His sympathetic understanding of offenders and his common-sense approach to matters