

Invercargill Borstal.—This institution is for younger lads than those detained at Waikeria, the ages being from fifteen to twenty. The purpose—i.e., “training and discipline”—is identical, the aim being to develop the lads into self-reliant members of society. The curriculum at Invercargill embraces a wider range of cultural activities than is practicable at Waikeria, the nearness to the city making it easier to arrange for the services of people competent and willing to take special classes, &c.

The usual school classes are held, and also special classes are taken by experts in wool-classing, agriculture, singing, and music. The Borstal choir has given acceptable programmes over the air and to public audiences in the city for patriotic and other purposes. Special instructors on the staff take classes and teach the lads in artisan trades such as carpentering, blacksmithing, painting, signwriting, bootmaking, &c. A Housemaster with special experience in youth work was recently appointed to assist in co-ordinating the reclamative activities of the institution. The House Matron, who was away for a time during the war, has resumed duty and fulfils a useful function in assisting in the socializing work of the institution.

Arohata Borstal.—This is the only Borstal for young women in New Zealand and was designed and equipped for a Borstal when it became necessary during the war to vacate the Point Halswell institution. The underlying principles of management are similar to those of the young men's institution, subject to the necessary modifications on account of the sex of the inmates.

The Arohata institution is fortunate in having a very earnest body of voluntary workers who co-operate with the staff in catering for the well-being and after-care of the inmates. The main industrial activities are domestic work, sewing, and laundering, a considerable volume of work under the latter two headings being done for other State Departments.

General.—The Department in the planning of its activities and scheme of treatment of prisoners does not claim to have discovered any panacea for wrongdoing. Long experience shows that any cure must come from within a prisoner himself. Unless he is prepared to co-operate, to take advantage of the opportunities afforded, and to strive to mend his ways himself, the Department cannot prevent him from joining the ranks of the recidivists. As is pointed out by Dr. Dale, a prison teacher, “with many of the prisoners their ideology is erroneous and founded on wrong premises”—the result of fantasy rather than factuality. The purpose of the Department is to provide stabilizing influences which will conduce to a more socially desirable pattern of life.

The results in general may be regarded as satisfactory. The efficacy of the methods employed is evidenced by the fact that less than 25 per cent. of persons sentenced to reformative detention or substantial terms of imprisonment offend again after release by the Prisons Board. The Borstal scheme, though given statutory recognition by the Prevention of Crime Act in 1924, was conceived a few years earlier and has been modified and developed over the years since 1921, and between this date and 1945 less than 20 per cent. of those who have passed through the three institutions have appeared before the Courts to face a subsequent charge.

STAFF

In my report last year I adverted to the difficult position which existed through shortage of staff and to the heavy strain that was being imposed on officers, who have been unable to take their recreational leave. The Public Service Commissioner has been most helpful in an endeavour to secure staff and has recently improved the salary scale for disciplinary officers. There have been a few accessions as a result, but there are still a number of vacancies.