

Length of Sentence.—Hereunder is set out a table showing in comparative form the lengths of sentences imposed on offenders :—

Term of Sentence.	Number of Prisoners.				
	1942.	1943.	1944.	1945.	1946.
Under one month	552	430	367	364	425
One month and under three months ..	1,283	824	627	639	753
Three months and under six months ..	398	421	327	318	274
Six months and under twelve months	206	241	189	197	203
One year and under three years ..	444	475	456	449	458
Three years and under five years ..	98	60	78	64	79
Five years and over	48	31	31	18	15
Indefinite (including " defaulters ") ..	..	..	24	26	6
Totals	3,029	2,482	2,099	2,065	2,213

It will be observed that just over 50 per cent. of the total number of distinct persons sentenced to imprisonment were given terms of three months or less, and that 65 per cent. received less than six months. It is estimated that 30 per cent. of the total receptions are what may be described as petty recidivists who are not readily responsive to reformatory influences and who are frequently in and out of prison. They constitute a nuisance factor, and many of them because of their indolence and irresponsible nature might well, in their own interests and for the protection of society, be declared to be habitual offenders. It is clear that in these cases short sentences serve little purpose. Time is an essential element in bringing to bear any stabilizing influence and in inculcating habits of industry.

The table also reveals a gradual lessening of the number of sentences of five years or more. Over the past five years there has been an inclination to greater leniency than was the case in earlier times. The general statistics do not indicate that this has borne untoward results, and this may partly be ascribed to the more intensive industrial and reclamative policy of penal administration.

Nationality of Offenders.—The following table shows the prisoners receiving during the year, grouped on a nationality basis :—

Year	New-Zealand-born (excluding Maoris).	Maoris.	British and Foreign.	Total.
1946	1,006	422	785	2,213
1945	1,109	430	526	2,065
1944	1,105	553	441	2,099
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

It is interesting to note that both the number of New-Zealand-born Europeans and Maoris have lessened slightly, although the proportion of Maori prisoners to the Europeans is still substantially out of relation to their ratio to the general population. The increased number of British and foreign-born prisoners is due, as already stated, to the seamen who appear to have found this country more attractive than the places from whence they came.