

WAIKERIA BORSTAL INSTITUTION (TE AWAMUTU)

(Superintendent : Mr. P. McMillan)

On the 1st January, 1946, there were in custody 58 Borstal inmates, and 41 were received during the year. The number of inmates released on probationary licence was 45, on expiration of sentence 6, on special remission 1, and 2 were transferees to other institutions, thus leaving 45 in custody on 31st December, 1947.

In the reformatory section there were in custody at the beginning of the year 72 inmates, and 121 were received during the year. Of these, 104 were either discharged on completion of sentence or released on remission or on probationary licence, 15 were transferred to other institutions, and 1 absconded and has not yet been retaken, the total in custody at the end of the year being 73.

Many minor breaches of discipline have, as usual, occurred during the past year, and these have been dealt with as required either by myself where the offence is only of a minor nature, or by the Visiting Justice or the Visiting Committee. I am pleased to be able to say that, in the main the offences committed were mostly of a minor nature. The impression one gains from these acts is that they reflect to a great degree a lack of decent upbringing and probably lack of parental control. It is also pleasing to say that while the acts may be repeated more than once by the same individual, as soon as it is realized that there is no intention to relax the discipline imposed, in many cases there is an almost immediate improvement in conduct which is maintained until release. If the lesson learned is retained by only a percentage of the inmates who pass through this institution, then it can rightly be said that the work being carried out is of great benefit. The Visiting Justice and members of the Visiting Committee were available always as required, and I am deeply indebted to them for their good services. The institution and the Department suffered a great loss during the year through the death of Mr. S. Clark, J.P., who had only recently been appointed to the position of Visiting Justice. The late Mr. Clark was a man of sound judgment and was always ready to lend assistance in any cause for the betterment of Waikeria.

During the year there were four escapes, involving five persons. One escapee has so far not been recaptured, but the others were retaken within a short period. The record of the institution in the matter of these escapes must be considered a good one, and it says much for the appreciation of the trust placed in many of the inmates. As mentioned in a previous report, these acts have a most disturbing influence on the others. Except in one case, where the intention was to endeavour to get closer to a wife who was in ill health, no definite reason can be given for these happenings, and I do not consider that because of them any alteration in the present method should be made, or that there should be any tightening up in control or additional supervision given.

As usual we had, in season, the usual run of influenza and other minor complaints, but there have been no serious illnesses of a general nature. In the reformatory section 25 inmates were laid up for a total of 439 days, 2 inmates accounting for 217 days of this time. In the Borstal sector 15 inmates were laid up for a total of 135 days, and here 4 inmates accounted for 74 days of those quoted. Where necessary, and on the advice of the medical officer, inmates are admitted to the Waikato Hospital. I must again pay tribute to the medical officer, Dr. J. B. W. Robertson, who has been most painstaking and sympathetic in his care of the inmates. One inmate was sent to Waikato Hospital for observation as a poliomyelitis suspect. He was later returned to the institution on the tests proving negative. The dental work necessary has again been capably carried out by Mr. W. Mackenzie.