

The ready co-operation of the Mental Hospitals Department has resulted in the Board being furnished whenever required with specialist reports on prisoners and inmates. These reports are of very valuable assistance to the Board in its deliberations. All inmates are examined by the Prison Medical Officers soon after their admission, and in any instance where the Medical Officer, the prison officials, or the Board at any time consider psychiatric treatment or advice would be beneficial, this is arranged.

The Board is also indebted to the various organizations and the many public-spirited citizens who give such splendid honorary service in the after-care of offenders. The friendly oversight, provision of suitable homes and/or employment, in certain difficult cases, are all-important factors in their rehabilitation.

The number of cases considered by the Board during 1947 was 1,047, or 6 more than the previous year; while the number in which the Board recommended a remission of sentence increased from 546 to 590.

If the 1947 statistics are compared with those of former reports it will be seen that the percentage of offenders who evidently make good has been maintained. Of the total number released on the recommendation of the Board after serving terms of Borstal detention and sentences of reformatory detention or hard labour, approximately 23 per cent. only have been reconvicted or failed to comply with the conditions of their release, while of the habitual criminals paroled since the Board was constituted in 1910, 59 per cent. have been returned to prison for non-compliance with the conditions of release or for further offences. Four persons who had proved their worthiness over a period of years in the community were recommended for complete discharge from the declaration as habitual criminal during the year.

In terms of the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, 13 probationers, as compared with 15 in the previous year, applied to the Board for respite from the conditions of their probation, on the grounds that they had complied with those exacting conditions over a long period and had become law-abiding citizens. Discharge was granted to 11 petitioners, and 2 applications were declined.

GENERAL

Since the Board commenced to function in 1911 no less than 35,867 cases have been considered by it. This includes prisoners undergoing sentences of reformatory detention, hard labour, habitual criminals, Borstal inmates, and probationers for discharge from probation or variation of terms thereof. Dealing with these cases under the particular headings, the results have been as follows:—

Reformatory Detention.—During the period from January, 1911, to December, 1947, 6,734 prisoners were sentenced to reformatory detention under the provisions of the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910. The number of cases that have been recommended for release or discharge is 5,480. In 725 cases prisoners were required to serve the full sentence imposed by the Court. Of the total number released after undergoing reformatory detention, 25·42 per cent. have been returned to prison either for non-compliance with the conditions of the release or for committing further offences, leaving approximately 75 per cent. who have not been convicted of any further offence.

Hard Labour.—Since the passing of the Statute Law Amendment Act, 1917, which extended the scope of the Prisons Board to the consideration of cases of prisoners sentenced to terms of imprisonment involving hard labour, 8,385 cases have been considered by the Board up to December, 1947. In 4,215 cases the prisoners were released on probation or discharged prior to expiry of the full time on the recommendation of the Board. Of this number, 2,774 completed probation satisfactorily, 299 were recommitted for other offences, and 65 were still reporting on probation at the 31st December, 1947, making approximately 67 per cent. who have not subsequently been reconvicted.