

Each year the number of persons admitted to probation shows a steady increase, and those connected with the work alone know the great amount of thought and care exercised before a person is admitted to probation. The psychiatrist now plays a very important part in the final decision arrived at in many cases, and the uncertainty as to whether or not a person should be admitted to probation is eliminated to a great degree. The thanks of this office are due to Dr. Buchanan, Superintendent of the Avondale Mental Hospital, and his assistants for the very valuable service they are rendering.

Early in the year the Honorary Probation Committee was reformed after having ceased to function during the last years of the war. The Committee is representative of the church and a wide variety of public interests. The Committee is under the chairmanship of Mr. J. H. Luxford, S.M., and meets monthly. Each committeeman has the care and oversight of a number of adolescent probationers, not specially selected, but representing a fair cross-section of those admitted to probation by the Courts as well as those released on licence from Borstals and reformatories. The gentlemen constituting the Committee are most enthusiastic, and their efforts have met with good success. My thanks are due to them for the time and thought that they have put into the work.

I again wish to place on record my thanks for the assistance received from the Rev. D. Caswell, of the City Mission; the Rev. Geo. Moreton, Secretary of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society; Mr. M. Curran, of the Catholic Youth Centre; the Maori Welfare Officers; officers of the various Salvation Army institutions; members of the Police Force in Auckland, also police officers in other parts of the Auckland Province who act as Probation Officers and have co-operated with this office to the fullest extent; and all those Government officials whose help and co-operation has been so essential in carrying out this important work.

In conclusion, I desire to express my keen appreciation of the kindly and understanding treatment accorded me by the Judges of the Supreme Court and the local Magistrates.

Mr. W. H. DARBY, District Probation Officer, Christchurch

So far as the Offenders Probation Act is concerned, its operation in this district has had the beneficial effect of saving again quite a number of first offenders from a prison sentence and given them a fresh start in life.

Altogether 63 were admitted to probation from the local Courts, and, in the main, most of them have responded well and settled down to steady work. As far as Christchurch is concerned, there has been a fairly considerable increase in the number transferred from other districts, and the same applies to the number transferred from this district. This movement is quite in keeping with the trend of things to-day, a restlessness prevails which is hard to explain.

The number transferred from other districts was 70, and that transferred out 59, 129 all told; 2 probationers left New Zealand, and 14 appeared before the Courts on charges of breach of probation or were sentenced on fresh charges; 49 completed their periods of probation, leaving 82 reporting at the close of the year.

The amount of restitution collected was £368 17s., and costs, £29 19s. 8d.

Under the Crimes Amendment Act we had reporting at 1st January, 1947, 32, and at 31st December, 21. During the year 21 were transferred from other districts and 34 transferred to other districts, 40 were released from prisons and 10 from Borstal institutions; 38 completed their terms on licence, 1 left New Zealand with the J Force, 1 died, and 8 were sentenced on fresh charges.