

in the receptions during 1947 are 442 ship-deserters, which number again unduly swells the aggregate for the year. The total number of persons received in 1947 was lower than the figure for 1942 and 1943, and it may be said that, subject to occasional minor fluctuations, the general trend since 1914 has been downward. The ratio of prisoners to each 10,000 of the total population of the Dominion in 1914 was 31·05, and in 1947 it was 13·04.

Nature of Offences.—The following table gives a comparative summary of the offences classified under three main groupings—that is, offences against the person, offences against property, and miscellaneous offences :—

Year.	Offences against the Person.	Offences against Property.	Miscellaneous Offences.	Total.
1947	264	1,049	1,038	2,351
1946	221	974	1,018	2,213
1945	226	985	854	2,065
1944	218	947	934	2,099
1943	239	1,060	1,183	2,482
1942	309	969	1,751	3,029
1941	249	781	1,339	2,369
1940	238	789	1,174	2,201
1939	238	777	1,490	2,505
1938	197	740	1,287	2,224

The number of offences against the person increased by 43, and approximately half of this increase was due to the number of sexual offences being slightly higher than during the previous year. It will also be noted that the number of offences against property has risen. Additional cases of theft, and breaking, entering, &c., largely accounts for the increase. When regard is had to the high wages and full employment conditions prevailing it is clear that the cause of crime lies more in aberrant-ethical conduct than from the pressure of any real need or economic want, a condition which reflects adversely on, and seems to suggest something amiss in respect of, social and moral attitudes. Although most of the repeaters are of the facile type who are easily led astray, only a small percentage of criminal conduct could properly be ascribed to mental impairment to a degree that the offender should not be held accountable. "Faulty early training is the root cause of crime," is the recent dictum of Dr. Roper, an English authority. The cause would seem to be much wider in its social implications. The Superintendent of the Invercargill Borstal, in analysing the cause of delinquency amongst youths, states :—

. . . the major underlying factor is undoubtedly unsatisfactory home and family circumstances . . . High wages, unsettled economic conditions, the ease of finding new jobs are probably also contributing factors.

The consummation of happiness of a community cannot be attained to solely by the amelioration of economic conditions such as the raising of wages and living standards, &c., due regard must be had to the spiritual factors, particularly goodness and honesty. These should be inculcated in the young, and preferably in the home. Prisons at best are probably the least fitted for undertaking this delicate task, for only in a negative way does the application of sanctions, designed to impress on an offender that crime does not pay, operate. In other words, the adoption of the old adage regarding "fences and the ambulance" would diminish the inflow of prisoners and assist in resolving much of the crime problem.