

The recession in the number of Maori offenders shown in last year's report was not maintained, although the number is still substantially down on the peak years during the war.

The Superintendent of the Invercargill Borstal writes :—

The number of Maoris admitted seems rather out of proportion to the population, but the cause is somewhat obscure ; it may be the drift to the cities, unsettled circumstances, or even maladjustment to our civilization. We find them amenable to discipline and good at their work if they are placed on the right jobs. Poor home conditions are frequently noticed in their case histories.

Dr. Dale, the Schoolmaster at Mount Eden Prison, commenting on the cause of Maoris being involved in crime, writes :—

One is forced to the conclusion that the breakdown of Native village life, the demand for labour in the cities, and the lack of care for the Maori migrant to factories and shops have some part to play in the misdemeanours which bring the Maori within the grip of the law. Is this purely a sociological problem for the Justice Department ? I suggest that, while it is partly that of the prison to do its best to put these men back into civilian life without too much bruising, other institutions have a part to bear in helping to adjust the many maladjusted migrants to the cities and smaller centres of population. Nor can youth be blamed for the crime problem. Many Maori prisoners are no longer young ; some have had experience with the Forces, but it is still safe to say that most of them are immature—immature from the point of view of experience in a pakeha community. Personal experience has shown that an inadequate appreciation of language, together with an ingrained aversion to looking foolish in a pakeha group, has led many a Maori along the path that finishes in prison. The problem is one that affects the school, but it is not solely the problem of the school. Rather, it is suggested, it is a problem that affects, and should be the concern of, many of our social organizations. The school is trying to do its part in facing and assisting to clear up the problem which society presents.

Age of Offenders.—Hereunder is set out a ten year table showing offenders classified in age-groups :—

Age-group.	1938.	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.	1943.	1944.	1945.	1946.	1947.
Under 20 ..	123	178	203	201	308	354	283	254	294	244
20-25 ..	362	424	348	478	749	639	506	524	698	713
25-30 ..	321	413	322	405	531	396	354	343	341	441
30-40 ..	555	612	492	533	709	490	461	470	412	486
40 and upwards	861	875	833	745	732	603	495	473	468	466
Not stated ..	2	3	3	7	..	..	..	1	..	1
Totals ..	2,224	2,505	2,201	2,369	3,029	2,482	2,099	2,065	2,213	2,351

It is interesting to note the trend in recent years as contrasted with the beginning of the decade and earlier years, is for the younger offenders to predominate. Hitherto by far the larger amount of criminality was amongst those round about forty and over. Crime to-day seems to manifest itself more among the young larrikin, round about twenty-five years and under.

MISCELLANEOUS

Deaths.—There were 3 deaths recorded during 1947, 1 from a ruptured aneurism, 1 from toxæmia, and 1 from fracture of the skull, the result of an accident.

Escapes.—During the year 32 prisoners and 23 Borstal detainees (9 from Arohata) escaped from custody. Four of the escapees (all prisoners) have not yet been recaptured. One made his way to Australia, where he committed further offences and was sentenced to a substantial term of imprisonment.

Mental Defectives.—A total of 29 persons were transferred from prisons and Borsitals to the various mental hospitals—3 under section 34 of the Mental Defectives Act, 10 under section 37, and 16 under section 38.