

AROHATA BORSTAL INSTITUTION

(Superintendent : Miss D. FAIRWEATHER)

On 1st January, 1947, 19 inmates were in custody in the institution. During the year 26 were received and 27 discharged or otherwise dealt with, thus leaving 18 in custody on 31st December, 1947. Of the 27 discharged, 16 were released on licence, 2 released under section 16, 8 transferred to other institutions, and 1 transferred to a mental hospital. Of the 8 transferred to other institutions, 6 had previously served sentences in the institution, and, as far as age and influence were concerned, they were considered quite unsuitable for Borstal training.

In the reformatory section there were no inmates at the beginning of the year, but 22 were received during the twelve months, and the same number discharged—4 on the expiration of sentence, 4 debtors, 13 transferred to other institutions or handed to the police, and 1 transferred to a mental hospital.

The health of inmates was good, the main cause of minor illness being colds. On admission the majority of girls are lacking in vitality and physical fitness, but with a balanced diet, adequate recreation, constructive work in restful surroundings, the response in mental and physical alertness is noticeable. Three inmates were admitted to public hospital for periods varying from three to twenty days for observation and treatment. There were five admissions to Bethany Maternity Hospital, each case necessitating regular visits to the ante-natal clinic. Five inmates were successfully treated for V.D. at the institution clinic. All inmates were thoroughly examined on admission by the medical officer, and tests taken by Sister Christian, of the Wellington Hospital, and all necessary treatment promptly carried out. Special attention was given to the condition of inmates' teeth, and, where required, the work of extractions, fillings, and dentures was attended to by the visiting dental surgeon.

A study of the case-histories of the inmates received during the year gives an interesting picture of their experience prior to admission. Eleven had already served a period of Borstal detention, 8 had been on probation, while 14 had previous convictions. Several are included more than once in these figures, having been subjected to more than one type of care and correction before admission. Four inmates were transferred from the Girls' Training Centre at Burwood. Eight were committed for theft, 3 for breach of probation, 2 returned to the institution after cancellation of probationary licence, 7 for being idle and disorderly, 1 for leaving a place of isolation without authority, and 1 for housebreaking.

The majority come from homes where conditions are far from satisfactory, broken homes and inadequate parental control being the general rule. In addition, most of the inmates have a poor work-history, having changed from job to job and proved ineffective workers. Very few have had satisfying recreational outlets or interests, or any connection with clubs or organizations designed to take an interest in the welfare of youth.

Twelve of the inmates admitted were Maoris, but they fit in very readily to the routine and discipline of the institution. Most of them have drifted from the country to the centres of population where there is no lack of work at good wages, but housing difficulties, little preparation for city life, insecurity, and restlessness all have a tendency to breed delinquency.

On the whole, the standard of behaviour was good, very few proving unresponsive to the usual institution programme. There were five escapes involving 10 inmates—1 inmate making three escapes and 2 others escaping twice. Where the programme is based on the essential system of trust, escapes are to be expected, especially in the early stages after admission, when some find it difficult to settle down after their experience of self-will and unbalanced freedom.