

was sentenced to six months. These are typical of many cases where it would have been more effective to have sent the case on to the Supreme Court for it to have considered the matter of declaring the prisoner to be an "habitual offender."

Take the case of "H," aged sixty-four, with sixteen previous convictions for offences of a homo-sexual nature. On appearing before the Court recently on four charges of indecent assault on males, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, notwithstanding that he had already served longer terms. This is a clear case of psychopathic perversion, and for the protection of boys an indeterminate sentence as an habitual criminal would seem to have been a more appropriate way of dealing with the case.

In the treatment of all offenders there are two interests to be considered—that of the offender and that of the community. The reconciliation of both may sometimes be impossible, but the welfare of society must in all cases be the paramount objective. This is where the judicious selection of the form of penalty comes in. If a penalty can be imposed which will be salutary in its effect and at the same time avoid the infliction of any psychic weal which will impair the offender as a citizen, the law will have been vindicated, and an asset retrieved instead of an embittered offender becoming a liability on the State.

The primary purpose of a constructive penal sanction is neither the imposition of punishment nor the exacting of retribution, but the protection of society. And apart from the protection of the community, the interest of the prisoners themselves is involved. There is no doubt that many prisoners are unable, or unwilling, to conform to a socially acceptable pattern of behaviour, and there are some who are less unhappy in the well-ordered security of a prison than in following the precarious and checkered existence of a social misfit.

Nationality of Offenders.—The following table shows the prisoners, grouped on a nationality basis, received into prison during each of the past ten years :—

Year.	New-Zealand-born (excluding Maoris).	Maoris.	British and Foreign.	Total.
1948	1,077	347	757	2,181
1947	1,078	446	827	2,351
1946	1,006	422	785	2,213
1945	1,109	430	526	2,065
1944	1,105	553	441	2,099
1943	1,401	523	558	2,482
1942	1,880	450	699	3,029
1941	1,402	346	621	2,369
1940	1,257	330	614	2,201
1939	1,427	310	768	2,505

Whilst the figures under each heading have lessened, the most noticeable reduction is the number of Maoris committed to prison during 1948 as compared with the previous six years ; nonetheless, it is still to be noted that the Maoris in prison at the end of 1948 constituted 20.88 per cent. of the total number of persons in prison, whereas the percentage of Maoris to the general population of the Dominion was only 6 per cent.

As the result of concern last year at the higher incidence of Maori offenders, the Department arranged for a closer working liaison with Maori Welfare Officers, and it has now been arranged that on the release of a Maori prisoner the Welfare Officer of the place to which the man returns is notified and required to interest himself in the prisoner's rehabilitation. This, coupled with the quickened interest of Maori councils, probably has a bearing on the lessened number of commitments during the past year, though it is yet too early to speak conclusively on this aspect.