

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

Age-group.	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.	1943.	1944.	1945.	1946.	1947.	1948.
Under 20 ..	178	203	201	308	354	283	254	294	244	190
20-25..	424	348	478	749	639	506	524	698	713	628
25-30..	413	322	405	531	396	354	343	341	441	428
30-40..	612	492	533	709	490	461	470	412	486	445
40 and upwards	875	833	745	732	603	495	473	468	466	489
Not stated ..	3	3	7	..	..	..	1	..	1	1
Totals ..	2,505	2,201	2,369	3,029	2,482	2,099	2,065	2,213	2,351	2,181

Apart from the reduction in the total receptions during 1948, and the lesser number in each age-group as compared with the previous year, the most satisfactory feature is the decrease in the number of young offenders sentenced to imprisonment. Since the war years, up till last year, the number of offenders under twenty-five years of age had shown an upward trend, whereas prior to this the highest incidence of crime was amongst those round about forty and over, and last year this was again the position.

MISCELLANEOUS

There were 2 deaths, both the result of accidents at one of the camps, recorded during 1948.

Escapes.—During the year, 35 prisoners and 18 Borstal detainees escaped from custody. All of these were recaptured.

Mental Defectives.—A total of 26 persons was transferred from prisons and Borstals to the various mental hospitals, 9 for observation under section 37, and 17 under section 38.

Borstal Reception.—A total of 95 males and 11 females were committed direct to Borstal by the Courts, and 2 were transferred from Child Welfare institutions.

Courts-martial.—Five prisoners sentenced by military courts-martial were received into prison during the year.

GENERAL HEALTH OF PRISONERS

The general health of prisoners has been good. The medical officers throughout have been regular in their attention to prisoners, as also have been the dentists. Where dental treatment has been necessary for a prisoner's health, the Department has anticipated his earnings when he has not been sufficiently in credit and has provided the cost of dentures, recouping later, but leaving the prisoner sufficient funds for his release.

There were 93 males and 8 females admitted to the public hospitals or prison infirmaries during the year. The daily average on the sick-list throughout all institutions was 20.22, which is approximately 2 per cent. of the total number in custody. In the majority of instances the sickness was due to the poor physical condition of prisoners on admission. There is a low incidence of sickness amongst prisoners generally, and this may be ascribed to the orderly routine and the simple, well-balanced, and wholesome diet. It is a notable fact that prisoners generally leave prison in a much better physical condition than when they enter.