

to the Prison, which is lit throughout by this means, as is also the officer's cottage. The town water-supply has been laid to the Prison. This work necessitated the laying of 7,000 ft. of 2 in. water-pipe, and the building of two concrete reservoirs of 6,000 and 31,000 gallons respectively. A pump and electric motor has also been installed. The whole of the trees planted on the hills three years ago have been weeded and 25,000 additional trees planted. The whole of the trees are doing well, and in the course of a few years should transform the appearance of the surrounding hills.

During the year the excavated area has been considerably extended, some 40,000 cubic yards of clay having been moved.

The Defence wharf at Mahanga Bay has had an extension built on, and the old portion has been scraped and tarred. The approach to the wharf at Shelly Bay has been repaired, and strengthened by a new fence and wall. A new high-pressure fire-extinguishing plant has been installed at the Prison. All of the above works were carried out by prison labour under the supervision of prison officers.

FIRST OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT.

EXTRACTS FROM PROBATION OFFICERS' REPORTS.

AUCKLAND.

This report covers the period from the date of my appointment in July, 1915, to the 31st March, 1917.

My appointment was, I believe, the first of its kind in New Zealand, for until then the work under the First Offenders' Probation Act had always been carried on by either the Gaoler of the district or a senior police officer.

Results have, I think, more than proved the wisdom of your Department in separating this branch of work from gaol and police officials; but it must be fully recognized that the hearty and active co-operation of these officials is an important factor in the administration of the Act, and I fully recognize and acknowledge my indebtedness to the Gaoler and the police of Auckland for the valuable assistance they have rendered.

For the purpose of clearness I shall deal in this report with probation work under the following: (1) Investigating the antecedents of accused persons, reporting to Court, and making recommendations; (2) first offenders' probation; (3) informal probation; (4) comments in general.

Investigating the Antecedents of Accused Persons, reporting to Court, and making Recommendations.

This work often entails a great deal of unrecorded effort and time that cannot be seen or realized. In many cases dealt with large numbers of people have had to be interviewed before your officer was able to form an estimate of all the circumstances of the case in order to give the Court a specific statement with recommendations thereon.

The importance of this department cannot be overestimated, for it is the foundation of all future effort in assisting the youthful offender to reform, and upon it depends in a large measure the success or failure of the leniency and benefits of probation.

The Auckland Judges and Magistrates have given your officer much encouragement and strength in his efforts in this department, and their sympathy and support in the work of reforming young offenders and thus preventing them from becoming criminals has proved a strong contributing factor in the success of probation in Auckland.

First Offenders' Probation.

When I took over the books from Mr. Ironside in July, 1915, there were nine probationers on the register with uncompleted terms. Since then and up to the 31st March, 1917, there were 100 probationers placed under my charge by the Supreme and Magistrates' Courts at Auckland. Of this total of 109 the following analysis is interesting: Fifteen have enlisted for active service, two have absconded, and five have broken probation and been sentenced to imprisonment, the percentage of failures being 6.42. Taking the failures individually, we find that (1) was a half-caste Chinese youth from Sydney with an unknown history, but who was given a chance because of his youth. He was so clever that he passed himself off as a Maori, and actually served as a soldier in the Narrow Neck Camp without his nationality being discovered (for some time at least). When placed on probation he was sent to a good farmer, with whom he was getting on well and giving satisfaction when he suddenly absconded. The money he had earned but not lifted was sufficient to cover advances made to him for travelling-expenses. (2) A returned soldier, suffering from shell-shock, absconded after satisfactorily serving several months of his twelve months' term. In this case the accused apparently got away in another Reinforcement draft. I made no charge against him, and did not have him gazetted for arrest. (3) A deserted wife. Husband had got away to the front and left no allotment in her favour. Ill health, worry, and drink especially caused the forfeiture of her probation. (4) A deaf man who was so under the mastery of drink that he should never have got probation. While drunk he attempted rape, and received a sentence of imprisonment. (5) A "black sheep" of a highly respectable family. Laziness the root cause of his failure. (6) A youth of seventeen years—a spoiled boy who had never been taught self-control and who rebelled against the necessary discipline imposed upon him by probation, and was therefore taken by your officer to Court and received a sentence of reformatory detention. This course was not adopted before he was given several chances to respond to kindness and leniency.