

I must further note the fact that the past year stands out as a record one for the district so far as placing people upon probation is concerned. This does not imply an increase in crime, but rather suggests that more use is made of the Probation Act to create a new hope in the man or woman who comes before the Courts.

I again repeat, the young person who gets the benefit of probation should be put on a lengthy, not a short, term, thus giving the Probation Officer the right to make a recommendation to the authorities for the remission of part of the sentence if the conduct of the probationer is decidedly good. This I am sure would be an encouragement to the person concerned to do his best to get his complete liberty.

The strong point of my work lies largely in getting to the homes of the probationer. I find that the parents and friends are pleased to meet me, and this means their assistance, which results in good; at all events I find it so here in Dunedin.

MR. A. McLEAN, INVERCARGILL.

I beg to report that during the year fourteen first-offender probationers were received—four from the Supreme Court, nine from the Magistrate's Court, and one on transfer from another district. Two were on the register at the beginning of the year, making a total of sixteen dealt with. The periods of probation were three for three years, three for two years, four for one year, one for eighteen months, and two for six months. Seven were transferred to other districts, two completed their probation satisfactorily, and seven remained under my charge at the close of the year. Orders were made for restitution in seven cases—two by the Supreme Court and five by the Magistrate's Court—amounting to £60 7s.; and costs of prosecution in five cases—four by the Supreme Court and one by the Magistrate's Court—to the amount of £57 6s. 4d. The amounts collected during the year were—restitution money, £61 13s.; and costs of prosecution, £3 16s. 4d. It is gratifying to record there were no failures.

The friendly feeling which has subsisted between probationers and their Probationer Officer was well maintained. Probationers were visited at their homes, and on various occasions parents were interviewed and conferred with on matters concerning the welfare of youthful probationers. By securing the confidence of probationers opportunities were presented to give direction to their activities by personal effort and by suggestion and counsel, at the same time giving due consideration to natural ability and temperament. The year's work was satisfactory, and the time, thought, and personal effort given in forwarding the welfare of probationers fully justified by the results. Probation is disciplinary, and the probationer is taught to regulate his life in accordance with the conditions imposed, and he is trained in self-control by being subject to control.

MR. T. P. MILLS, WELLINGTON.

There were seventeen offenders on the register at the beginning of the year, forty were placed on probation and eleven were transferred from other districts, sixty-eight in all passing through my hands during the year. Five completed the period of their probation satisfactorily, twenty-one were transferred to other districts, four left the Dominion with the Expeditionary Forces, three received sentences of imprisonment, leaving thirty-five on the register at the 31st March, 1919.

Two only of those imprisoned lapsed into criminal ways; the third refused to obey orders as a conscientious objector in camp, and was sentenced at a Court-martial. The first two were both mental weaklings, and may never reform.

In quite a number of cases under review men whose characters have not been altogether unblemished have been extended probation. This certainly increases the task of supervision, but on the whole the Courts' leniency has been amply justified, for in a period extending over almost three years there have been only two distinct cases of failure, the total number passing through my hands being 116.

Outside those who have been granted probation, there are over thirty on my lists who have been convicted and ordered to come up for sentence when called upon, and placed under my supervision. Only one of these has lapsed into criminal ways, thus emphasizing the advantages of extending the benefits of the probationary system.