

My duties included attendance at each session of the Supreme Court, and daily attendance at the Police Court. In connection with the latter my duties brought me in touch with thirty-seven juvenile offenders dealt with by the Juvenile Court. This number is suggestive, and gives emphasis to the reference in a recent annual Prisons Report to the necessity for a Department or central organization for the purpose of checking the anti-social tendencies of the rising generation, and to deal with juvenile delinquents. The condition seems to indicate the absence of moral consciousness, and suggests that there is a lack of home teaching arising from the want of a sense of responsibility to the children on the part of some parents.

The friendly relations subsisting between your officer and parents and relatives of probationers were fully maintained, and conduced to the success of the year's operations.

I desire to acknowledge the courtesy and assistance extended to me throughout the year by departmental, Court, and police officials.

MR. T. P. WILLS, WELLINGTON.

There were fifty-two offenders on the register at the beginning of the year; fifty-three were placed on probation (within the scope of the Act), and twenty were transferred from other districts, 125 in all passing through my hands during the year. Twenty-eight completed the period of their probation satisfactorily, twenty-eight were transferred to other districts, one left the Dominion, three were imprisoned, leaving sixty-five on the register at the 31st March, 1921.

The conduct of probationers has been generally satisfactory. Of the 125 persons dealt with only two have been failures; another was imprisoned for several offences committed prior to the one on which he was granted probation. There were two others who were brought before the Court for breaches of their probation (failing to report). The period of one was extended twelve months, which has proved very salutary; the other received one month's imprisonment, but since his release his conduct has been fairly satisfactory only.

Of those who have passed through my hands during the year sixty were between the ages of sixteen and twenty, thirty-six between twenty-one and thirty, twenty-one between thirty-one and forty, and eight over forty. There were 103 without any settled occupation, which adds to what has been often stressed in relation to crime generally—the need of every youth learning some trade. It is not the young tradesman or the skilled workman that contributes to the criminal population to any extent.

There has been hardly sufficient time to state definitely the benefits that may have accrued from the new Act, except to say that in quite a number of instances where imprisonment would have been imposed under the First Offenders' Probation Act, 1908, release under probation has now been made possible. This has, of course, given the Court power to consider cases on their merits, and to give a chance to extend leniency where there is a possibility of reform without prison punishment. Very frequently imprisonment confirms rather than reforms. Probation with wise conditions is certainly irksome to some, and is in itself a form of punishment obviating the need of being herded with criminals or with criminals in the making.

The humane provisions of the present Act in one case at least have been most encouraging. A man with two previous convictions, when he was fined in each instance, came before the Court on a third offence. The Court, after some hesitation, granted him probation. He is now, after a few months, proving one of the most satisfactory on my register. He is steeling himself against his old associates, is in constant employment, and is endeavouring in a very earnest way to establish himself in decent society.

OFFENDERS' PROBATION ACT, 1920.

AGES AND TERMS OF OFFENDERS PLACED ON PROBATION DURING 1920.

Ages, in Years.				Four Months and under.	Six Months.	Twelve Months.	Fifteen Months.	Eighteen Months.	Two Years.	Three Years.	Four Years.	Total.
10 and under 15	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	1	1	..	4
15 " 20	..	..	..	..	4	36	..	1	46	25	..	112
20 " 25	..	..	..	..	3	31	..	..	17	21	..	72
25 " 30	..	..	..	..	3	8	..	1	10	6	1	29
30 " 40	..	..	..	..	1	9	..	..	10	4	..	24
40 " 50	..	..	..	..	2	10	..	..	6	3	..	21
50 " 70	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	2
Totals	..	..	..	..	14	96	..	2	90	61	1	264

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