

eight satisfactorily concluded their terms of probation, one was removed by death, and there were seven remaining on the register at the end of the year. Orders were made for the payment of costs of prosecution amounting to £77 4s. 10d., and for restitution amounting to £66 7s. 6d. A total of £24 8s. 8d. (costs of prosecution £14 7s. 2d., and restitution £10 1s. 6d.) was collected and disposed of in the ordinary way. The principle of restitution is good, and is of special value to youths. It enforces the practice of economy and corrects extravagant habits; by it a probationer is taught one of the primary principles of justice and honesty towards those whom he has wronged. Even without an order of the Court a willingness on the part of a probationer to make good the damage done or loss sustained would evidence a desire to reform.

It is gratifying again to record that there were no failures. Where there was laxity in the observance of the conditions of release a personal interview and friendly counsel secured the desired result. The probationary system is demonstrating its power and value as a preventive and reformatory agent by its success. While cases are met with where offenders expect probation as a right, it is recognized that probation is an alternative to imprisonment, to be extended to offenders who may reasonably be expected to reform without punishment by imprisonment. The reformation of the individual is the first consideration. Though offenders, with or without previous convictions, released on probation are spared the loss of reputation and position imprisonment entails, and though prison life is not conducive to the display of the best side of character, in cases where the benefits of the Offenders Probation Act cannot be extended it should be recognized that sentencing especially youthful offenders to periods of reformatory detention is really only placing them under institutional control. The several institutions under the control of the Prisons Department are far removed from the old-time prisons system, and provide for the discipline, moral, mental, and physical instruction of beginners in crime. Surrounded by helpful influences—instruction, order, cleanliness in person and speech, authority, and discipline—often altogether absent in former mode of life—the individual is given every opportunity to reform, and cannot fail to benefit in some measure from a period of institutional control. The measure of reform is not to be estimated from visible results alone.

In the course of my duties as general Probation Officer there are always a number of probationers under my supervision who have served periods of reformatory detention under the Crimes Amendment Act, and it is interesting to note the ready manner in which these obey instructions and respond to personal effort on their behalf. This, to my mind, demonstrates that they have learned obedience to authority and the respect for law and order which is the basis of good citizenship. Many probationers under the Offenders Probation Act have to learn this primary step in the pathway to reformation. It is interesting also to note the effect probation has in correcting roving, thriftless, and extravagant habits, the result of uncontrolled and more or less primitive impulsiveness. My experience throughout the years has been that one result of extending the provisions of the Offenders Probation Act to youthful offenders is a decided improvement in life and conduct, even though in some cases the reformation desired has not been realized to the fullest extent. That there will be failures is obvious and perhaps natural, but the failures do not detract from the value of the probationary system.

My duties throughout the year included attendance at the quarterly sessions of the Supreme Court and daily attendance at the Magistrate's Court, and furnishing reports on accused or convicted persons as required. In this connection I desire to acknowledge the courtesy extended to me by departmental, Court, and police authorities and officials. The reception accorded me by parents and relatives when making inquiries and when visiting probationers was always friendly.

Under the Crimes Amendment Act there were nine probationers under my supervision at the beginning of the year, and six were received during the year. Five satisfactorily concluded their periods of probation, three were transferred to other districts, one was returned to custody, and there were six remaining on the register at the end of the year. It is pleasing to record that probationers under this Act settle down to work with a good will, and some remain with the same employer during their term of probation and after.

REV. O. BLUNDELL, PROBATION OFFICER, NEW PLYMOUTH.

I beg to report that fifteen probationers were placed in my charge during the year. Of these, nine have been transferred to other stations, three completed their term of probation, and three are still reporting to me. I am satisfied that the three now discharged (all young men) made definite efforts to "make good." I am hopeful that in the case of each the experience has had a salutary effect upon their lives. The three still in my charge are satisfactorily conducting themselves.

I find that when the cases are young or really first offenders they are glad to seize the opportunity given to them to "make good," and to escape the depraving effects of an experience in gaol: these give satisfaction; but with others who are older or are old offenders the probation appears to be regarded as merely an easy let-off.

MR. T. P. MILLS, WELLINGTON.

There were sixty-five offenders on the register at the beginning of the year, seventy-one were placed on probation, twenty-seven were transferred from other districts, 163 in all passing through my hands during the year. Thirty-two completed the period of probation satisfactorily; four were discharged by the Prisons Board; forty-six were transferred to other districts; two left the Dominion permanently; nine were imprisoned for subsequent offences; two were sentenced on their original charges, having made no effort to comply with the terms of their probation; leaving sixty-eight on the register at the 31st March, 1922.