

During the year ten were prosecuted for breaches of the conditions of their probation and were suitably dealt with by the Court. The widening of the provisions of the First Offenders Probation Act has allowed the Courts room to experiment, and several with previous convictions or otherwise only fairly satisfactory characters have been released on probation. In fact, some who were undergoing sentences of imprisonment for minor offences were granted probation on much more serious charges. One offender who had three charges against him for false pretences was released on probation although he had only been out of prison for two years, having served an eighteen-months sentence for misappropriation of moneys.

It will be noticed that although the number of imprisonments for subsequent offences is not very great there is an increase over the previous year's very low percentage. There have been several contributing causes. Very doubtful cases were given the benefit of a doubt; new arrivals who were quite unknown to the police soon showed their real character after their release on probation by continuing their offences. Altogether the year has been a busy one, and though it is not to be expected that there will be a much smaller percentage than the average every effort is being made to reduce the lapses to a minimum.

Of the 163 cases dealt with, 40 per cent. were under the age of twenty-one years, and only five out of the seventy-one new entrants were qualified tradesmen. The numbers of transfers to and from Wellington were seventy-three, due principally to the difficulty of obtaining employment, a factor that adds to the work of effectively handling these men.

So far I think the provisions of the present Act are more than justified. The percentage of failures, even in doubtful cases, is small, and the Court is given wider discretion in dealing with the criminal or incipient criminal, who becomes more the subject of inquiry than the offence. Justice can be administered without the application of hard-and-fast rules, each case being considered on its own merits.

AGES AND TERMS OF OFFENDERS PLACED ON PROBATION DURING 1921.

Ages, in Years.			Four Months and under.	Six Months.	Twelve Months.	Fifteen Months.	Eighteen Months.	Two Years.	Three Years.	Four Years.	Five Years.	Total.
10 and under	15	..	1	2	4	..	..	1	..	..	2	10
15	20	..	..	4	71	..	1	70	35	3	2	186
20	25	..	..	11	57	..	1	51	29	3	4	156
25	30	..	..	3	22	..	1	31	20	2	2	81
30	40	..	..	5	29	..	..	25	21	1	4	85
40	50	..	..	2	18	..	..	6	12	..	2	40
50	70	..	..	..	8	..	2	6	..	..	1	17
Totals			1	27	209	..	5	190	117	9	17	575

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