

1922.
NEW ZEALAND.

OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920
(REPORT ON OPERATIONS OF) FOR THE YEAR 1921-22.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE to His Excellency the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.
MY LORD, - Wellington, 1st September, 1922.
I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Chief Probation Officer on the operations of the Offenders Probation Act for the year 1921-22.
I have, &c.,
E. P. LEE,
Minister of Justice.

The CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER to the Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE.
SIR,— Office of the Chief Probation Officer, Wellington, 31st August, 1922.
I have the honour to submit my annual report and the reports of the honorary Probation Officers on the working of the adult probation system of the Dominion for the year ending 31st March last.
Until the presentation of my last year's report the operations under the First Offenders Probation Act of 1886 (consolidated 1908) were dealt with as a section of the annual Prisons Report, but the passing of the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, so enlarged the scope of the probation system that it became necessary to publish an independent report in order that the work of this important branch of my Department should receive the attention it merited. When the 1921 report was written the new Act had been in force for only seven months. It was therefore impossible to make any definite comparison between the figures under the old and new systems. We have now, however, been working under the new Act for twenty months, and have the Statistician's figures for the full calendar year 1921. We are thus enabled to arrive at a conclusion as to the extent to which the Courts have availed themselves of the discretion given them to grant probation to all classes of offenders whether previously convicted or not. The table below indicates clearly the increase in the number of offenders placed upon probation during the first full year under the amending Act, compared with the last twelve months under the old Act.

NUMBER OF OFFENDERS PLACED ON PROBATION, SHOWING PERIODS OF PROBATION.

				Four Months.	Six Months.	Twelve Months.	Fifteen Months.	Eighteen Months.	Two Years.	Three Years.	Four Years.	Five Years.	Total.
1921	..	..	..	1	27	209	..	5	190	117	9	17	575
1920	..	..	..	..	14	96	..	2	90	61	1	..	264
Increase, 1921 over 1920				1	13	113	..	3	100	56	8	17	311

From the foregoing table it will be seen that the number of persons placed on probation under the new Act is 117·8 per cent. greater than under the original Act. This appears to indicate that the

wider discretion given to the Courts was appreciated both by Judges and Magistrates, as enabling them to vary to a greater extent than was previously possible the treatment to be applied in the various cases coming before them. In other words, it permitted a nearer approach to the "individualization of punishment" than under the former more rigid conditions.

All the Probation Officers report most favourably on the results of the enlarged system, and it is abundantly clear from our own experience, and that of other administrations in England, the United States, and elsewhere, that a liberal system of probation wisely and carefully administered is one of the greatest reformatory and preventive agents in existence. I say "wisely and carefully administered" advisedly, because, unless a wise discretion is exercised in the selection of offenders to be granted probation, and the greatest care and firmness characterizes the treatment of the probationers by the Probation Officers, the system will be abused and its good effect largely nullified. The New York State Probation Commission in its last year's report makes the following statement in regard to this question :—

"The Commission has always urged that too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the need for careful discrimination in the use of probation, based on a thorough investigation and knowledge of the previous record in each case. The Commission has never advocated, and never will advocate, probation as a cure-all or as a treatment to be applied even once in every case. Some offenders should never be placed on probation; others may wisely be given more than one chance. The individual good judgment of the Court and the Probation Officers must decide. . . . The method is most successful when applied to a large class of so-called 'accidental' offenders, and others not inherently criminal but with delinquent tendencies exaggerated by improper environment and association. With this class of delinquents, which far outnumbers the professional kind, probation succeeds in the vast majority of cases, when applied as a real system of discipline and helpfulness."

In this country, as in others, there are many persons, both among the general public and even among those engaged in the administration of the criminal law, who assert that imprisonment is the only proper and adequate method of dealing with law-breakers; but that is not the opinion of Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, K.C.B., Chairman of the Prison Commission for England and Wales, who, in his work "The English Prison System," makes the following statement :—

"This is the meaning of the 'individualization of punishment'—it is quite consistent with a firm administration of penal justice, but it destroys for ever the old classical idea of the 'abstract type of criminal.' In other words, *justice demands that the old formula of 'imprisonment with or without hard labour,' indiscriminately applied, shall no longer be held to satisfy all her claims.* The reaction against this so-called *dosimétrie pénale*—i.e., the abstract conception of crime and the mechanical application of punishment 'according to code,' is a growing force. It is marked in the United States of America by the universal adoption of the 'indeterminate sentence,' and on the Continent of Europe by various decrees for conditional conviction and liberation which find their place in the latest penal codes. In England and America, probation; in France and Belgium, the *sursis à l'exécution de la peine*—all mark the reluctance to resort to fixed penalties when justice can be satisfied by other means."

From the quotations I have given it is apparent that the efficacy of probation as a "treatment" to be applied in proper cases is well established, at all events, in the majority of English-speaking countries.

As pioneers in the system we are justified, after thirty-four years' experience of its beneficial effects, in extending its scope as we have done. It now remains for those engaged in the administration of the Act to see that the privileges granted under it are not abused, and that offenders who endeavour to take undue advantage of those privileges are firmly and drastically dealt with, both as a means of disciplining the individual offender and as a warning to others.

DEPARTMENTAL AND GENERAL.

Provision having been made under the 1920 Act for the appointment of persons "of either sex" as Probation Officers, four ladies were appointed—one in each centre—to supervise the female probationers. This departure from the older system, under which we had power only to appoint male Probation Officers, has worked out very satisfactorily.

In view of the large increase in the volume of probation work due to the passing of the new Act it became necessary to appoint a Deputy Chief Probation Officer to assist at headquarters. The appointment was conferred upon Mr. D. A. Mackintosh, Chief Clerk of the Prisons Department, who is now the sectional head of the Probation Branch.

During the year we lost the services of one of our most enthusiastic and hardworking honorary Probation Officers in the person of the Rev. F. R. Jeffreys, of Auckland, under whose able and sympathetic management in the northern city district the system has been built up and consolidated. Mr. Jeffreys's loss will be severely felt not only by the Department, of which he was a highly valued and efficient honorary officer, but by the probationers, to whom he was guide, philosopher, and friend for so many years. Mr. Jeffreys has been succeeded by Mr. W. J. Campbell, of the Auckland Magistrates' Court staff.

The restitution-money and Court costs collected from probationers for the year ended the 31st December, 1921, amounted to £2,210. This, added to the figures quoted in last year's report, gives a total sum of £13,027 obtained from probationers since the passing of the First Offenders Probation Act in 1886.

CHAS. E. MATTHEWS, Chief Probation Officer.

OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920, AND GENERAL PROBATION.

REPORTS OF HONORARY PROBATION OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1922.

REV. F. R. JEFFREYS, GENERAL PROBATION OFFICER, AUCKLAND.

I HAVE pleasure in submitting the annual report of the probation work I have carried on during the year ended 31st March, 1922.

The operation of the Probation Act, 1920, and the various amendments to the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, have greatly increased the scope of probation generally, and, while this increase has made heavy demands upon your officers, there is no doubt whatever that the results obtained have been of incalculable value to the community.

I submit a summary of figures which are proof of the wisdom of our Legislature in widening the operations of probation. As I act as Probation Officer in Auckland to probationers under the Offenders Probation Act and also to those released on probation from prisons I shall report on the two branches of work separately, and for the purpose of clearness and simplicity shall hereafter refer to those admitted to probation under the Offenders Probation Act on conviction at Courts as "Court probationers" and prisoners released on probation from prisons and institutions under the Crimes Amendment Act as "prison probationers."

Court Probationers (granted probation under the terms of the Offenders Probation Act, 1920).—At the close of the year ended 31st March, 1921, I had 113 probationers still remaining under my care; this easily constituted a record. During the past year I received from the Auckland Courts a total of 125 probationers, for the following periods: two for six months, twenty-six for twelve months, forty-two for two years, forty-two for three years, four for four years, nine for five years; and added to this number I received forty-six probationers on transfer from other districts, making a total of 144 for the year. Of this number ten failed to "make good," and were punished in various ways. A failure of less than 7 per cent. is surely remarkable when one considers the complex circumstances and variety of human frailty of this large body of youthful delinquents. During the year forty-six were transferred to other districts, a large number completed their terms, and at the close of March, 1922, 135 remained under my care.

Court orders made for the collection of moneys from probationers placed under my care by the Auckland Courts during the year amounted to £1,352 19s. 9d.; restitution of money stolen, £1,036 17s. 10d.; costs of prosecution, £316 1s. 11d. I collected and banked £427 4s. 2d. for restitution, and duly paid that sum to claimants; and £189 10s. 9d. for costs of prosecutions. It must be remembered that it sometimes takes many months for probationers' payments by instalments to clear their responsibility.

As in past years, I desire to emphasize the discipline and reform that is accomplished by making delinquents repay from their own earnings what they have wrongfully obtained. This purely material aspect of the whole question has been greatly influenced by the prevailing financial stress; and when it is remembered that securing work for convicted offenders is most difficult, and that many are out of work for a long time, the results secured are all the more creditable for the probationers.

I would like to stress the fact that far too little is being done to help on this great work of assisting the weaker and erring members of society. There should be a permanent appropriation to provide funds for assisting Probation Officers to carry on this work. At present no financial assistance is provided by the State. I constantly take probationers from the Courts who have no home to go to, no friends to keep them, generally regarded with suspicion and distrust, and the problem is how to put them on their feet and give them a start. The only fund I can draw upon to help these cases is the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. This society, while fulfilling a most important function in the community, and working quietly and strongly, is, however, heavily handicapped for want of funds. At the present time I am nearly £50 overdrawn on this fund. If Probation Officers were provided with a small sum of money to give probationers a start, many could be given a helping hand. The money would be recoverable, and the country would be more than repaid.

Even more than in previous years I have felt the great responsibility attached to the preparation of the antecedent reports of accused persons. For a long time past there was not any definite sentencing-day at the Auckland Supreme Court. The resident Judge was so overworked that opportunities had to be seized when prisoners could be dealt with. No one could ever tell a prisoner or his relatives just when sentence would be passed. Very often a visiting Judge would deal with a large batch of prisoners on a Saturday morning, the congested state of Court work making any other time impossible. In the case of prisoners who were admitted to probation this proved a most unsatisfactory arrangement. For example, one Saturday morning about thirteen men were sentenced, and seven were admitted to probation. After 1 o'clock I found myself with these seven men on my hands. It was rather an interesting contrast to notice the prison van with its complement of warders returning with its small batch of handcuffed prisoners, while the Probation Officer had to deal with the larger number. All business had stopped in the city for the week-end. Several of these men were from country districts in the province and had no homes, and no friends to help them. Board and lodging had to be found and provided for them (the Government has never given any assistance in this direction), but of course it was impossible to secure them work late on Saturday afternoon. The work involved in securing the necessary accommodation, however, was not my real trouble; but the thought of the temptations increased

by idleness during the week-end was a matter for real concern. This anxiety can readily be understood when numbers of these men are victims of drink and laziness. I placed the whole matter before the resident Judge, and he readily grasped the difficulty, and agreed that in future there should be a regular sentencing-day in the middle of the week, when all prisoners who had pleaded guilty in the Lower Court could be dealt with. Thus it came about that every second Wednesday at 10 a.m. the sentencing of prisoners takes precedence over all other business.

The Offenders Probation Act, 1920, provides that all reports must be in writing; and, while this entails more work, it is more satisfactory than the method I had hitherto adopted of making verbal reports in Court. In order to facilitate the business of the Court I have consistently provided the Crown Solicitor with a copy of the report submitted to the Judge. My purpose in drawing attention to the large number of prisoners dealt with is to emphasize the importance of and responsibility attaching to the Probation Officer's report. Obviously Judges require all the help they can get in dealing with the difficult problems of complex frailties of human nature. Those only who are familiar with Court work can have even a small conception of a Judge's difficult and responsible duty in sentencing prisoners. Naturally, and quite properly, counsel for the defence do all that is possible to secure as lenient treatment as possible for their clients and urge everything possible in mitigation of an offence. On the other hand, and just as naturally, the police want the criminal who has caused them endless trouble, and society great loss, to receive sufficient deterring discipline to bring him to his senses. Thus it comes about that the Probation Officer's duty is analogous to that of an arbitrator, and his report must be an absolutely impartial statement.

Before sentencing-day your officer is often inundated with relatives and friends of accused persons. Experience has taught that the greatest possible use can be made of the numerous representations that are thus made. Careful sifting of facts from various sources is often the best index of the character of an accused person. It often happens that a report containing a recommendation in a few short sentences is the outcome of much careful observation and analysing. In this work I am greatly indebted to the constant and unfailing courtesy and assistance of responsible police officials. I rarely report on a case without first discussing it with the detective in charge. It is a common thing to hear "the man in the street" cruelly malign the police as persecutors of the men who have been in trouble. The general public would be greatly surprised if it but knew how often the same maligned officials go out of their way to do a good turn for the family of the man their duty has caused them to bring to justice. Repeatedly I have been rung up and communicated with by the police asking me to help some family whose breadwinner has been arrested.

This may appear to be a digression from my report, but I take the liberty of its insertion as it is my last report. The knowledge that except on rare occasions the Judges largely act upon the Probation Officer's recommendations greatly increases the responsibility of the officer's work. At times one gives offence and disappointment to relatives and friends in not being able to see the case from their viewpoint and recommending severe sentences rather than lenient treatment. It is safe to say that 90 per cent. of our delinquents are the direct result of insufficient home training and parental control. Most of our criminals are to be pitied rather than blamed, and deserve all the sympathy and help that can be extended to them: they are so heavily handicapped in life through false friendships and lack of their birthright—a good home and good early training. To extend this sympathy and help one must of necessity often appear hard and stern in order to be kind. The greater the disease the more serious is the operation to effect the cure. On frequent occasions I have been gratefully thanked by prisoners and relatives for having recommended stern discipline that has meant the salvation and reinstatement of the accused.

Prison Probationers (released from prison on recommendation of Prisons Board).—In common with other districts, I find that this is the most distressing part of the work. Close contact with criminals for a number of years forces the conclusion upon me that, notwithstanding the noteworthy reforms of our prison system within recent years, much yet remains to be done. Dealing with delinquents who have not been under general prison influence and who are free from prison stigma is very different from dealing with men who have long prison associations. Reformatory detention in the actual reformatory institutions at Waikeria and the Borstal Institution at Invercargill is a very real and vital thing, but the same influences cannot be brought to bear in the central penal institutions. These facts are patent by observation of the results coming from the different institutions. Holding these facts in mind, one cannot expect anything like such good results as in the case of Court probationers. Yet, on the other hand, considering all the difficulties, the results are most encouraging. The following are the number of these cases dealt with during the year: April, 35; May, 38; June, 42; July, 38; August, 41; September, 39; October, 34; November, 36; December, 44; January, 54; February, 61; March, 60.

Payments from prison earnings and gratuities were made to these licensed prisoners as follows: April, £45 6s.; May, £16 10s.; June, £25; July, £32 9s. 6d.; August, £60 12s. 7½d.; September, £31 17s. 3d.; October, £60 1s. 9d.; November, £13 17s. 9d.; December, £7 14s. 11d.; January, £51 4s. 4d.; February, £55 4s.; March, £71 14s. 10d. These payments are made in small sums to meet the need for food, clothing, &c. The careful distribution of this money often causes complaints by the probationers, who would quickly squander it if it were not shepherded, and occasionally there is interference from outside persons whom probationers have enlisted to help them get more money. Such interference always gets the short shrift it deserves.

General Remarks.—Owing to the great growth in the work of the association of which I am Superintendent I have found it necessary to resign from probation work, and regret the necessity of severing my connection with this branch of social service on the 30th June next. More conscientious and faithful help than my assistants have given me could not be desired, and I thank them warmly for all their help and co-operation.

I desire to gladly acknowledge the uniform courtesy and assistance I have received during the past seven years from gaol, Court, and police officials. The work accomplished could not have been done without the sympathetic help I have received on all sides. The Judges and Magistrates have been exceedingly good to me during all these years. The public can little realize the labour and effort that the responsible officers of justice put into their work to give every one a fair deal and every delinquent a fighting chance to "make good." Members of the Auckland Bar have helped me in ways too numerous to mention, and I gratefully acknowledge their numerous acts of kindness and advice.

As this is my final report, I may be forgiven for drawing a comparison between prison and probation systems of work. It takes a staff of at least fifty and a large institution to care for 320 prisoners at great cost to the country. Three of us manage to care for 200 probationers, with probably less cases for discipline and punishment than in the prisons.

In conclusion, sir, I desire to heartily thank you for all you have done to support me in every way you have been able to. Only the claims of orphan and destitute children in our midst make it possible for me to relinquish this work and break an official relationship that has been without interruption of the most pleasant nature. If I can ever help you in any way I trust you will call upon me. I do hope the day is not far distant when the social problems will be grappled with by some central organization and not dealt with in the present piecemeal fashion.

REV. FRANK RULE, PROBATION OFFICER, CHRISTCHURCH.

I have to report that during the year ended 31st March, 1922, the work of the Probation Officer under the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, has very materially been increased. The humane provisions of the 1920 Act are being taken advantage of by all the Magistrates that sit in Christchurch as well as by the Judges that preside in our Supreme Court. During most of the year under review I was out of the Dominion, and the work of this office was ably done by Mr. D. H. Fawcett.

While on holiday in America and Great Britain it was gratifying to find that in neither country was the work of seeking the reformation of those tempted to live by crime done any more effectively than in our own Dominion. The numbers that come before the Court again after being given the chance this system provides is gratifyingly small.

The following figures show the cases dealt with during the year: Number on books at the beginning of the year, 49; put on probation during the year, 69; received on transfer from other districts, 20; completed and discharged, 34; transferred to other districts, 23; to inebriates institution, 1; defaulted and not traced, 4; sent to prison, 7; on the books at close of the year, 69.

REV. F. G. CUMMING, GENERAL PROBATION OFFICER, DUNEDIN.

In giving a brief report of the probation work in this district for the last twelve months covering Offenders Probation Act and Crimes Amendment Act probationers it is pleasing indeed to be able to say nothing but good concerning the systems under the two Probation Acts. At the present moment I have reporting to me some eighty men and women who are making a determined effort to "make good." I have only had to recommend the cancellation of some three licenses during the past twelve months.

Yes, the provisions of both Acts are good, and the country is to be congratulated upon the satisfactory results which one is pleased to record. Most men and women can and do behave well under supervision, and that supervision, in most cases, can be made as effective outside an institution as inside; and one thanks God not only for the chance given, but for the results obtained. There is, in my opinion, only one principle in penology that is worth any consideration: it is to find out why a man or woman does wrong and make it not worth his or her while to continue in such wrongdoing. This is what our new Probation Act really does, and in this lies its success. I again point out what valuable opportunities Probation Officers really have. It is more than pleasing to look upon the year's work and see the triumphs in the way of true reform, and further to witness these men and women making such an heroic attempt to do things satisfactory to themselves and to the community.

I find that one of the best methods of getting and keeping the confidence of the probationer is to make him feel that the responsibility of "making good" is his, and is not so much due to the oversight of the Probation Officer. In other words, there is given to him full confidence that he is capable of becoming a new man. The more that I see of the new Act the stronger becomes my conviction that it is most humane.

I ought to say further that I have very little difficulty in placing these men and women in good positions. My work during the year has been a decided pleasure.

MR. A. McLEAN, GENERAL PROBATION OFFICER, INVERCARGILL.

I beg to report that at the beginning of the year there were seven probationers on the register, exclusive of two probationers residing in another district whose payments of restitution-moneys were disposed of through this office. Twenty-six persons—twenty-three males and three females—were placed on probation from the Supreme and Magistrate's Courts, and five were received on transfer from other districts. Of the number placed on probation through this office twelve were from the Supreme Court and fourteen from the Magistrate's Court. The periods of probation were—twelve for three years, two for two years, eleven for one year, and one for six months. Eight were under twenty years of age, ten were between twenty-one and thirty, five from thirty-one to forty, and three were over forty years of age. During the year twenty-two were transferred to other districts, fourteen of whom returned to their homes immediately on release from the Courts; and in eight instances probationers removed to other districts to improve their positions and environment;

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.

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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