

a system of personal aid on release. In connection with the lads this need is being met by assistance from the various Prisoners Aid Societies, and by an extended organization and establishment of Probation Committees. Already considerable assistance has been given in finding employment and in aiding lads, who have been released, to re-establish themselves in society.

There are Visiting Committees attached to each of the institutions, and these are doing splendid work in assisting the executive officers at the institutions in enlarging the programme of work. At Waikeria and Invercargill these Visiting Committees have raised the requisite funds to have installed wireless sets as part of the institutional equipment.

The need of after-care is even more necessary with girls than with lads, and during the year, chiefly due to the instrumentality of Her Excellency the Lady Alice Fergusson, who has taken a keen interest in the welfare of the girls at Point Halswell, a Women's Borstal Association was formed on the lines of the English Borstal Association. The ladies comprising the membership of this association not only find positions for the girls when released, but through associate members in the country towns they maintain contact with them and exercise a friendly supervision over them during their probationary period and until they are thoroughly re-established in society. The members of the Borstal Association also visit the institution, provide regular entertainments, arrange lectures, and by tactful and sympathetic influence, advice, and friendly talks to the girls, they endeavour to stimulate the emotion of the ideal and promote a healthy outlook on life. The Department is greatly indebted to this committee.

The results of the system have been distinctly gratifying. The English authorities regard the Borstal scheme as the most rational method devised in recent years for dealing with youthful delinquents who require institutional treatment, but local results are even better than those achieved in England.

A case record of each inmate has been carefully kept, and during the five years and a half ended the 31st December last, of the 1,504 lads who passed through the Invercargill Borstal Institution, only 116, or 7·7 per cent., have been subsequently reconvicted. Of the 94 cases committed under the Prevention of Crime Act since the establishment was properly constituted a Borstal institution in 1925, in only two cases have there been reconvictions.

At Waikeria, during the five years and a half ended the 31st December last, of the 1,050 men who passed through the reformatory only 67, or 6·38 per cent., have been reconvicted. Since the institution was gazetted a Borstal in 1925, 100 inmates have passed through the institution and of these only 2 have been reconvicted.

The Point Halswell Borstal Institution has hardly been sufficiently long established to enable reliable conclusions to be drawn from the results, but since it has been declared a Borstal institution there have been 63 committals: 20 have been released and up to the date of publishing this report only 2 have been reconvicted.

Dealing with the results of this branch of the work in England, Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, the founder of the Borstal scheme, stated, *inter alia*, as follows:—

“ These figures are full of hope for the future when it is considered with what material we are dealing. It is nearly, if not quite, certain that if, as was till lately the case, these girls had on the occasion of each repeated offence been made subject to a mere repetition of short sentences of imprisonment in the local prisons they would, without exception, have drifted hopelessly and inevitably into the ranks of ‘ professional ’ recidivism. To pick up and save even one from such a fate is a great and praiseworthy act, bringing as much honour to the worker who achieves it as advantage to the community, which is at least freed from this one contaminating and hurtful influence; but to save even more than half—and, as time goes on, it is hoped even more than that—is a work not only of substantial material benefit to the State, and in that way patriotic in the best sense of the word, but a splendid example of human charity and effort, which is determined that these young erring creatures shall not glide down the easy current of shame and dishonour without at least an attempt to rescue and save.”

EXPENDITURE AND REVENUE.

In this section an analysis is made of expenditure and revenue for the year ended the 31st March. Two noteworthy facts are shown. Although the average daily number of prisoners in custody rose from 1,340 in 1925–26 to 1,397 for the year ended the 31st March last, the gross expenditure from the Prison vote amounted to approximately £4,000 less than in 1925–26, and, of course, considerably less per head than that of the previous year. This can principally be attributed to the cessation of sawmilling and brickmaking during the year. The actual credits to the vote for 1926–27 are smaller, due partly to the fact that during the previous year considerable credits were received on account of 1924–25, but mainly on account of cessation of brickmaking and sawmilling, and reductions in rates charged to other Departments for prison products and services. An alteration in the railway tariff resulted in the establishment of several quarries by County Councils that had hitherto been customers of the Department. This temporarily affected the disposal of the Mount Eden quarry output. Additional equipment to meet the changed demand is in process of installation, and a recovery of this industry will be assured. An increase in roadmaking credits in the Waimarino district would have been made but for the fact that a considerable reduction in price for metalling supplied to the Public Works Department and the Tongariro National Park Board was agreed upon during the year.

For the present year (1927–28) steps have been taken to reduce expenditure and maintain revenue by co-operative and individual effort of officers with other Departments of State. The Prisons Department stands in an uncommon position in this respect. While utilization of prison labour towards the reduction of prison-maintenance cost is carried out rigorously, the utilization of this labour for other