

Mr. T. P. MILLS, District Probation Officer, Wellington.

During the year 222 probationers passed through my hands. At the beginning of the year there were 85 offenders, 94 were placed on probation, 43 were transferred from other districts. The removals were made up as follows: 65 completed the period of probation, 54 were transferred to other districts, 2 left the Dominion permanently, 2 were discharged by the Prisons Board, 4 were imprisoned, 3 were sent to Borstal institutions, leaving 92 on the register at the end of the year. There were 9 others punished for breaches of probation. These together with those imprisoned and sent to Borstal make a total of 16 who failed to respond to their conditions of probation. This is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total dealt with, which may be considered satisfactory. The larger majority of the probationers are endeavouring to make good, but with the present dearth of employment several are having a rather difficult experience.

Payments during the year have been comparatively satisfactory, £54 8s. 6d. having been received by way of costs, and £452 1s. 11d. in restitution.

Transfers to and from other districts are quite a feature of the year's experience. It is indicative of the general restlessness of a large proportion of probationers. Unemployment has something, of course, to do with the matter, and men will naturally seek other fields if work offers. It is noteworthy that in only two cases has a lapse been directly attributable to unemployment. The number of lapses could easily have been increased if the non-payment of restitution-moneys were deemed sufficient cause for prosecution, but under the foregoing circumstances such action would help neither the probationer nor his creditor. The man who persistently evades his responsibilities without real excuse is the one who deserves but scant consideration.

On the whole the year's work compares more than favourably with previous years, and it is more than pleasing to report that so many have made good.

Crimes Amendment Act Probationers.—There is little to report on these men, as they were only handed over to me during the last fortnight of the year. In all 26 probationers were received. With 3 exceptions they were all apparently making good endeavours to live honestly. One was transferred to another district and 1 satisfactorily completed the term of his probation, leaving 24 on the register at the end of the year.

Mr. W. H. DARBY, District Probation Officer, Christchurch.

During the short period I have been in charge results of the work of the Act seem to have been quite successful.

Offender probationers on the register on the 1st April, 1926, 104; received during the year, 76: total dealt with, 180. Of this number 23 were transferred to other districts, 48 completed their terms satisfactorily, 18 were sentenced for fresh offences, and 7 defaulted. There were 106 on the register at the end of the year.

The sum of £414 18s. 5d. was received as restitution, and £108 for costs of prosecution: total, £522 18s. 5d.

Crimes Amendment Act Probationers.—The number reporting at the end of the year was 33. Of the number of those released from prison on probationary license, 1 completed the term and 1 died whilst on probation.

Rev. F. G. CUMMING, Probation Officer, Dunedin.

I am again pleased to present a brief report of the probation work at this centre, and in doing so have no hesitation in stating that the past year has been in every way a very satisfactory one.

I am pleased to report that the Court here takes the kindest interest in the Probation Officer's work, and further uses him to the very best advantage. This sympathy shown and expressed is a real inspiration to any one who seeks to help the men or women who are in trouble. It is absolutely essential that the Probation Officer at all times should have the confidence and fullest respect of both Judges and Magistrates. Without this his position is hopeless and his work is a failure.

Summary for the year—First Offenders Act: Number of probationers dealt with during the year, 49; number of probationers at present reporting, 69. Amount of costs of prosecution recovered, £31 7s. 7d.; amount of restitution recovered, £190 2s. 3d.: total, £221 9s. 10d. Crimes Amendment Act: Number of probationers dealt with during the year, 10; number at present reporting, 9.

Two were sent to prison for short periods, 4 for reformatory detention, and 3 had their probationary period extended.

It will thus be seen that trouble was only caused by a very small percentage of the men under my control. It is very gratifying to the Probation Officer, as it must be to your Department, to see so many of these men making good under the direction and control of the Probation Officer. Of course, failures in some cases are bound to come, but, taking the whole working of the probation system, one must recognize, and do so with pleasure, the large number of both men and women who really make good. In my district I am able to look with profound pleasure at many who have become new men and have gained the respect and confidence not only of those who employ them but of the community as a whole.

The great key to success is to make these men feel that they can again become true citizens in the community. I am fully satisfied after long experience that no method of dealing with offenders can be satisfactory until complete restitution is not only demanded but paid. In this connection I have watched the struggle many have had to endure in making an effort to meet their liabilities, and further to gain the confidence of their employers and the respect of those they come in contact with. The more I see of the work of the probation system the more I become convinced of its