

the rest of the community. Through the inculcation of the "team spirit" inmates are enabled to realize more vividly that through life, as in games, it is by purposeful and effortful co-operation success is achieved.

With the object of training inmates to be capable of taking their places in the community as useful economic units, various courses of training are provided. For the males many trades are taught, but farming occupations predominate, and, as the institutional reports show, the results have been exceedingly satisfactory. In this regard I desire to make special mention of the splendid voluntary service given by Mr. T. Matthews, the Agricultural Instructor to the Southland Education Board, for his voluntary assistance in organizing and conducting classes in agricultural science, practical agriculture, and wool-classing. The wool-classing school at the Invercargill Borstal Institution is considered to be one of the best equipped in the Dominion. Through the generosity of several Invercargill brokers, a wide range of wool counts is always available. The Department is also indebted to many other teachers and interested helpers who rendered voluntary service in connection with special classes conducted at the three institutions.

The personal influence of the staff is a factor of primary importance in the social and moral training of the inmates, and in this connection the Department also has the kindly co-operation of the various Christian ministers, social workers, and representatives of social-service organizations. To these the Department is deeply indebted.

The after-care of inmates when released is recognized to be equally important with the in-care treatment. It has been said that it is only on emerging from a Borstal institution to face life's struggle afresh that the sentence really begins, for in many cases those committed are handicapped through lack of moral balance or the stability of a normal person. It is only by friendly and judicious oversight until the released person has found his feet as a free agent that our responsibility can be regarded as having ceased.

The voluntary committees organized in connection with our probation system have given splendid help in finding employment for discharges, and also in maintaining oversight. The Department has had numerous letters from released inmates expressing gratitude for assistance received at the hands of these organized helpers. The Prisoners Aid Societies and the Howard League have also given considerable help.

In connection with the Point Halswell Borstal Institution the Women's Borstal Association have done splendid work throughout the year. This organization, which is comprised of Wellington ladies under the presidency of Her Excellency the Lady Alice Fergusson, and assisted by associated workers in other towns, has, in addition to arranging for regular in-care work in the form of visits, lectures, and entertainments, arranged for employment, after-care, and supervision of the young women discharged from the Point Halswell Borstal Institution. The problem of dealing with young women is more difficult than with lads, largely because of their greater emotional instability, and but for this effective system of after-care there is no doubt that a larger proportion of the girls would fail to stand up to the struggle that faces them in free life.

The following statistics show the results of the Borstal system. It is admitted that the system has not been sufficiently long in vogue to draw really reliable conclusions from the figures, but they do disclose a state of affairs which justifies the claim that the Borstal system is the most constructive and hopeful plank in our penal system to-day.

A case record of each inmate has been carefully maintained, and during the six years and a half ended 31st December last, of the 1,621 youths who passed through the Invercargill Borstal Institution, only 141, or 8·7 per cent., have subsequently appeared before the Courts. Of the 184 cases that have been released from the Borstal since the coming into operation of the Prevention of Crime Act, only 17 have again been reconvicted.

At Waikeria, during the six years and a half period referred to above, of the 1,131 inmates who passed through the Institution only 86, or 7·6 per cent., have been subsequently charged with offences, and of the 161 Borstal lads who have been released since the institution was gazetted a Borstal Institution in January, 1925, only 11 have been reconvicted.

The Point Halswell Borstal Institution is of still more recent origin. The total number of committals since its inception, three years ago, up till the 31st December last was 89, and of this number 44 have been released. Of these, only 4 have again appeared before the Courts. As 20 girls have been released for over two years, this small number of failures is most encouraging.

In England the Borstal system has been in vogue since 1908, and it is considered highly satisfactory to secure 70 per cent. successes. The results of our experiment in this method of treatment of young offenders may thus be regarded as distinctly gratifying. In the words of Lord Hewart, the Lord Chief Justice of England, in relation to the English Borsals, it can equally be said of our own institutions:—

"These are good works. May they increase and succeed more and more. They make it plain that this country, at any rate, is rich in means, if they are faithfully employed, for helping those who have made a lapse, and for forming or retrieving a character able to resist temptation and to avoid crime. Let us beware of any voices of indolence or of cynicism that might belittle the efforts or hamper their further development."

GENERAL PROGRESS DURING THE YEAR.

Industries and Development.

Following the present-day policy of employing prisoners on utilitarian works, considerable progress has been made in the industrial activities of the Department. The farm-development work at Waikeria, Invercargill, Paparua, Wi Tako, and the work in connection with the bringing into cultivation of the pumice lands at Hautu and Rangipo is foremost in the Department's enterprises.

One of the principal objects of employment is to instil in the prisoners a sense of economic and social responsibility, and thus fit them to take their place as useful units of society on release. The activities most suited to this purpose in a young and partially developed country are those associated with the primary industries of the Dominion.