

1929.

NEW ZEALAND.

# OFFENDERS PROBATION

UNDER OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920, AND CRIMES AMENDMENT ACT, 1910  
(REPORT ON OPERATION OF), FOR THE YEAR 1928-29.

*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.

SIR,—

Wellington, 9th August, 1929.

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 1928-29.

I have, &c.,

THOMAS M. WILFORD,  
Minister of Justice.

The CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER to the Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

SIR,—

I have the honour to present my annual report on the work of the probation system under the Offenders Probation Act and the Crimes Amendment Act, together with the reports of the Field Organizer and the principal District Probation Officers for the year ended 31st December, 1928.

This report covers the forty-third year that the system of probation has been in force in New Zealand. It came into operation on the passing of the First Offenders Probation Act, 1886, the provisions of which were later extended by the Offenders Probation Act, 1920.

Two years ago the working of the probation system was rendered more effective by the appointment of four full-time Probation Officers, and the organization of voluntary committees in the main centres and principal towns to assist the Probation Officers in the supervision and care of probationers, it being realized that the number of probationers in the centres was more than one man could satisfactorily deal with. Last year two further Probation Officers were appointed, one at Palmerston North and one at Nelson, as the work had grown to a greater degree than could be properly attended to by the local Police Probation Officers.

Sufficient experience has now been gained to show that the system of working with voluntary committees is a sound one, and during the past period of industrial depression but for the assistance of voluntary helpers considerably greater difficulty would have been experienced in placing probationers in employment. We have on record many instances where members of committees have befriended probationers, taken them into their homes, and given much valuable time and assistance in finding work or helping a probationer through a difficult period at a time when, but for kindly shepherding and supervision, a further lapse into crime would have been almost inevitable.

The reports from the District Probation Officers show that in the majority of cases those admitted to probation have satisfactorily responded to this method of treatment. The number of failures represents only 8 per cent. of the total number dealt with during the year. This does not include 23 persons who left the Dominion and whose subsequent conduct is not known. This splendid result is due in a measure to the sympathetic oversight maintained, and also to the discretion exercised by the Courts in the admission of suitable cases to probation. The statistics appended hereto show that 769 persons were admitted to probation during the year and came under the supervision of Probation Officers in terms of the Offenders Probation Act. This was 49 cases in excess of the previous year. Of the total number placed under the Department's care, 615 were by direct admission, and 154 came under the provisions of the Act under the scheme of deferred sentence.

During the year under review there were 181 offenders between the ages of fifteen and twenty, as compared with 200 for the previous year. As mentioned in last year's report, in an effort to suppress delinquency among adolescents who appear to be heading for a career of crime, the Courts