

have had recourse to a more deterrent and salutary method, and in quite a number of cases Borstal detention has been prescribed. A considerable percentage of those appearing before the Courts and receiving a term of discipline and training at the Borstal have already been tried out on probation or otherwise dealt with by the Juvenile Courts.

There were 192 persons between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, and 224 between the ages of twenty-five and fifty, showing that probation is by no means confined to youthful offenders. The test of suitability for probation is not one of age, although with young offenders the responsibility resting on the Courts is more grave than with older offenders, for even if institutional treatment does have a reforming influence, a young person emerges with a social stigma which is a severe handicap throughout his whole career. The real test is to distinguish between the unfortunate who in some weak moment has broken the law and those who with deliberation embark upon a criminal career. A reviewer of the recently published English statistics, commenting on the recent increase in crime, concluded by saying, "On the whole the figures lend support to the view that with the spread of education fraud has tended to supersede force in the world of crime." Where there is a clear knowledge of right and wrong and evidences of calculation and deliberation, the more generous impulses of the law are futile, and a salutary lesson is essential in the interests of society. The benefit of probation in appropriate cases, and the value of a well-organized probation system cannot be denied, but there will always be criminals who need detention for the protection of the community.

As an indication of the greater effectiveness with which the scheme is being administered and the efforts to insist on stricter compliance with probationary conditions—perfunctory probation being worse than letting the offender off—it is to be noted that a total of £4,228 7s. 5d., representing restitution moneys and costs of prosecution, was collected from probationers last year. This represented an increase of 45 per cent. over the amount collected for the previous year. This fact alone may be said to justify the cost involved in connection with the recent reorganization of the probation system. The total amount collected in this manner since the inception of the scheme is £41,489, the greater portion of which represents restitution to victims—a positive feature of probation as compared with imprisonment, where the victim receives nothing and the offender becomes a charge on the taxpayer.

The saving to the State in respect of those admitted to probation as compared with the cost of their maintenance in an institution is enormous. The economic factors both in regard to the State and the individual are of considerable importance, due to the fact that an offender remains a free industrial unit, maintaining his family relationships and responsibilities, and as an economic producer in the community he is not required to be supported at the public expense. The arguments for probation are concisely stated by an oversea authority in the following terms: "The loss of earning-capacity, the loosening of family ties, the social stigma, the possibility of contamination, the weakening of morale, the difficulties of readjustment, are evils borne not alone by the man who undergoes the imprisonment, but by the rest of us, to whom, no matter how we try to cut ourselves loose from the criminal, we suffer with him, not materially to any great extent perhaps, although the faithful adherence to any kind of religion would cause us to do so, but practically from the loss of money taken from us for taxes for his support, and from further injuries which this man, less suited than ever to dwell in society because of his enforced absence from it, is likely to do us. Imprisonment is therefore not something to be lightly used without thought of the damages it might do."

Dealing with the Crimes Amendment Act statistics for the year under review, it is to be noted that during the year 158 cases were admitted to probation on the recommendation of the Prisons Board, and only 24 of these, which includes 12 habitual criminals, were recommitted to prison for breaches of their license. These institutional discharges are under the care of the Probation Officers and their committees similarly to those admitted to probation direct by the Courts. The success of the cases paroled may be judged from the fact that during the quinquennium ended 31st December last 833 prisoners who had been sentenced to reformatory detention or hard labour were released on probation, and during the five years only 92, or 11 per cent., were recommitted for breaches of conditions of their probation or for other offences, and 26 per cent. were reconvicted for lapses subsequent to discharge. These figures not only reflect creditably on the reformatory influence of our present penal methods, but they also bear evidence of the effectiveness of our system of parole and after-care.

I desire to again record the Department's appreciation of the helpful co-operation of the Magistrates who have taken the chairmanship of the Voluntary Probation Committees. I also desire to thank the members of the various committees for the time devoted to this important public service, and the kindly interest taken in befriending and assisting in the rehabilitation of those who have "fallen by the wayside." To the various Christian Churches, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Rotarians, and other voluntary organizations and helpers grateful thanks are also extended for assistance rendered. A feature of probation is not solely the question of supervision and the conditioning of a probationer's mode of life during the actual term of probation prescribed by the Courts, but, as an English Magistrate has aptly put it, "The fallen man must be followed with an unfallen man," and it is hoped that by linking probationers up permanently with these organizations the socializing influence will continue long after the official probation has expired.

I have pleasure in recording my deep sense of gratitude to the members of my staff, and to the police officers and others who act as Probation Officers for the zealous manner in which they have co-operated with me, as well as for the sympathetic way in which they have dealt with probationers coming under their care.

With your concurrence I desire to publish as an addendum to this report an address entitled "Alternatives to Imprisonment," given by Lord Hewart of Bury, the Lord Chief Justice of England, at the last International Prisons Congress. This address will be instructive to Probation Officers, and no doubt interesting to members of the local Judiciary, to whom copies of this report are sent.

B. L. DALLARD, Chief Probation Officer.