

1931.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS DEPARTMENT.
PRISONS BOARD
(ANNUAL REPORT OF) FOR 1930.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

Hon. Mr. JUSTICE REED, C.B.E. (President); Sir DONALD MCGAVIN, Kt., C.M.G., M.D. (Lond.); D. G. A. COOPER, Esq., O.B.E.; JOHN ALEXANDER, Esq., C.M.G.; THEO. G. GRAY, Esq., M.B., M.P.C.; Mrs. C. A. FRAER; and B. L. DALLARD, Esq., Contoller-General of Prisons.

SIR,—

6th August, 1931.

I have the honour to forward herewith the report of the Prisons Board for the year 1930.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Justice.

J. R. REED, President.

REPORT OF THE PRISONS BOARD.
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1930.

THE Board has to report that during the year it visited each of the prisons, prison camps, and Borstal Institutions in the Dominion. It dealt with a total of 1,260 cases at fifteen meetings held at the various institutions.

The following summary gives details of the cases considered and the decisions arrived at :—

<i>Cases dealt with.</i>		<i>Board's Decisions.</i>	
Persons undergoing Borstal detention ..	479	Recommended for release on probation ..	333
Persons sentenced to reformative detention ..	370	Deferred for further consideration ..	778
Persons sentenced to hard labour ..	313	Petitions declined	86
Habitual criminals	74	Recommended for discharge	48
Habitual offender	1	Discharged from probation	7
Habitual criminals for remission of head sentence	7	Recommended remission of head sentence ..	7
Probationers under Crimes Amendment Act ..	5	Modification of terms of probation ..	1
Probationers under Offenders Probation Act	11		
	1,260		1,260

It is the function of the Prisons Board, which is constituted under the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, to make inquiry from time to time as to whether there is reasonable cause for belief that any habitual criminal or offender, or any person undergoing a sentence of imprisonment or reformative detention, is sufficiently reformed to be released on probation or discharged, or whether there are any other sufficient grounds for releasing or discharging such person, and in making any recommendation for release or discharge the Board is to have regard to the safety of the public or of any individual or class of persons, and to the welfare of the person whom it is proposed so to discharge or release on probation.

The regulations under the Crimes Amendment Act require that the Board shall, as far as possible, give every prisoner eligible for consideration an opportunity of appearing before it and stating his case personally when the Board visits each of the penal institutions once in each year. Persons undergoing sentences may make application to the Board in writing and the Board may consider any case at any time it deems fit.

The regulations also provide that habitual criminals and habitual offenders may make application to the Board in writing for consideration of their cases once only in every year, but the Board may consider any case oftener in special circumstances. No prisoner sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour shall apply to the Board for consideration of his case until he has served at least half the full term of his sentence, nor shall the Board consider a case until six months after the date of reception into prison. In regard to prisoners who have been sentenced to definite terms of imprisonment exceeding ten years, including those who have received life sentences or death sentences commuted to imprisonment for life, the period within which the Board shall first take any case into consideration shall be five years from the date of reception into prison.

Subsection (3) of section 10 of the Crimes Amendment Act provides that, subject to the regulations above mentioned, the Board may determine its own procedure. The Secretary of the Board is required to prepare and place before the Board a full statement of the circumstances connected with each case brought up for consideration. In actual practice it is customary for departmental files to