

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

Offenders Probation Act: Total dealt with, 223; total costs of prosecution and restitution-moneys collected, £207 2s. 9d.

Due to the economic condition the past year has been a most difficult one. The number of defaulters was 20. Notwithstanding the number of defaulters, the conduct of the majority has been excellent. Several new accounts have been opened in the Post Office Savings-bank. The Court work has been particularly exacting on account of the large number of reports that have been required for those coming up for sentence. In spite of the difficult times we are passing through, our contact with the different social agencies in the city has been of the most helpful nature, and I am under a deep debt of gratitude to them.

Crimes Amendment Act: The number dealt with under this heading was 89, of whom 31 completed their term, 1 was discharged by the Prisons Board, 3 absconded, 7 had their licenses cancelled, and 2 were reconvicted, leaving 45 reporting at the end of the year.

Mr. J. GARBUTT, District Probation Officer, Dunedin.

Offenders Probation Act: Total dealt with, 135; total costs of prosecution and restitution-moneys collected, £93 14s. 5d.

If, instead of assisting to develop moral stability in those committed to our charge, the object of probation were merely to cater for material needs in the form of employment and the collection of restitution-moneys, then the past year with its economic chaos would, as indicated by the figures furnished, represent one of the worst on record. The real test, however, is whether and to what extent the subject has benefited morally during the period of control. This, I am convinced, can only be achieved by contact with social agencies fitting individual needs and creeds, and unless and until this is made a binding condition by the Courts little permanent benefit is likely to follow.

Sympathetic understanding is essential, but firmness in enforcing conditions is an ingredient which cannot profitably be left out of the treatment. There is still a lingering tendency to consider the offence in preference to the offender and to treat infractions of probation as trivial which, if allowed to continue, would render it futile and farcical.

Crimes Amendment Act: The total number dealt with was 64.

Releases from institutional restraint have found conditions on discharge exceptionally trying and one can readily understand their oft-quoted, if pathetic, remark that real punishment only commences on release from prison. In this connection our association with the executive of the local Prisoner's Aid Society continues to prove beneficial, and, interlocking as it does with all kindred branches of the social service, a very helpful spirit of reciprocal co-operation is brought about by this means.

Major GORDON, Probation Officer for Women, Auckland.

Offenders Probation Act: Total dealt with, 60; total costs of prosecution and restitution-moneys collected, £92 8s. 6d.

Of the probationers dealt with, 2 failed to appreciate the privileges of probation, and were committed to the Borstal. The result of the year's work is very encouraging, and my experience has been that the large majority of the young women respond to the interest taken in them.

Miss A. J. SIMPSON, Probation Officer for Women, Wellington.

Offenders Probation Act: Total dealt with, 54; total costs of prosecution and restitution-moneys collected, £35 3s. 10d.

In spite of the prevailing economic depression and consequent unemployment and distress, suitable situations were found for all the girls who came under our jurisdiction during the year. Many young probationers seem to be averse to employment in private houses as domestic servants, but raise no objection to working in restaurants or boarding-houses, where the more regular hours and the higher wages are probably the attractions. The prosecution of unemployed probationers for default in paying Court costs or restitution, would serve no useful purpose, and the only alternative is to delay action until the probationers concerned are in a position to pay.

Mr. C. G. L. POLLOCK, Probation Officer, Invercargill.

Offenders Probation Act: Total dealt with, 60; total costs of prosecution and restitution-moneys collected, £27 9s. 6d.

Crimes Amendment Act: Number dealt with, 15.

It is gratifying indeed to be in a position to record that the conduct of those admitted to probation by the Courts has been very good, and in no case was it necessary to bring an offender before the Court for failing to comply with the conditions the opportunity conceded to them. With one exception, the conduct of those released from institutions has been satisfactory. It will be readily understood that the past year has been a very difficult one as regards employment, and practically the only work offering has been obtained under the various schemes of the Unemployment Board.

Mr. G. MCKESSAR, Probation Officer, Timaru.

Offenders Probation Act: Total dealt with, 36; total costs of prosecution and restitution-moneys collected, £22 19s. 2d.

In the main the probationers have conducted themselves very well indeed, and have carried out my instructions to the letter. The present depression does not tend to elevate the minds of those of uneven balance, and it is to the credit of these men that they are conducting themselves so well. My experience goes to show that the giving of probation is, wherever possible, much to be preferred to sending men to prison.