

REPORTS OF DISTRICT PROBATION OFFICERS.

Mr. W. J. CAMPEELL, District Probation Officer, Auckland.

I have the honour to submit my thirteenth annual report as Probation Officer of the Auckland District for the period ending 31st March, 1935.

The following are the figures for the period :—

Probationers remaining on register at 1st April, 1934	..	..	177
Probationers received from Auckland Courts	..	..	101
Probationers received on transfer ..	..	..	58
			— 159
Total dealt with	..	..	336
Of these there were—			
Probationers completed probationary term	..	..	82
Probationers transferred to other districts ..	..	..	51
Probationers discharged by Prisons Board ..	..	..	8
Probationers left Dominion by permission ..	..	..	2
Probationers sentenced on original charge ..	..	..	7
Probationers sentenced on other charges ..	..	..	2
			— 152
Total remaining on register at 1st April, 1935	..	..	184

In addition to the above-mentioned defaulters, 9 in number, there were 4 probationers who were convicted of breach of probation and later resumed reporting, 5 who were convicted on other charges and also resumed reporting, while there were 7 probationers who failed to report and had not been traced at the end of the period. This shows a total of 25 defaulters for the year, this figure being approximately 7 per cent. of the number dealt with.

A slight increase over the amount collected during the previous period is shown in the money paid as restitution and costs of prosecution, the figures being restitution, £418 10s. 9d; costs of prosecution, £48 8s. 2d.: a total of £466 18s. 11d. As so very many of those probationers who have restitution to make are earning scarcely sufficient to meet actual living-expenses, the amount paid in shows a very creditable effort. Many, of course, find it impossible to make payments, or at the best can only make very small payments. With due regard to all the circumstances, care is taken to make the burden as light as possible.

I am pleased to report that, apart from the defaulters shown, very few of the probationers have given trouble, and the majority have done very well, despite the adverse conditions with which many of them have to contend. The members of the Voluntary Probation Committee have done whatever was possible to assist in those cases brought under notice, and my thanks and appreciation are due to the committee for their assistance.

Probationers on release from prison and Borstal institutions: In this class the average number reporting monthly during the period was 96, and 73 completed the probationary term during the period under review. All, excepting 8 of that number whose conduct was not quite satisfactory, completed their terms with credit. Nine probationers left the Dominion by permission, 3 were discharged by the Prisons Board, and 1 was committed to the Mental Hospital. There were 14 defaulters who came before the Court on other charges. Of these, 4 had their licenses cancelled, 2 remained on probation, and 8 were sentenced to terms longer than the remaining probationary period. There are also 6 probationers who absconded and had not been traced to the end of the period, 3 of whom have had their licenses cancelled. The number remaining on the register at 1st April, 1935, was 88.

It is noteworthy that no probationer in the habitual criminal class came before the Courts during the period under review.

The conditions regarding employment have been much the same during the year, and the majority of probationers in this class have been employed on local relief works, or at public-works, forestry, or other relief camps.

In conclusion, I have pleasure in again recording my appreciation of the courtesy and sympathetic understanding shown by the Judges and the Magistrates at this centre.

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

Although there is nothing of an outstanding nature to report on concerning the past year's work here, it is pleasing to be able to say that it has been a year of steady progress. Despite the fact that unemployment has been as bad as ever, a smaller number of probationers than in former years have defaulted. It was stated during the past year by a gentleman doing important social work in one of our large cities that unemployment was driving the younger men in New Zealand to commit crime, but I would like to say emphatically that is not our experience in Christchurch: and I would go further and state that the statement referred to above is a gross libel on the unemployed men of our country. There never has been any real difficulty in obtaining work of a kind in this district, provided the offender has been willing to undertake it for the time being, and it is an old saying, but a very true one, "that half a loaf is better than none at all." With one or two exceptions, the men reporting to this office have worked well and conducted themselves excellently.