

Although the amount collected by way of restitution (£284 2s. 1d.) does not appear to be a very large sum, when the circumstances under which it has been earned and the very real sacrifices made to pay it in are taken into consideration, I think it represents a very fine effort. Costs of prosecution amounting to £23 15s. 10d. were also paid in. There are still a few married men on our books with large families, who have restitution to make, but as they are only able to obtain relief work it is absolutely impossible for them to make any payments.

During the year there were 93 persons released by the local Courts under the Offenders Probation Act, 60 completed their term of probation, 7 defaulted and received fresh sentences, 1 was sent to Weraroa Training Farm, 26 transferred to other districts, and 21 received on transfer from other districts, leaving a total of 98 on our books at 31st March, 1935. Regarding those persons reporting to this office under the Crimes Amendment Act, 64 were reporting at 1st April, 1934, 14 defaulted and received fresh sentences or had their licenses cancelled, 1 died, 15 were transferred to other districts, and 43 completed their period on license, leaving 47 reporting at close of year. Taking everything into consideration, the conduct and industry of these men has been excellent, and it is quite safe to say that a very large proportion of them will never offend again.

Although the Court work was not so heavy as in previous years, nevertheless it is of such an exacting nature that it requires close scrutiny all the time. My relations with the Bench and Bar have been of a most helpful nature, and I am very grateful for the kindly interest they take in our work. Our contact with all the social and charitable and Government institutions in the city has been of the best nature possible, very largely contributing to the success of the work. The members of the Voluntary Probation Committee when called upon to serve have done so very willingly, and we are very grateful to them.

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

Statistics for the past year indicate an increase over the preceding period in the number of offenders admitted to probation by the Courts in this district, with a corresponding increase in the numbers dealt with under various headings.

The increase referred to includes restitutional and other payments which, in comparison with the small sum left outstanding at the period ending, may be considered as a satisfactory statement. This does not imply that restitution has been made without some degree of personal difficulty and self-denial, or that the means to such an end through securing employment is guaranteed in any way to an offender against the law to enable him to meet his obligations.

In the latter respect and consistent with the slightly improved economic outlook, opportunities for providing employment other than unemployment relief work have correspondingly increased, more particularly where an aptitude is expressed for farm work or other employment outside the city area.

There is, however, a section who are always reluctant to break away from town life and prefer to depend upon the rather slender opportunities provided through casual employment, and, in their frequent disillusionment, are inclined to adopt a disgruntled attitude towards society in general and show a feeling of resentment against the restrictions of probationary control.

The numbers dealt with by the Courts for breaches of probation approximate to the average for this district, and the general response of those under our control may be gauged accordingly.

It is our experience that a better response is made by the younger type of offender, who is possessed of a possible background of moral training however sketchy, than is obtained from the older, more callous, and perhaps criminally minded type.

In order to deal effectively with the more difficult cases, it is essential that they should realize that the Courts have within their power authority to support the Probation Officer in his endeavours to secure a reasonable response, and indeed occasionally do exercise that authority to ensure a closer observance of the conditions laid down.

Borstal Institutions and Crimes Amendment Act: The number of releasees from institutional control dealt with during the year shows a substantial increase over previous years.

In close association with the local Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society, releasees are assisted, materially and otherwise, as befits their particular needs, and the individual application of a will that recognizes the moral necessity of making good is thereby encouraged.

Handicapped, as many of these men are, by an acquired bias and the necessity of readapting themselves to social and economic conditions, it is rarely that an ex-prisoner, possessed of even a measure of good faith, fails to some extent to make good; if he is prepared to apply himself in a spirit that brooks no denial of or deviation from the purpose that he has set out to accomplish, then he receives the encouragement and consideration that his efforts deserve.

For the most part, those whose licenses were revoked during the year incidental to their having committed further offences or failed to appreciate the advantages of conditional liberty, represent recidivist types who, possessed of a definite criminal outlook, would not under any circumstances tender an adequate response to either advice or control.

The opportunity is taken to express gratitude to those members of the Voluntary Probation Committee who by their valuable assistance and kindly interest at all times have shown some practical interest in our work.

Likewise, the same is due to the executive of the local Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society for their practical interest and loyal co-operation in our common task.

I also desire to place on record my appreciation of the efficient service rendered by my assistant, Mr. R. Watt, on whose service and qualities I place a very high estimate.