

Of the 6 discharged by the Prisons Board, 4 were habitual criminals. These 4 men gained their discharge by good conduct and industry, and it is gratifying to note that they are still doing well. Two of the men who committed further offences were habitual criminals and their licenses were cancelled, while there were 6 who failed to report and had not been traced up to the end of the period under review.

The number of defaulters shown is approximately 6 per cent. of the number dealt with, a very satisfactory result with this class of probationer.

Reviewing the list of those who completed their term of probation, I find that the majority were well behaved throughout. As usual, however, there were those, who, while they completed the term without further offence, required warning and censure for certain phases of conduct. A few of those who successfully completed the probationary term were men released after serving what I hope will be the last of several sentences served in previous years and who are still doing well. Getting into steady work plus perhaps added years and added wisdom had much to do with their rehabilitation. While there have been more opportunities for work there is still lack of that important corrective, steady and remunerative employment.

While it must be admitted that there are those who, given opportunity, do still lapse into crime, there can be no doubt that if it were possible to readily secure employment there would be less chance of failure to make good. During the year the Placement Officers here have done much to solve the problem of securing employment for these men released from prison, and they have shown great consideration in that respect.

Closing this report I must again record an appreciation of the very kindly and courteous treatment which I have experienced from the Judges of the Supreme Court and the Magistrates at this centre, and of the assistance given by the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, the Salvation Army, the social workers, and the police, all of which have been invaluable in contributing to the measure of success shown.

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

I have the honour to submit the following report concerning the work carried on in this district under the Offenders Probation Act and Crimes Amendment Act, during the year ended 31st December, 1936 :—

Under the Offenders Probation Act 119 persons were admitted to varying periods of probation, while 13 were received on transfer from other districts. Seventy-one probationers completed their respective terms and were discharged, and 22 were transferred to other districts. At 31st December, 111 probationers were on the register.

Twenty-eight probationers were received during the year from institutions under the provisions of the Crimes Amendment Act. Thirty-one completed their terms and 2 were discharged on the recommendation of the Prisons Board. At the end of the year 41 men were reporting.

The increase in the number of probationers under the Offenders Probation Act is largely due to prosecutions under the Employment Promotion Act for making false statements regarding employment and earnings. This class of probationer has not given a great deal of trouble, and it is anticipated that the prosecutions and consequent publicity will result in fewer offences of this nature. It is also noticeable that the Courts show greater reluctance in committing offenders to prison where there appears to be a likelihood of reformation under the probation system. In the large majority of cases the probationers appreciate the leniency extended to them, and, in addition to good behaviour, they make restitution by weekly or monthly instalments from their earnings.

Regarding the question of employment, some of the men are difficult to place because of their physical condition, while a few are mentally incapable of competing in the labour market with their more fortunate fellow-men. The activities of the Public Works Department have been the means of giving employment to a number of able-bodied probationers, but there are a few who may be regarded as permanent sustenance cases.

The amount collected by way of restitution is slightly less than in the previous year, but this is mainly due to the fact that the Court orders last year were for smaller amounts. I am pleased to report that many of the men have made very creditable efforts to make restitution. This is very gratifying and goes to prove that the large majority of those who are admitted to probation show their worthiness of the leniency extended to them by the Courts.

With regard to the behaviour of probationers, I have to report that less than 2 per cent. of those dealt with during the year were committed to prison for failure to comply with the conditions of their license. This compares more than favourably with previous years and should be regarded as very satisfactory.

Voluntary social workers have continued to render assistance to probationers whenever possible. The value of the splendid work which they perform for the community cannot be overestimated, and I desire to express my appreciation to each and all of them for their kindly help during the year. It would not be possible to give the necessary individual attention to certain probationers without the assistance of these understanding people who are prepared to give of their own time to help along those who have slipped in the battle of life.

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

In proportion to the steady decline in criminal statistics for this district, the number of offenders admitted to probation during the period under review has been fewer than usual. This does not imply, however, that, where the circumstances have been favourable to the adoption of such a course, the Courts have been less inclined than hitherto to make use of probation as a reconstructive agency. My experience is that possibly owing to the relatively minor offences against the law, not a few of