

I have previously stressed that crime-prevention commences in the home and its environment. There are marked indications of an urgent need for an earlier inculcation of the principles and obligations of citizenship. Detention in a Borstal institution or a reformatory for reclamation purposes at best is a negative force—like an ambulance at the bottom of the precipice. It is much more difficult to extirpate bad habits arising from baneful early environmental influences than to approach the problem in a positive way by developing early the homely virtues of honesty, truthfulness, and a due regard for the rights of others. Those who grow up in a right atmosphere and are trained to right standards of conduct usually run true to form. They do not need to inquire whether dishonesty of a particular kind is criminal or not. They are impelled by a sense of *noblesse oblige*.

*Nationality of Prisoners.*

| Year.      | New Zealand<br>born (excluding<br>Maoris). | Maoris. | British and<br>Foreign. | Total. |
|------------|--------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|--------|
| 1937 .. .. | 1,383                                      | 257     | 351                     | 1,991  |
| 1936 .. .. | 1,022                                      | 199     | 569                     | 1,790  |
| 1935 .. .. | 1,256                                      | 226     | 676                     | 2,158  |
| 1934 .. .. | 1,416                                      | 211     | 749                     | 2,376  |
| 1933 .. .. | 1,604                                      | 253     | 874                     | 2,731  |
| 1932 .. .. | 1,941                                      | 316     | 1,144                   | 3,401  |

Hereunder is set out in tabular form the prisoners received during the year, classified in age-groups, and for the purpose of comparison similar figures for the past quinquennium are shown. The increase, it will be observed, is fairly evenly distributed over each age-group, but it is unhappy to observe that in contrast with the figures for the previous year there has been a fairly pronounced increase in the number of young offenders under the ages of twenty and twenty-five years:—

| Age-group.           | 1933. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Under 20 .. ..       | 175   | 120   | 131   | 96    | 115   |
| 20-25 .. ..          | 459   | 391   | 350   | 285   | 303   |
| 25-30 .. ..          | 403   | 343   | 321   | 254   | 282   |
| 30-40 .. ..          | 747   | 640   | 545   | 437   | 456   |
| 40 and upwards .. .. | 937   | 878   | 809   | 715   | 831   |
| Not stated .. ..     | 10    | 4     | 2     | 3     | 4     |
| Totals .. ..         | 2,731 | 2,376 | 2,158 | 1,790 | 1,991 |

The following table gives an analysis according to the term of sentence imposed, showing the proportion of each group to the total number of persons received. It will be observed that substantially the greater proportion of persons admitted to prison are sentenced to short terms, over 60 per cent. of the total number received being for sentences under three months. These short sentences are imposed by the Courts primarily for punitive and deterrent purposes. The regimen of a modern prison is organized on humanitarian lines and designed mainly with a view to bringing about the reformation of offenders, and it is questionable whether a short sentence served under the ameliorated conditions of to-day fulfils an effective purpose. Time is an essential element in habit-formation as well as in the matter of affording an opportunity to provide some form of vocational training calculated to assist the offender to earn an honest livelihood on release. Time also is an important factor from a punitive point of view, for loss of liberty, apart from the stigma and disgrace, is virtually the only punishment that imprisonment under present-day conditions involves.

| Term of Sentences.                       | Number of Prisoners. |       | Percentage to Total<br>Number sentenced. |       |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|------------------------------------------|-------|
|                                          | 1936.                | 1937. | 1936.                                    | 1937. |
| Under one month .. ..                    | 752                  | 808   | 42·0                                     | 40·5  |
| One month and under three months .. ..   | 371                  | 413   | 20·7                                     | 20·8  |
| Three months and under six months .. ..  | 218                  | 230   | 12·2                                     | 11·8  |
| Six months and under twelve months .. .. | 132                  | 155   | 7·4                                      | 7·8   |
| One year and under three years .. ..     | 234                  | 303   | 13·1                                     | 15·4  |
| Three years and under five years .. ..   | 59                   | 72    | 3·3                                      | 3·2   |
| Five years and over .. ..                | 24                   | 10    | 1·3                                      | 0·5   |
| Totals .. ..                             | 1,790                | 1,991 | 100·0                                    | 100·0 |