

As to the general behaviour of the men, the figures speak for themselves. It cannot be doubted that, in the main, the probationers recognize the benefits of becoming law-abiding citizens. It is not to be wondered at, however, that sometimes old, harmful associations and habits beckon alluringly, and occasionally successfully. Many, perhaps most of the young men, go astray because of their unsatisfactory home conditions, and it is obviously desirable to make every effort to remove the thoughts of criminal activity from the present generation for the benefit of themselves and the next generation.

Grateful appreciation is acknowledged to the voluntary social workers, the police, the Labour Department, and the Salvation Army. I especially wish to record thanks to the agent of the local Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society, whose co-operation in our mutual endeavours has been of great benefit.

Statistics for the year are as follows :—

*Offenders Probation Act.*—On register at the beginning of the year 60, admitted during the year 30, received on transfer 12, total 102, which is to be reduced by 43 who completed their term, 14 transferred, 3 discharged by Prisons Board, 2 defaulters, and 2 imprisoned, leaving 38 on the register at the end of the year.

*Crimes Amendment Act.*—On register at beginning of year 22, released from institutions 19, received on transfer 11, total 52, less 22 who completed period, 10 transferred, 3 recommitted to institutions, and 1 discharged by Prisons Board, leaving 16 on register.

Restitution payments totalled £74 8s. 1d., and costs of prosecution, £1 13s.

Mr. R. WATT, District Probation Officer, Wellington.

I have the honour to submit the following annual report on probation work in this district for the year ended 31st December, 1937.

At the beginning of the year 116 offender probationers were reporting; during the year 129 were released on probation by the local Courts, while 30 were received on transfer from other districts, making a total dealt with during the period of 275.

Of this number, 72 completed their respective periods of probation and were discharged; 62 were transferred to other districts; 3 absconded and at the end of the year remained untraced; 5 were dealt with for additional offences, and 4 of this number were sentenced on the original charges; 2 left the Dominion; 3 were charged with a breach of the conditions of their release on probation; while 2 were convicted on other charges and were again released on probation. At the end of the year there remained 131 probationers on the register.

Reference to the statistics indicates that there has been an increase of 20 per cent. in the number dealt with, although the proportion of defaulters, approximately 4 per cent., is about the average for the district and may be regarded as satisfactory, reflecting, as it does, on the general standard of conduct and response among probationers. Reviewing the year's activity, one feels that, on the whole, response has in a general way been encouraging, and for the most part probationers have shown an intelligent interpretation of their obligations and of the opportunity for re-establishment provided through their release on probation.

The sum collected by way of reparation in the form of restitution and costs of prosecution, £441 11s., is somewhat less than last year, but, nevertheless, represents a fair response on the part of those probationers mainly concerned. Apart from those who seem to require constant pressure, many are regarded as having made a genuine effort that seemed to indicate the recognition of a moral obligation. Permanent and suitable employment has largely contributed to the ability of many to meet their monetary obligations, although in some cases reparation has meant a measure of self-denial.

Seven offenders, all of the youthful type, were dealt with for traffic offences and released on short terms of probation on condition that they attended instruction classes conducted by the Traffic Department of the City Council. Most of these probationers displayed a keen interest, and the reports of the Chief Traffic Inspector leaves no doubt as to the potential value of such instruction, which embraces all phases of driving and application and knowledge of Road Code and by-laws, &c., particularly as effecting youthful and impetuous drivers.

*Borstal Institutions and Crimes Amendment Act.*—At the commencement of the year 41 were reporting, while 79 came to this district on release from various institutions, 29 were received on transfer, making a total dealt with during the year under review of 149.

In all, 45 were discharged on completing their terms on probationary license and 44 were transferred to other districts, while 4 left the Dominion with prior consent. It was found necessary to cancel licenses in 6 instances by reason of unsatisfactory conduct or other offences having been committed, while 4 probationers were sentenced for further expressions of criminal conduct. Two absconded and failed to report, leaving 44 probationers on the register.

For the most part, conduct proved satisfactory during the period and on the part of many, general response has given pleasing encouragement. Singularly enough, some failed in varying degrees in the reaction from institutional to civil life with the existing favourable conditions of employment, &c., and apparently found readjustment as difficult as they might have done under more disadvantageous economic conditions.

Among those who defaulted or committed other offences are included those almost inevitable types who seem prone to err under almost any conditions and several comparatively young men who obviously failed to profit by experience. Two of the latter were representative of a sub-normal type who present a problem both to the Courts and social workers.