

1943  
NEW ZEALAND

---

# PRISONS BOARD

(ANNUAL REPORT OF) FOR 1942

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency*

---

## MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Hon. Sir HUBERT OSTLER, Kt. (President) ; Sir DONALD MCGAVIN, Kt., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.D. (Lond.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.) ; B. L. DALLARD, Esq. ; THEO. G. GRAY, Esq., C.M.G., M.B., M.P.C. ; and ERNEST EDRIDGE, Esq. (Sir HUBERT OSTLER retired in February, 1943, and the Hon. Mr. Justice BLAIR was appointed in his place.)

SIR,—

3rd June, 1943.

I have the honour to forward herewith the report of the Prisons Board for the year 1942.

I have, &c.,

A. W. BLAIR,

President.

The Hon. the Minister of Justice.

## REPORT OF THE PRISONS BOARD

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1942

THE Board has to report that during the year it visited each of the prisons, prison camps, and Borstal institutions in the Dominion. It dealt with a total of 933 cases at fifteen meetings held in Wellington and at the various institutions.

The following summary gives details of the cases considered and the decisions arrived at:—

<i>Cases dealt with.</i>		<i>Board's Decisions</i>	
Persons undergoing Borstal detention ..	333	Recommended for release on probation ..	482
Persons sentenced to reformatory detention ..	237	Deferred for later consideration ..	334
Persons sentenced to hard labour ..	283	Petitions declined ..	20
Habitual criminals ..	41	Recommended for discharge ..	27
Habitual offenders ..	..	Discharged from probation ..	18
Habitual criminals for remission of head sentence ..	2	Recommended remission of head sentence ..	1
Probationers under Crimes Amendment Act ..	17	Modification of terms of probation ..	1
Probationers under Offenders Probation Act ..	20		
	933		933

Having but recently assumed the office of President of the Prisons Board, I do not propose to comment on the 1942 statistics except to note that the satisfactory results shown by the statistics for previous years have continued to be maintained.

It is with regret the Board records the premature retirement of Sir Hubert Ostler, whose appointment as President terminated when, on account of failing health, he retired from the Supreme Court Bench in February of this year. Sir Hubert was profoundly interested in the work of the Board and the welfare of those coming under its purview. At considerable personal sacrifice he gave his time both willingly and liberally in this connection.

The close co-operation existing between the Prisons Department, the Mental Hospitals Department, and the Prisons Board results in the Board being furnished regularly with reports concerning the inmates' progress under institutional regime, together with reports and advice by mental specialists.

The after-care of prisoners and Borstal inmates in New Zealand is in the hands of various voluntary societies and associations, which co-operate with the prison authorities in furthering the welfare of the inmate, both before and after release. The practical value of the assistance given by the members of these organizations and other public-spirited citizens in the all-important matter of rehabilitation is appreciated by the Board.

#### GENERAL

Since the Board commenced to function in 1911 no less than 30,846 cases have been considered by it. This includes prisoners undergoing sentences of reformatory detention, hard labour, habitual criminals, Borstal inmates, and probationers for discharge from probation or variation of terms thereof. Dealing with these cases under the particular headings, the results have been as follows :—

*Reformatory Detention.*—During the period from January, 1911, to December, 1942, 5,719 prisoners were sentenced to reformatory detention under the provisions of the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910. The number of cases that have been recommended for release or discharge is 4,691. In 663 cases prisoners were required to serve the full sentence imposed by the Court. Of the total number released after undergoing reformatory detention 24·36 per cent. have been returned to prison either for non-compliance with the conditions of the release or for committing further offences, 2·44 per cent. left the Dominion or absconded, 0·38 per cent. died or were transferred to mental hospitals, leaving 72·82 per cent. who have not further offended and who may therefore reasonably be assumed to have become useful and law-abiding members of the community.

*Hard Labour.*—Since the passing of the Statute Law Amendment Act, 1917, which extended the scope of the Prisons Board to the consideration of cases of prisoners sentenced to terms of imprisonment involving hard labour, 7,080 cases have been considered by the Board up to December, 1942. In 3,332 cases the prisoners were released on probation or discharged prior to expiry of the full time on the recommendation of the Board. Of this number, 2,055 completed probation satisfactorily, 196 were recommitted for other offences, and 65 were still reporting on probation at the 31st December, 1942.

*Habitual Criminals.*—During the period from January, 1911, to December, 1942, 695 habitual criminals were released on license on the recommendation of the Prisons Board. Of those so released, 57·12 per cent. were returned to prison either for committing further offences or for non-compliance with the conditions of probation. No offences are recorded against the remaining 42·88 per cent., and, allowing for those who have left the Dominion or died, this leaves 21·72 per cent. who remain in the Dominion and have not further offended.

*Borstal Cases.*—Since the coming into operation of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1924, 3,236 young persons have been detained under this Act, either by original commitments by the Court or by transference of youthful offenders from penal institutions or industrial schools. There have been 2,970 inmates released on the recommendation of the Board, 2,745 being on probation and 225 on the expiration of their sentence. Of the total number released, 62 have been returned to the institution for non-compliance with the conditions of release, 297 were recommitted for further offences whilst on probation, and 549, or approximately 18 per cent. of the total released, have been sentenced for offences committed after discharge or on expiry of their period of probation.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given ; printing (708 copies), £3.