

WAIKERIA BORSTAL INSTITUTION (TE AWAMATU)

(Superintendent : Mr. P. McMILLAN)

I have the honour to present my annual report on the activities of this institution for the year ended 31st December, 1948.

On the 1st January, 1948, there were in custody 45 Borstal inmates, and a further 19 were received during the year. The number of inmates released on probationary licence was 34, on expiration of sentence 3, on special remission 2, 3 were transferred to other institutions, and 3 were subsequent to a Magisterial examination, sent to a mental hospital, thus leaving 19 in custody on 31st December, 1948.

In the reformatory section there were in custody at the beginning of the year 73 inmates and 130 were received during the year. Of these, 100 were either discharged on completion of sentence or released on remission or on probationary licence and 6 were transferred to other institutions, thus leaving a total of 97 in custody at the end of the year.

The greatest number of Borstal inmates in confinement at any one time was 45, the least 16, and the daily average 28.52. In the reformatory section the greatest number of inmates in custody at one time was 104, the least 68, and the daily average 92.66 inmates. It is interesting to note here the reduction in Borstal admissions and the increase in numbers in the reformatory section. Similarly, with the increase in numbers in the latter section it is noted that the proportion of shorter-term prisoners tends to show an increase.

In an institution such as this, good working insists on the maintenance of a high standard of discipline, and while this is maintained at a reasonably high level, breaches must occur, and must be dealt with. Generally speaking, the great majority of breaches committed are not serious ones, and the past year has not proved to be an exception. Where it is thought that the offence is one which should not be dealt with by me, then the services of the Visiting Justice or the Visiting Committee are availed of. The time and consideration given by these gentlemen is appreciated by the administration. It does seem that the fact that punishment will be administered when required and found to be necessary is a restraining influence.

The urge to escape again manifested itself during the year, in which there were 5 inmates involved. In each case the individual was not at large for any length of time and was retaken within a short distance of the estate. One must record the fact, however, that the number of escapes is small, and where a great deal of trust is placed in these inmates one must only expect that from time to time it will be abused. The remedy does not appear to be an immediate restriction of privileges and a tightening of the honour system. On the other hand, if for no other reason than that they are a disturbing and unsettling influence, they must be guarded against at all times.

The health of the inmates has been in the capable hands of Dr. J. B. W. Robertson, who, as in past years, has made himself available at all times and at the shortest notice. There have been no cases of serious sickness, and only the normal amount of influenza and other minor complaints. The dental work has been taken over by Mr. N. F. Dixon, who has done everything required of him. On many occasions inmates have been taken through to the Waikato Hospital at Hamilton for x-ray or other specialist treatment. Where this treatment has been over an extended period the inmate concerned has been transferred to Auckland Prison for greater convenience.

The usual summer sports—cricket and tennis—were played and were as popular as ever. It is surprising how well some of the inmates develop at these games, particularly when it is considered that many of them have never previously taken part in any organized sport. Several cricket matches were played with outside teams, and some very enjoyable games resulted. Owing to the fact that these games interfered