

WAIKERIA BORSTAL INSTITUTION

(Superintendent : Mr. P. McMILLAN)

On the 1st January, 1949, there were in custody 19 Borstal inmates, and a further 36 were received during the year. The number of inmates released on probationary licence was 10, on expiration of sentence 3, a further 4 were transferred to other institutions, and 1 was, subsequent to a Magisterial examination, sent to a mental hospital. The number remaining in custody on 31st December was 37.

In the reformatory section there were in custody at the beginning of the year 97 inmates and there were 75 admissions. Of these 100 were either discharged on completion of sentence, released on remission, or on probationary licence. Ten were transferred to other institutions, 4 after examination transferred to mental hospital, thus leaving a muster in this section of 58 at the close of the year.

The greatest number of Borstal inmates in custody at one time was 37, the least 17, and the daily average 24.15. In the reformatory section, the greatest number of inmates in custody at one time was 97, the least 49, and the daily average 69 inmates. In my report to you last year I commented on the fact that statistics showed a reduction in the number of admissions to Borstal, and the increase in the number of shorter-term reformatory inmates received. This year under review shows that the Borstal admissions have nearly doubled, and that there has been a correspondingly large decrease in the number of receptions in the reformatory section. One comments on this fact, as it is found that relatively less can be done to assist a short-term prisoner to rehabilitate himself, than can be done for one who has received a longer sentence. The first essential is to endeavour to superimpose the work habit and this cannot be done in a short time.

Discipline has been maintained at a reasonably high standard, and it is important that this should be so. It nevertheless cannot be expected that firm and kindly control will reduce to nil breaches against the rules. These, as in past years, have not been of a serious nature, although on occasions it has been found expedient to call on the services of the Visiting Justice or the Visiting Committee. I am impressed by the care and thought that is given each case presented to these gentlemen, and I can assure you that their actions have a good effect on the maintenance of discipline within the institution.

There were again a number of escapes, and while these are disturbing one hesitates to suggest that the general system calls for overhaul. Rather perhaps that every one should be reminded that they have an obligation to be on the alert against any attempt to make an escape, and that nothing should be done, wittingly or unwittingly, which may under some circumstance be of assistance to a prisoner escape-minded. Considerable trust is placed in many inmates from time to time and not in many cases is this trust abused. The fact that those who do escape are generally considered to be not worthy of full trust, would seem to indicate to all that continual vigilance is necessary to reduce these undesirable happenings to a minimum.

The general health of the inmates has been good, and it would be surprising if, under the conditions obtaining here, the position were not so. During the year the medical officer for a long number of years, Dr. J. B. W. Robertson, resigned to take up another appointment. His place as medical officer was taken by Dr. P. C. Calvert of Te Awamutu who continues to look after the health of the inmates in a very capable and sympathetic manner. It is fitting that I should record the long and faithful service Dr. Robertson has rendered to Waikeria. As in the past where hospital treatment is required, either as an in-patient or as an out-patient, inmates are taken to the Waikato Public Hospital at Hamilton. It is sometimes of greater convenience to transfer to another institution any inmate whose treatment as an out-patient is likely to extend over a long period. In many instances out-patient attendance requires the absence of an officer throughout the day. Dental treatment, as required, is attended to at the surgery of Mr. N. F. Dixon.