

## REV. FRANK RULE, CHRISTCHURCH.

For the year ending 31st March, 1918, eight persons have been placed upon probation by our city Courts, while one was received by transfer from Wellington. In February of this year our Magistrates began to place first offenders on informal probation, and before the 31st March three had been so dealt with. A goodly number have followed since, but they will be reported on next year. Our total for the year 1917-18 is therefore twelve.

A good example of the beneficent use of the First Offenders' Probation Act, 1908, came before our Supreme Court during the year under review. A young man belonging to a good family living in one of our suburbs was concerned with some others in certain improprieties which landed him in our Courts. To have sent that foolish young fellow to prison would have been in my judgment an act of legal indiscretion. The First Offenders' Probation Act came in and saved that young man from prison. After reporting for twelve months he was discharged, probably much benefited by the warning he had received, but without the stigma of "gaol" attaching to him.

## MR. F. CUMMING, DUNEDIN.

So far as Dunedin is concerned there has been a far larger number of young and old people placed on probation than in former years—indeed, it must be looked upon as a record year. Both the Supreme and Police Courts have taken the fullest advantage of the First Offenders' Probation Act.

I am pleased to put on record that not a single license has had to be cancelled, and very little difficulty has been experienced in getting the probationers to adhere strictly to the terms of their licenses; indeed, the conduct both of those serving under the First Offenders' Act and those under the Crimes Amendment Act has been excellent.

The past year has been the most satisfactory I have known during the whole of my time as a Probation Officer. In this connection I must acknowledge the great help received from His Honour the Judge, Magistrates, Court officials, and the police. Their courtesy and kindness make my work much lighter, and certainly much more congenial.

I have been made welcome to the homes where the probationers live. These visits do much to encourage the one who is down, and serve to bring to the aid of the Probation Officer all the good influence of the parents or friends of his charge. I find it a good practice to write frequently to those under my control: this has proved most helpful. This year the correspondence has been fairly heavy, but the keeping in close touch is the true key towards reform.

The amount of money that has passed through my hands during the past year for payments of costs of prosecution or refunds has been decidedly large. In making these collections there is not a great deal of trouble—at all events, not so much as some people would be inclined to think. The system of collecting these amounts is, in my judgment, good, and in a wonderful way helps the Probation Officer to control his clients.

At this centre during the year quite a number of single women and even a few married women have been placed under probation, and all have given great satisfaction.

There is a large number of persons who cannot be placed upon probation but who are ordered to come up for sentence when called upon. Here again the Probation Officer becomes associated with such people, and this gives him a magnificent chance of helping towards reform. I am satisfied from experience that when a man or woman is down the Magistrate acts kindly when he links the Probation Officer with such a case.

I visit the Courts most regularly, Supreme and Police, so that if required for any purpose whatever I am on the spot. Thus I frequently have the opportunity of conferring with the Judge and the Magistrate upon matters affecting special cases. This is done with good results. I find the heads of the Courts most anxious to assist in any way possible towards the redemption of the unfortunates who have to appear before them.

I need not repeat that from close observation and practical knowledge the First Offenders' Probation Act has more than justified itself—the results are, on the whole, remarkable; and further, I am convinced that we are touching the fringe of a great probation scheme, which has in it all that is good for the uplifting of those who are fortunate enough to have its benefits applied to them. I am also a strong believer in as far as possible getting the probationer linked up with his Church. The assistance of his minister has helped me much. I would like to see upon every probation license one condition—namely, that he (the probationer) should attend Divine service at least once on Sabbath, and in the case of a young lad or girl attendance at Sunday school might be a further condition.

## MR. A. McLEAN, INVERCARGILL.

I beg to report that during the year eight men were admitted to probation at Invercargill—one by the Supreme Court and seven by the Magistrate's Court—and one was on the register at the beginning of the year. Of this number three were transferred to other districts, three completed their terms of probation satisfactorily, and there were three remaining under my charge on the 31st March, 1918. The periods of probation were: three for two years, one for eighteen months, two for twelve months, and two for six months. In four instances special conditions of release included the repayment, by instalments, of restitution moneys amounting to the sum of £52 9s. 6d., and in one case £15 costs of prosecution. The principle of restitution is good, and is of benefit to youths especially. It enforces the practice of economy and thrift, and corrects evil habits of self-indulgence and extravagance. In some instances the results were immediately apparent, and give hope of becoming permanent. In cases where repayment of the amount involved would inflict undue hardship upon dependants, and make it difficult for the offender