

to repay by instalments within a period of probation that would ordinarily meet the case, the term could be made longer, with provision for the remission of part of the term if his conduct has been good.

In the course of the year no special difficulties were encountered. Minor breaches of conditions occurred, arising chiefly from probationers' careless disregard of instructions. Considerable improvement in this respect was obtained as the result of personal interviews and repeated admonition. The general reception accorded when interviewing parents, and when visiting youthful probationers, was friendly and sympathetic. In this connection it is an advantage to have the good will of parents and relatives in dealing with probationers.

The real meaning of the First Offenders' Probation Act (as I interpret it) is to secure the reformation of the offender, and it includes something more than requiring probationers to observe and obey the conditions of release. These conditions, however stringent they may be made, are restrictive and disciplinary, and their fulfilment is not necessarily reformation. The method adopted throughout the year was with a view to secure the earnest and intelligent co-operation of probationers in taking the first step towards their own redemption.

The Act requires to be sympathetically administered to accomplish its true purpose, and to determine its value to probationers in its reformatory aspect, and it may be said to have accomplished its object in some measure when the probationer adopts the conditions of his release as a governing principle of conduct rather than an irksome duty, and it is here that the power and value of the personal influence of Probation Officers to direct and assist is seen as an important factor in the work of reformation.

MR. T. P. MILLS, WELLINGTON.

There were eleven offenders on the register at the beginning of the year; twenty-one were placed on probation during the year, and nine were transferred from other districts, forty-one in all passing through my hands. During the period covered by this report ten completed the period of their probation satisfactorily, eleven were transferred to other districts, and three left the Dominion with the Expeditionary Forces, leaving seventeen on the register at the 31st March, 1918.

There is not one failure to record during the year. The probationers have all conducted themselves satisfactorily, in nearly every instance reporting with gratifying regularity and settling down to hard and honest work. In every case where monetary penalties are imposed to cover cost of prosecution or by way of restitution payment has been forthcoming. This bears testimony to the excellent provision made for first offenders under the Act, as well as the discriminating sagacity of the judicial Bench.

In addition to the ordinary first offenders it is becoming the custom of the Courts to order some offenders who are convicted and ordered to come up for sentence when called upon to be placed under my surveillance for varying periods, the conditions being similar (frequently more stringent) to those obtaining under the First Offenders' Probation Act. Altogether twenty-three of these were under my supervision during the year. They have for the most part a much poorer past record than the first offender, and need closer attention. It is encouraging to say that not one of these has lapsed into a criminal career. One only has given me any great trouble, the condition of reporting being one of little concern to him. It may be humiliating to some offenders to report, but this constant reminder of their own unlawful acts is an excellent corrective as well as a mild punishment.

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