

*Probationers under Crimes Amendment Act.*—It was found necessary during the year to cancel the licenses of five probationers and have them returned to prison. In view of the fact that I have dealt with thirty-two cases during the year, the number of failures is small.

I think the Probation Officer could help the Prisons Board in their great work by giving confidential reports on the men who come from their respective districts, and also the kind of homes from whence they came, as it is not always desirable that a prisoner should return to his original town, and the condition of his release might prevent him from so doing. At all events this idea may be worth considering.

MR. A. McLEAN (RETIRING PROBATION OFFICER) AND MR. C. G. L. POLLOCK (APPOINTED GENERAL PROBATION OFFICER, FEBRUARY, 1923), INVERCARGILL.

During the year ended 31st March last a total of thirty-three persons were dealt with under the Offenders Probation Act, 1920. Of this number seven were on the register at the beginning of the year, fourteen were received on transfer from other districts, four were received from the Supreme Court and eight from the Magistrates' Court, thirteen were transferred to other districts, ten completed their periods of probation satisfactorily, two were committed to the Borstal Institution (one for assault and one for theft), leaving eight on the register at the close of the year.

Orders were made in six cases for the payment of costs of prosecution and restitution amounting to £20 5s. 4d. and £63 respectively. A total of £2 12s., costs of prosecution, and £41 restitution-money was collected through this office during the year, and disposed of in the manner directed.

The periods of probation in the cases released from the Invercargill Courts were: One for two years and a half, three for two years, three for twelve months, and five to come up for sentence when called, being under supervision for periods ranging from three months to three years.

Of the number who passed through this office for the year nine were males and three females.

With two exceptions the conduct of probationers has been satisfactory. Where laxity, indifference, or neglect in regard to the conditions of release on the part of probationers was met with, friendly counsel and firm control secured the observance of the conditions imposed and the desired amendment of conduct.

We realize that the Act requires to be sympathetically administered if it is to accomplish its true purpose, and to determine its value to probationers and to the community in its reformatory and preventive aspects; it may be said to have accomplished its objective when the individual concerned adopts the conditions of his release and the purpose of the Act as a governing principle of life. The method hitherto adopted in this district has much to commend it, especially in regard to receiving reports from and having personal interviews with probationers at home, and it has been decided to continue upon the same lines. This method affords better opportunities for confidential talks, and spares the individual the publicity that calling at an office open to the public would entail. Probationers appreciate and generally respond to any consideration extended to them in this and other ways, such as conducting correspondence in plain envelopes, &c.

As one becomes more fully acquainted with the working of the Act and experienced in its effect upon probationers, as well as to its value to the community, the conviction is strengthened that the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, fully justifies its existence.

*Crimes Amendment Act Probationers.*—During the year fifteen probationers passed through this office, ten of whom were released in this period (including one on earnings only). Employment has been found for these young men, and it is gratifying to know that they are all doing well.

It is very desirable that probationers leave for their destination immediately on release, otherwise there is the danger of them drifting into undesirable associations after the period of detention. Each individual is supplied with the means to give him a good start, and, if he has not sufficient coming to him, the Prisoners' Aid Society is never appealed to in vain.

REV. O. BLUNDELL, PROBATION OFFICER, NEW PLYMOUTH.

I have the honour to report that for the year ended 31st December, 1922, eighteen probationers have been in my charge. One of these completed his term of probation on the 20th February, 1922, five have been transferred to other districts, and twelve are still reporting to me. In practically every case satisfaction has been given, and in several instances, particularly in the case of youthful offenders, very evident efforts have been made to "make good." When this is noticeably the case, concessions have been made by way of encouragement, such as a lessening of the number of reports demanded or a shortening of the term of probation.

Several probationers are employed upon farms situated in out-of-way localities, and these report to me in writing, but whenever they are visiting New Plymouth they come and report in person.

By means of a fund provided by the members of my church I have been able to give temporal assistance to probationers who find themselves penniless when granted probation. A means of assisting people to go to places where work can be obtained became imperative, so I have been glad to avail myself of the fund mentioned in order to relieve necessitous cases.

MR. T. P. MILLS, PROBATION OFFICER, WELLINGTON.

There were fifty-eight offenders on the register at the beginning of the year, sixty-three were placed on probation, twenty-seven were transferred from other districts, 158 in all passing through my hands during the year. Twenty-nine completed the period of probation satisfactorily, four were discharged by the Prisons Board, thirty-four were transferred to other districts, three left the Dominion permanently, nine were imprisoned for subsequent offences, two were released on probation for breaches of