

1925.  
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS DEPARTMENT.  
PRISONS BOARD  
(ANNUAL REPORT OF) FOR 1924.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

MEMBERS OF BOARD.

Right Hon. Sir ROBERT STOUT, P.C., K.C.M.G. (President); Sir GEORGE FENWICK, Kt.; EDWIN HALL, Esq.;  
FRANK HAY, Esq., M.B.; C. B. JORDAN, Esq.; CHARLES E. MATTHEWS, Esq.; WILLIAM REECE, Esq.

SIR,—

Wellington, 23rd July, 1925.

I have the honour to forward herewith the report of the Prisons Board for the year 1924.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Justice.

ROBERT STOUT, President.

REPORT OF THE PRISONS BOARD.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1924.

The Board has to report that during the year 1924 it dealt with a total of 1,102 cases at meetings held at Christchurch, Paparua, Addington, Invercargill, Wellington, Wi Tako, Point Halswell, The Terrace, New Plymouth, Waikune, Hautu, Auckland, and Waikeria. The following table sets out under their respective statutory headings the number of cases considered at each meeting, together with the decisions reached :—

TABLE A.

Month of Meeting.	Place of Meeting.	Cases considered of							Decisions showing how Cases were disposed of.								Totals.
		Habitual Criminals.	Persons undergoing Reformative Detention.	Hard-labour Prisoners.	Habitual Offenders.	Habitual Criminals for Remission of Hard-labour Sentence.	Crimes Amendment Act.	Offender Probationers.	Totals.	Recommended for Release on Probation.	Petitions deferred.	Petitions declined.	Recommended for Discharge from Prison or Probation.	Offender Probationers ordered Discharge.	Recommended for Remission of Hard-labour Sentence.	Recommended transfer Consumptive Sanatorium, &c.	
Feb.	Christchurch	10	36	33	..	1	3	2	85	10	55	4	13	1	1	1	85
"	Paparua ..	1	48	9	..	..	..	..	58	14	42	..	2	..	..	..	58
"	Addington	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	3
"	Invercargill	..	156	3	..	..	..	..	159	30	121	..	8	..	..	..	159
April	Wellington	..	1	3	..	..	..	..	4	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
May	"	7	23	26	..	2	..	..	58	23	30	..	3	..	2	..	58
"	Wi Tako ..	..	17	6	..	..	..	..	23	11	5	1	6	..	..	..	23
"	Pt. Halswell	1	28	1	..	..	..	..	30	8	20	1	1	..	..	..	30
"	The Terrace	1	6	6	..	..	..	..	13	3	4	..	5	..	..	1	13
"	Wellington	4	39	35	1	..	6	4	89	8	33	14	30	4	..	..	89
July	"	1	81	50	..	..	3	9	144	31	82	6	17	8	..	..	144
Aug.	New Ply- mouth	4	14	17	1	..	..	..	36	5	24	6	1	..	..	..	36
Oct.	Wellington	1	34	32	..	..	..	5	72	15	43	5	4	5	..	..	72
Nov.	Waikune ..	3	35	12	..	..	..	..	50	13	32	..	5	..	..	..	50
"	Hautu ..	2	13	4	..	..	..	..	19	4	14	..	1	..	..	..	19
"	Mount Eden	43	97	49	..	..	1	1	191	43	118	20	9	1	..	..	191
"	Waikeria ..	..	52	16	..	..	..	..	68	12	50	..	5	..	..	1	68
		78	683	302	2	3	13	21	1,102	234	676	57	110	19	3	3	1,102

TABLE B.—SHOWING RELEASES AND DISCHARGES, ETC., EFFECTED EACH MONTH FOR 1924.

1924.	Released on Probation.			Discharged from Prison.			Discharged from Probation.				Re- mi- sions.	Totals.
	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual- criminal Cases.	Reformative- detention Cases.	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual- criminal Cases.	Reformative- detention Cases.	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual- criminal Cases.	Reformative- detention Cases.	Offender-pro- bationer Cases.		
January ..	7	3	18	6	..	3	..	..	..	1	..	38
February ..	5	3	5	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	1	18
March ..	3	..	21	2	..	5	..	..	..	..	1	32
April ..	3	1	8	3	..	4	..	..	..	..	2	21
May ..	6	2	17	4	..	5	..	..	..	4	2	40
June ..	5	..	8	7	..	3	..	3	1	1	..	28
July ..	6	..	16	5	..	3	..	..	..	6	..	36
August ..	3	2	24	10	..	5	1	..	..	..	..	45
September ..	1	..	6	5	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	14
October ..	3	..	2	3	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	11
November ..	10	1	9	6	..	6	..	..	..	5	..	37
December ..	7	2	19	3	..	1	..	1	..	3	..	36
Totals ..	59	14	153	56	..	42	1	4	1	20	6	356

## OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920.

During the year twenty-one applications for discharge from probation were considered by the Board, and of the number received twenty were granted.

TABLE C.—REFORMATIVE-DETENTION CASES DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD FROM JANUARY, 1911, TO DECEMBER, 1924.

Total number sentenced to reformatory detention .. .. .	2,583
Released on recommendation of Board .. .. .	1,782
Discharged from reformatory on completion of full sentence .. .. .	310
Total number released .. .. .	2,092
Of whom there were—	
Returned to reformatory for non-compliance with conditions of release ..	81
Committed to reformatory for further offences whilst on probation ..	141
Sentenced for offences committed after discharge or expiry of period of probation ..	265
Total number returned and recommitted .. .. .	487
Absconded and not traced .. .. .	26
Died .. .. .	7
Left Dominion to return to former domiciles .. .. .	42
Known to have been killed in action while on active service .. .. .	3
Returned to Weraroa .. .. .	1
Transferred to Rotorua Inebriates Institution .. .. .	1
Transferred to mental hospitals .. .. .	3
Transferred to Mount Magdala Home .. .. .	1
Transferred to Salvation Army Home .. .. .	1
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1924 .. .. .	99
Number who have not offended since their discharge or expiration of period of probation, and presumably doing well .. .. .	1,421
	1,605
	2,092

Of the total number released after undergoing reformatory detention 23·2 per cent. have been returned to prison either for non-compliance with conditions of release or for committing further offences; 3·2 per cent. have left the Dominion or absconded; 0·9 per cent. have died or been transferred to mental hospitals, &c.: leaving 72·7 per cent. who have not further offended.

TABLE D.—HABITUAL CRIMINALS DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD FROM JANUARY, 1911,  
TO DECEMBER, 1924.

Total number declared habitual criminals .. .. .	391
Of whom there were released on recommendation of Board .. .. .	327
Of whom there were—	—
Returned to prison for non-compliance with conditions of release .. .. .	44
Committed to prison for further offences .. .. .	104
Sentenced for offences committed after their discharge from prison or from probation .. .. .	20
Total number returned .. .. .	168
Absconded and not traced .. .. .	24
Died .. .. .	11
Left Dominion to return to former domiciles .. .. .	41
Transferred to mental hospital .. .. .	1
Transferred to consumptive sanatorium .. .. .	1
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1924 .. .. .	35
Number who have not offended, so far as known, since their discharge from probation, and presumably doing well .. .. .	46
	159
	327

Of the total number of habitual criminals released on probation 51·4 per cent. were returned to prison either for non-compliance with the conditions of probation or for committing further offences. No offences are recorded against the remaining 48·6 per cent., but our tables show that 3·9 per cent. died or were transferred to mental hospitals, while 19·9 per cent. left the Dominion or absconded. This leaves a definite percentage of 24·8 who have remained in the Dominion and have not further offended.

Since 1917 the Board has dealt with the following hard-labour cases :—

TABLE E.—HARD-LABOUR CASES.

Total cases considered .. .. .	1,081
Number discharged from prison on recommendation of Board .. .. .	203
Number released on probation on recommendation of Board .. .. .	299
Left the Dominion .. .. .	14
Absconded .. .. .	1
Recommitted for other offences .. .. .	11
Completed probation .. .. .	210
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1924 .. .. .	36

## GENERAL SUMMARY.

The following table shows the cases considered year by year by the Board over the last decade :—

TABLE F.

Year.	Habitual Criminals and Offenders.	Reformative Detention.	Hard Labour.	Habitual Criminals for Remission, Hard Labour.	Probationers for Discharge from Probation.		Totals.
					Crimes Amend-ment Act.	Offender Probationers.	
1915 ..	101	273	..	..	..	..	374
1916 ..	102	322	..	..	..	..	424
1917 ..	95	329	14	..	..	..	438
1918 ..	87	201	92	..	..	..	380
1919 ..	97	471	115	..	18	..	701
1920 ..	74	467	75	..	32	..	648
1921 ..	75	564	167	..	18	17	841
1922 ..	93	594	271	..	19	30	1,007
1923 ..	74	671	304	4	16	24	1,093
1924 ..	80	683	302	3	13	21	1,102
Totals	878	4,575	1,340	7	116	92	7,008

The statistics that appear in the tables set out in the report show that, as heretofore, not a fourth of those who have undergone reformatory treatment have again offended. This is certainly a gratifying result. Improvements are continually being made in the administration of our prison institutions,

and we have hope that still better results will be obtained from the efforts put forth to redeem those who have offended against society.

The Dominion suffered a great loss in the death of the late Mr. C. E. Matthews, who had been a member of the Board since November, 1916. He was greatly interested in his work, and spared neither time nor labour to carry out reforms in the institutions with which he was connected.

The wave of crime that was witnessed two or three years ago has spent its force. It cannot, however, be expected that crime will at once be lessened. Many of the causes of crime are to be found in the past, for heredity plays a great part in our social life, and so long as there are mental defectives there will be offenders against our laws. Crime, however, might be lessened if those guilty were always found so by our tribunals, and if the community removed temptation from our midst. The cessation of crime cannot be obtained except by an uplift of our civilization, and to get such an uplift requires a struggle of all our citizens for a higher life. Notwithstanding the many failures met with in our efforts to reform those under our jurisdiction, the members of the Board are yet full of hope, and they are gratified at the results of the efforts to redeem the erring that are being made in our reformatory institutions. One thing much needed is the assistance that should be given to those who have regained their liberty and begun their citizen life afresh. The majority of them are weaklings, and they need help and guidance.

ROBERT STOUT, President.

Wellington, 23rd July, 1925.

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation, not given; printing (725 copies), £4 15s.

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By Authority: W. A. G. SKINNER, Government Printer, Wellington.—1925.

Price 3d.]