

The total number of inmates transferred to public hospitals for treatment during the year was ninety. There were no outbreaks of any of the commoner epidemic diseases at any of the institutions during the year.

There continues to be a considerable number of persons suffering from venereal disease on reception, there being no less than 120 cases treated during the year. In Wellington the position has become so acute that it has been necessary to establish a special clinic at the prison for the segregation and treatment of persons so afflicted. In only one case was it necessary to have recourse to the provisions of the Prisoners Detention Act, 1915, which provides that a person suffering from venereal disease shall not be discharged notwithstanding that the term of the sentence imposed by the Court has expired.

There were twenty-five inmates transferred to mental hospitals either upon certification or for observation. Following the working arrangement with the Mental Hospitals Department all inmates who have shown signs of mental abnormality have been examined by a psychiatrist for the purpose of determining the best method of treatment. There is a small percentage of inmates whose conduct is such that they are obviously not normal, but they are not certifiable, though in some cases they can be classed as social defectives. There is as yet no place where such as these can be segregated. The likelihood of a further lapse into crime when released is fairly certain, yet with a fixed sentence there is no alternative but to release them. Prior to the depression it was often possible to induce some one to undertake the responsibility of their after-care with friendly supervision, but unemployment conditions have shrunk these outlets. As a protection to society mental hospital is the only alternative.

It is often asserted that every inmate is mentally unbalanced and should be subjected to an examination by a psychiatrist or specialist in psycho-therapy. The following recent observation by Dr. Norwood East, English Prison Commissioner, is apropos in this connection: "The bald statement is sometimes made that a full psychological investigation is required in the case of every offender, and that without this penal measures must be futile. This is so contrary to practical experience that it is likely to defeat its purpose."

There is a grave danger in attaching too much emphasis to abnormal conduct and overweighting the significance of what is often no more than adolescent instability and likely to be outgrown with discipline and suitable regimen. To suggest morbidity to the criminally inclined is to encourage mental invalidism. As Dr. East has aptly stated in a recent report: "Society and the criminal are better served if the latter can be made to cultivate a sense of social responsibility."

BORSTAL INSTITUTIONS.

The foregoing statistics include committals to Borstal Institutions established under the Prevention of Crime Act, 1924, which Act largely follows the provisions of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908 (Imperial).

There are three Borstal Institutions in the Dominion, one for lads under twenty-one years of age at Invercargill, and one at Te Awamutu (Waikeria) for young men under twenty-five years of age. The New Zealand system provides for a higher age group than the English Act, which restricts the age of admission to twenty-one years. There is also an institution for young women at Point Halswell, Wellington.

During the year 168 lads and 35 young women were committed to Borstal by the Courts, and 40 youths were transferred from industrial schools and other institutions to Borstal for training and discipline.

Since the Waikeria and Invercargill Institutions have been established, 4,011 lads have passed through them, and of this number just a fraction over 14 per cent. have again come in conflict with the law after release. One hundred and fifty-five young women have been released from Point Halswell, and 17, or just under 11 per cent. only, have fallen into trouble again necessitating an appearance before the Courts.

Considering the intense difficulties in these times of depression that beset those, upon whom rests the stigma of a conviction, in their efforts to obtain employment and rehabilitate themselves, it must be admitted that the foregoing highly satisfactory results are evidence of the efficacy of the system and bear eloquent testimony to the success of the efforts of those responsible for the in-care and after-care of these young people.

A varied range of activity in diversified occupational training, educational classes, and recreational sports make up the programme underlying the purpose of the Act. The reports of the three Superintendents attached as an appendix hereto show the extent to which expression is given to these activities, and it is not necessary to further elaborate the details herein, as they have been traversed fully in previous reports. Institutional effort, however, would be largely in vain were it not for the splendid help given by a large body of voluntary workers who undertake the placement and after-care of inmates when released.

The members and associates of the Women's Borstal Association have been indefatigable in their efforts, regularly visiting the Point Halswell institution, getting to know the girls, and then arranging for their supervision when they are released. This Association has associates in all parts of the Dominion, and it is carrying out a most praiseworthy public service.

The Voluntary Probation Committees have continued, under profound difficulties, to render assistance to the Probation Officers in finding employment and maintaining after-care of discharged lads. The Department is indebted to the unemployment authorities for elastically interpreting the regulations in dealing with difficult and deserving cases of released lads.

Members of Rotary, the Honorary Justices' Association, and many other public-spirited citizens have backed the Department in its efforts to redeem and re-establish the unfortunates placed in its care.