

Mr. W. H. DARBY, District Probation Officer, Christchurch.

It is my privilege to submit my report on the past year's work in this city under the Offenders Probation Act, 1920.

I think it would be correct to say that there has been a very big improvement all round during the year, more especially in the last few months. With the exception of those who are quite unemployable, very little difficulty has been found in placing men in employment, and I can say that the majority have stuck to their jobs and have worked really well. So far as their conduct is concerned, I have never known a year that was so free from complaints, and this is substantiated by the very small number who have again appeared before the Courts.

The amount collected during the year by way of restitution shows a considerable increase over the previous year's total, and, although it includes one large amount, is indicative of the improvement in the economic position. There has been no slackening-off of interest in our work, and all classes of the community to whom I have appealed for assistance have responded willingly and gladly. It is therefore extremely difficult to single out any one organization, but to the members of the Voluntary Probation Committee, the Salvation Army, Rev. Revell and his Guest House, our very best thanks are due. It is also difficult to express in mere words the very kindly interest taken by the Bench and Bar in our work and the assistance given by the different Government Departments in the city. Everybody has worked like one big team without a single discordant note. The outlook for the coming year is certainly very much brighter in view of the hoped-for improvement in the economic situation, and I am confident that a number of probationers who have been unable to meet their financial obligations will be in a position to do so.

The following are the statistics for the year: Restitution collected, £501 11s. 1d.; costs, £36 1s. 4d.

Probationers reporting at 1st April, 1935, 98. Probationers received from Courts, 96; transferred from other districts, 13. Completed probation, 97; transferred to other districts, 30; imprisoned, 9; left Dominion by permission, 1. Probationers reporting at 31st March, 1936, 80.

Probationers reporting under Crimes Amendment Act at 1st April, 1935, 47; completed their term, 39; imprisoned, 10; period expired while defaulting, 2. Returned to Borstal, 1; transferred to other districts, 8. Probationers reporting at 31st March, 1936, 49.

Mr. J. GARBUTT, District Probation Officer, Dunedin.

*Offenders Probation Act.*—The number on the Register at 1st April, 1935, was 69, admissions and transfers increased the total to 138, while the usual transfers to other districts and probationers who completed their term totalled 60. Moneys recovered: Restitution, £71 19s. 5d.; costs, £7 7s.: Total, £79 6s. 5d.

*Crimes Amendment Act.*—The number at the commencement of the year was 25, increased by 28 releases and 11 transfers, while sentences completed totalled 22, transfers 16, and licenses cancelled 2, leaving 24 on the register at 31st March, 1936.

While an examination of the figures for the year under review indicate a consistency in regard to the total number dealt with, there is also revealed a decrease in the number admitted to control by the local Courts, while the number discharged from probation during the same period shows a decided increase. This increase may be attributed to the fact that previously quite a number of offenders had been admitted to periods of probation of one year and less.

Reparation that has been made by way of restitution reached a total somewhat lower than is usual for this district, but nevertheless representing a comparatively satisfactory response on the part of those directly concerned. In this connection it might be interesting to mention that of the total amount of restitution ordered to be made during the past year the portion remaining unpaid at date, apart from transfers, is 17.2 per cent., represented by only one probationer. The remainder has been paid, in some cases, in a lump sum according to circumstances, but more often by small, regular instalments, the gleanings from the earnings of lower category workers.

The relief schemes in operation under the Unemployment Board, together with the practical and helpful co-operation of the local Unemployment Bureau, have rendered incalculable assistance in regard to securing employment. The main difficulty would appear to be that so many probationers have no particular trade or training in a special type of work, and consequently are more or less dependent upon the slender prospects of an already over-loaded labour-market. On the other hand, the comparatively improved economic situation has resulted in more probationers being placed in suitable employment. In consequence of this, the materialistic attitude towards probationary control so often met with and so difficult to dispel has perhaps been less in evidence than during the past few years.

With the usual and apparently unavoidable exceptions, the general response and conduct of probationers reached a more or less satisfactory standard, while the number of defaulters dealt with by the Courts was about the average for this district.

One noticeable feature of the past year's activities has been the comparatively small number of youthful types admitted to control by the local Courts. This, of course, may be a matter of some satisfaction in the community.