

It has been asserted by certain critics that, in relation to the general population of the two countries, New Zealand has a prison population three or four times in excess of that of England. As has been pointed out in earlier reports, exact comparisons cannot be made, as certain classes of offenders are included in the New Zealand prison statistics who are not so dealt with in England. The latest published English statistics show the receptions on conviction per 10,000 of the general population to be 12·4, hence it will be seen that the disparity is not very wide.

Nationality of Offenders.—The following table summarizes those received into prison during the year on a nationality basis:—

Nationality of Prisoners.

Year.	New-Zealand-born (excluding Maoris).	Maoris.	British and Foreign.	Total.
1935	1,256	226	676	2,158
1934	1,416	211	749	2,376
1933	1,604	253	874	2,731
1932	1,941	316	1,144	3,401
1931	1,779	271	1,153	3,203
1930	1,576	184	1,104	2,864

It is satisfactory to observe that the decline in the number of New-Zealand-born offenders in evidence two years ago has been steadily maintained, but the number of Maoris, 226, has increased by 15. In the East Coast district and North of Auckland the amount of petty crime amongst young Maoris is causing some anxiety, and it is observed that there is too great a proportion of Maori youths in Borstal. There are over twice as many Maoris in detention as would be the case if the ratio of Natives to the general population were preserved. The matter of establishing a separate training institution in the North Island on somewhat more rigorous lines than Borstal, where the younger Maori offenders could be taught efficient farming methods and at the same time be subjected to socializing influences, is one worthy of consideration. If there could be instilled into the Maori youth habits of industry and an interest in the productive utilization of Maori lands it would be to the national advantage.

Age of Prisoners.—Hereunder is set out in tabular form the prisoners committed during the year classified in age groups. There has been a slight increase (11) in the number committed under twenty years of age. This is due mainly to the number, referred to above, of Maori youths received.

The decline generally has been evenly spread over the other age groups, and, having regard to the proportion of each group to the general population, it cannot be deduced from the table that at any age is there a special predisposition towards criminal conduct:—

Age Group.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Under 20	164	203	222	175	120	131
20-25	429	555	559	459	391	350
25-30	426	488	504	403	343	321
30-40	716	822	903	747	640	545
40 and upwards	1,118	1,129	1,207	937	878	809
Not stated	11	6	6	10	4	2
Totals	2,864	3,203	3,401	2,731	2,376	2,158

Length of Sentences.—Except in the case of Borstal detention, where the sentence is imposed as much in the interests of the offender for the purpose of discipline and training as for the protection of society, the period of sentence is some criterion of the gravity of the nature of the crime involved. This must be qualified, however, by reason of the fact that the Courts, whilst having some regard to the intrinsic nature of the offence, also have regard to the offender himself, and his need for correctional treatment, in imposing reformatory detention. If these two classes of sentences are eliminated there remains an exceedingly small number of cases in which substantial punishment is imposed. That is to say, less than 10 per cent. of the total prisoners dealt with received in excess of twelve months' ordinary imprisonment.

It will be seen from the table set out hereunder, which includes sentences of Borstal detention and reformatory detention as well as ordinary imprisonment, that a comparatively small proportion of offenders receive substantial sentences.