

those admitted to probation have but little conception of the obligations imposed on them by this form of control, and all too frequently are inclined to regard it as a very mild form of restriction on their obvious, though only partially checked, trend towards more serious crime.

Restitution-moneys, costs of prosecution, &c., in terms of Court orders have been collected where possible in a manner consistent with the ability of probationers to meet that demand without hardship on themselves or their dependants.

In the matter of employment there has been, under improved conditions at present existing, much less difficulty in securing such work as probationers are generally able to carry out, but it will be appreciated, I trust, that many whom it is desired to assist in this respect are either unskilled, incompetent, or in some cases work-shy. A rather disturbing feature at present is the inclusion of a number of young men who, as the probable aftermath of the depression years, have never adapted themselves to honest labour and now apparently have arrived at a stage where they are seemingly content to idle their more useful years on one or other of the unemployment benefits provided. In cases where the Courts are sympathetic an order compelling such idlers to seek honest work is sought.

The defaulters and those whom it was necessary to have returned to detention are happily in the usual small ratio compared to those who have completed their period of probation without further trouble.

Frequently I come across ex-probationers who ungrudgingly refer to the steadying effect probation had on their more youthful or foolish inclinations, and this admission apparently carries with it no rancour against the process which entailed so little cost to their truer selves.

In the case of releasees, whether ex-Borstal or those who have had prison experience, we are in close and very efficient co-ordination with Mr. Steven, agent and chaplain to the local Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society, when everything possible is done to assist during rehabilitation, or to provide the means to cover a particularly lean period for the dependants of prisoners. I cannot speak too highly of the work which the Society, through its agent, is doing in this respect, and our association, as hitherto, continues on the lines of happy relationship with mutual understanding and co-operation in our common task.

Probation without the many social-welfare contacts would place your officer in a similar position to a general withdrawn from his source of supply, and I am afraid little good could be accomplished.

I would also pay a warm tribute to many local social workers who have co-operated in team-work to our mutual advantage and the benefit of our work.

Especially would I single out the State Placement Service for a special word of thanks. Time and again, in his usual cheery and enthusiastic manner, the local officer has succeeded, in most cases at short notice, in placing probationers in suitable employment, and thus removing one of the chief obstacles to their ultimate effort towards rehabilitation.

The statistics for the year of offender probationers show 60 on the register at commencement of year, increased by 38 admissions and 5 transfers, against which have to be set 24 completed term, 14 transfers, 2 discharged by Prisons Board, and 3 defaulters, leaving 60 on the register at 31st December, 1936.

Restitution payments totalled £51 12s. 6d.; costs of prosecution payments totalled £5 7s. 6d.

The number of Crimes Amendment Act cases on the register was 24, increased by 19 new releases and 5 transfers. During the year 10 completed sentences, 1 was discharged by Prisons Board, 5 licenses were cancelled, and 10 transferred, leaving 22 on the register at the end of the year.

Mr. R. WATT, District Probation Officer, Wellington.

I respectfully submit the annual report on probation work for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

A perusal of the figures for the year indicates that the total number of probationers dealt with (230) approximates to the average for this district, and, while the number of admissions represents an increase, the proportion of defaulters is on a par with that of other years. In addition to the latter, 4 were convicted for breach of conditions of their release on probation and 3 for other offences, but these subsequently resumed reporting and for the most part appeared to have profited to some degree by their experiences.

Apart from those who failed to take full and proper advantage of the opportunity that their release on probation provided, the standard of general response and conduct has been fairly satisfactory. The comprehensive value of the probation system seems to be no more adequately exemplified than in the now numerous cases that can be quoted where ex-probationers are now regarded as respectable citizens who have more or less fully re-established themselves as such and are assuming their full measure of responsibilities in that respect.

During the past year, more particularly the latter part, the improved economic situation has resulted in many being able to resume permanent employment at their respective trades, while the increased demand for general and casual labour has benefited those unskilled workers who form such a large proportion of those under control. Apart from the important and essential advisory aspect of our work, the extrinsic but constructive value of suitable employment and the full occupation of time and mind with some definite object in view, material though it may be, is regarded as inestimable as effecting general response to probationary control and outlook on life.

The increase in the amount collected in respect of costs of prosecution and restitution, apart from comparatively larger Court orders, may be regarded as an indication of the increased earning-capacity. Also, with the exception of several large amounts, the sum collection in this way represents the result of a consistent response by way of regular payments on the part of those probationers willing to discharge their responsibility in that respect.