

1937.

NEW ZEALAND.

OFFENDERS PROBATION

UNDER OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920, AND CRIMES AMENDMENT ACT, 1910
(REPORT ON OPERATION OF), FOR THE YEAR 1936.

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

The Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE to His EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

SIR,—

Wellington, 14th October, 1937.

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency the report of the Chief Probation Officer on the operations of the Offenders Probation Act for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

I have, &c.,

H. G. R. MASON,

Minister of Justice.

The CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER to the Hon. the MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

SIR,—

I have the honour to present my annual report on the working of the probation system under the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, and the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910 and 1920, for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

Statistical tables showing the numbers dealt with, the nature of the offences, and the ages of the offenders concerned are also appended. The epitomized reports of the District Probation Officers are annexed hereto.

Probation was first adopted in New Zealand in 1886 on the passing of the First Offenders Probation Act. Until the passing of the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, probation was applied only to first offenders, but since the passing of the later Act this method of dealing with offenders has been more generally applied, the Courts exercising a free discretion as to what persons shall be admitted to probation.

The statute prescribes as a preliminary to consideration of probation that the Court may require a Probation Officer to make inquiry respecting the character, personal history, and any other special matter relating to an offender to assist it in deciding whether the case is one for probation. In reporting to the Court the Probation Officer is required to have regard to the best interests of the public and of the offender concerned.

Probation is generally regarded by most authorities as being inappropriate to offences involving deliberation and brutality. In other words, persons most likely to respond to this form of treatment are those classed as "accidental offenders." The interests of the community as a whole must invariably be paramount, and it may be in certain cases that a severer form of punishment is desirable as a deterrent to others, as in the case of crimes of common prevalence, but where such considerations do not arise probation should be seriously considered as a constructive alternative to imprisonment, especially in cases of adults, where the severance of domestic ties and the stigma on the family of an offender renders imprisonment an infinitely harsher means of punishment than is implied by the deprivation of the liberty of the person concerned.

With young offenders, bad environmental conditions and influences, and the need of discipline and training, are factors not to be overlooked, as separation from undesirable associations or the well-ordered regimen of a Borstal institution may mean the deflection of a young offender from the "slippery slope" that leads to a criminal career. Again, with the offenders who may be classed as "socially inefficient," custodial treatment is often best in their own interests unless suitable care and oversight in the community can be arranged.

!—H. 20B.

Probation in New Zealand is administered under a centralized system of control under the Department of Justice. Each Probation Officer has a direct and individual responsibility to the Court to which he is attached, but he furnishes reports regularly in respect of each case to headquarters, where a case record of each probationer is kept. Offenders in New Zealand would seem to be essentially nomadic, and the system adopted makes it more easy to keep a check on a probationer's movements around the country and to arrange for prompt action to be taken should he fail to comply with the conditions of his release.

The reports from the District Probation Officers disclose a satisfactory year's work, and, with few exceptions, those admitted to probation responded well to the obligations imposed. Approximately 6 per cent. only of the total dealt with during the year committed breaches of the conditions.

One Probation Officer states: "The success of the system is evidenced by the large number of ex-probationers one meets who have been restored to useful citizenship and who have retrieved their self-respect as self-reliant members of the community." Probation is essentially a method of treatment calling for firm but understanding oversight on the part of the Probation Officer and his assistants. An attitude of "maternal fussiness" is equally as disastrous to the best results as one of exacting narrowness. Common-sense and an experience of human nature usually commands more respect than experimentation with fanciful theories which are often grasped at by the wrongdoer as a means of rationalizing his conduct. Any philosophy which makes an offender feel sorry for himself rather than ashamed is not calculated to inspire the best results.

The total number admitted to probation was 813, or 54 more than for the previous year.

An analysis of the offences involved shows that the largest increase was in connection with offences (fraudulent statements) relating to the Employment Promotion Fund, such offences representing just under 10 per cent. of the total cases dealt with. These cases exercise the Courts to no small degree, their general prevalence and deliberateness calling for salutary penalties on the one hand, whereas on the other imprisonment involves hardship to the families who, in many cases, have already suffered privation through unemployment. Except in very bad cases, time is allowed in which to pay fines in instalments, the fines in many cases being fixed at an amount equivalent to the sum fraudulently obtained.

Unlawful conversion of motor-cars also showed an increase. There was a considerably less number of offences dealt with by probation for intoxication in charge of a motor-vehicle and negligent driving than in the previous year, and in this connection an interesting experiment has been tried by some of the Magistrates, making it a condition of probation that the offender shall be required to take a course of instruction in "road courtesy and driving" under the expert guidance of officers of the local Traffic Department. The reports received indicate that this experiment has met with successful results.

It is rather surprising to note, as conveying an indication of the more extensive use being made of probation, that in 2 cases of incest, 6 of arson, and in 1 associated with abortion the offenders were admitted to probation last year.

During the year under review £3,349 was collected under orders for restitution, £2,731 of which was restored to persons defrauded. This is a positive feature of probation as compared with imprisonment, where the offender is a burden on the taxpayer. This requirement to make reparation has a very salutary effect in most cases, particularly with young offenders, for the reason that the steady repayment by instalments indicates whether the probationer is in employment. The discipline of regular work is in itself a reforming influence.

Whilst the selection of suitable cases for probation is a vital consideration in the success of the system, the most important matter is the efficiency of the methods adopted for the oversight of the offenders whilst they are on probation. A fundamental feature of the system is that probationers shall be placed under the supervision of persons whose duty it is to "guide, admonish, and befriend them," and in this connection the Department is fortunate in having the help of the Voluntary Probation Committees and other individual social workers who assist in the oversight of probationers. It has been observed that overseas there is a tendency to make probation a professional job. In certain States of America it is considered that the voluntary worker is often "zealous but temperamentally unsuited to the work," that "many individuals enter into the work for the thrill they can get out of it, but as time passes the enthusiasm burns out"; or that "volunteers, with few exceptions, want the spectacular and soon droop their wings when they find it drudgery."

In New Zealand, whilst it is recognized that there are volunteers for both probation and prison work who are motivated from a sentimental or morbid interest, it is my experience that if care is exercised in the selection of helpers on the basis of their ability and not solely because of their expressed interest, voluntary workers are a most valuable supplementary force in probation work. The readaptation of our social misfits is essentially a community job, and it has been gratifying to find so many unflagging stalwarts amongst a large band of voluntary helpers who co-operate with the Department in this important public service. The professional Probation Officer acts as a directing and marshalling agency, and deals personally with the more difficult problem cases.

There are four full-time Probation Officers, each with an assistant, dealing with male offenders at the four principal centres. Each of these has a Voluntary Probation Committee associated with him. In all the principal secondary towns public servants, specially selected because of their understanding and sympathy, act in a part-time capacity as Probation Officers, and at other towns where there is a police-station the senior member of the Police Force acts as Probation Officer.

So far as women probationers are concerned, at Wellington there is a full-time Women's Probation Officer. The members of the Women's Borstal Association and its associates supervise

all Borstal parolees. Women Salvation Army officers are appointed as Probation Officers for women at other towns. There is a grand total of 230 officials, exclusive of the Borstal Association and Voluntary Probation Committee members, engaged in probation work.

The Crimes Amendment Act statistics, which deal with parole probationers—those persons who have been released on the recommendation of the Prisons Board after serving a term of imprisonment or detention—show that 428 persons were released on probation during the year, 3 of these were recommitted to prison for a breach of the conditions of their license, and 26, including 6 habitual criminals, had their license cancelled for further offences. Considering the difficulties that in the majority of cases beset discharged prisoners in the rehabilitating of themselves, this small percentage of failures must be regarded as satisfactory. The effectiveness of the present method of parole and after-care may be judged from the fact that during the five years ended 31st December last, 1,788 prisoners (excluding habitual criminals) were released on probation, and during this period only 139, or 7·7 per cent., were returned to prison for failing to comply with the conditions of their release or for other offences whilst on probation, and only 22·2 per cent. have again been convicted subsequent to discharge.

I desire to place on record the Department's appreciation of the valuable assistance given in this probation work by a large number of public-spirited citizens working with the Voluntary Probation Committees, Prisoners' Aid Societies, and other social-service organizations, for their help to probationers and for their co-operation with Probation Officers.

I also desire to record my gratitude to my own staff for their loyal co-operation, and also to the Salvation Army officers, Police officers, and others who act as Probation Officers in a sympathetic and constructive manner.

B. L. DALLARD,
Chief Probation Officer.

REPORTS OF DISTRICT PROBATION OFFICERS.

Mr. J. ANDERSON, District Probation Officer, Auckland.

I have the honour to submit the annual report on the probation work at this centre for the period from 1st January, 1936, to 31st December, 1936.

At the beginning of the year there were 179 offender probationers on the register, 111 were admitted to probation during the period, and 42 received on transfer, making a total of 332 dealt with.

Of that number, 76 completed the term of probation in a satisfactory manner, 64 were transferred to other districts, 1 was discharged by the Prisons Board, 4 left the Dominion, 2 were sentenced on the original charge, and 15 were before the Court for other offences, leaving 170 probationers on the register at 31st December, 1936.

A further two defaulters have to be added to the 17 shown above, as one probationer was convicted of breach of probation and later resumed reporting, while one failed to report and had not been located up to the end of the period. From the foregoing figures the number of defaulters shown is 19, which is approximately 6 per cent. of the number dealt with during the period under review. It may be noted that six of the probationers who came before the Court later resumed reporting. This result may be considered very satisfactory indeed.

The total amount received as payment in respect of costs of prosecution and restitution was £541 3s. 7d. This amount represents £64 3s. 5d. received as costs of prosecution and £477 0s. 2d. restitution-moneys. The total is £179 less than the amount collected during the previous period, due largely to the fact that a smaller aggregate sum was ordered to be paid under these headings. The lack of employment in many cases has a considerable bearing on the payments made. While there are some probationers who are lax in respect of payments and who have to be often reminded of their obligation in that respect, the majority make a real effort without much compulsion. Whatever view be taken regarding payments, there is no doubt that the all-important factor, remunerative employment, largely governs the ability or inability to pay. It can be said of those probationers who have to make restitution that they at least get some grounding in the rudiments of thrift, and, as in a class, some learn more readily than others.

Apart from the list of defaulters shown, the majority of probationers were well behaved, showing by their responsive conduct due appreciation of the chance given on probation.

While there are still many probationers handicapped by lack of steady employment there has been less trouble in that respect lately. The members of the Probation Committee have done whatever was possible to assist in that respect, and my thanks are due to them for efforts made in that and other directions.

The Placement Office here has been instrumental in placing many of the out-of-work probationers in employment of either a temporary or permanent nature, so that there has been less need to call on the good services of the members of the Probation Committee.

Probationers on Release from Prison and Borstal Institutions.—At the commencement of the period there were 69 probationers in this class on the register, 140 were received on probation from the various Prisons and Institutions, and 10 were received on transfer from other places, making a total number of 219 dealt with.

Of that total, 82 completed the term of probation, 44 were transferred to other districts, 6 were discharged by the Prisons Board, 3 left the Dominion by permission, and 8 were sentenced to terms of imprisonment for offences committed while on probation, leaving 72 in this class on the register at 31st December, 1936.

Of the 6 discharged by the Prisons Board, 4 were habitual criminals. These 4 men gained their discharge by good conduct and industry, and it is gratifying to note that they are still doing well. Two of the men who committed further offences were habitual criminals and their licenses were cancelled, while there were 6 who failed to report and had not been traced up to the end of the period under review.

The number of defaulters shown is approximately 6 per cent. of the number dealt with, a very satisfactory result with this class of probationer.

Reviewing the list of those who completed their term of probation, I find that the majority were well behaved throughout. As usual, however, there were those, who, while they completed the term without further offence, required warning and censure for certain phases of conduct. A few of those who successfully completed the probationary term were men released after serving what I hope will be the last of several sentences served in previous years and who are still doing well. Getting into steady work plus perhaps added years and added wisdom had much to do with their rehabilitation. While there have been more opportunities for work there is still lack of that important corrective, steady and remunerative employment.

While it must be admitted that there are those who, given opportunity, do still lapse into crime, there can be no doubt that if it were possible to readily secure employment there would be less chance of failure to make good. During the year the Placement Officers here have done much to solve the problem of securing employment for these men released from prison, and they have shown great consideration in that respect.

Closing this report I must again record an appreciation of the very kindly and courteous treatment which I have experienced from the Judges of the Supreme Court and the Magistrates at this centre, and of the assistance given by the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, the Salvation Army, the social workers, and the police, all of which have been invaluable in contributing to the measure of success shown.

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

I have the honour to submit the following report concerning the work carried on in this district under the Offenders Probation Act and Crimes Amendment Act, during the year ended 31st December, 1936 :—

Under the Offenders Probation Act 119 persons were admitted to varying periods of probation, while 13 were received on transfer from other districts. Seventy-one probationers completed their respective terms and were discharged, and 22 were transferred to other districts. At 31st December, 111 probationers were on the register.

Twenty-eight probationers were received during the year from institutions under the provisions of the Crimes Amendment Act. Thirty-one completed their terms and 2 were discharged on the recommendation of the Prisons Board. At the end of the year 41 men were reporting.

The increase in the number of probationers under the Offenders Probation Act is largely due to prosecutions under the Employment Promotion Act for making false statements regarding employment and earnings. This class of probationer has not given a great deal of trouble, and it is anticipated that the prosecutions and consequent publicity will result in fewer offences of this nature. It is also noticeable that the Courts show greater reluctance in committing offenders to prison where there appears to be a likelihood of reformation under the probation system. In the large majority of cases the probationers appreciate the leniency extended to them, and, in addition to good behaviour, they make restitution by weekly or monthly instalments from their earnings.

Regarding the question of employment, some of the men are difficult to place because of their physical condition, while a few are mentally incapable of competing in the labour market with their more fortunate fellow-men. The activities of the Public Works Department have been the means of giving employment to a number of able-bodied probationers, but there are a few who may be regarded as permanent sustenance cases.

The amount collected by way of restitution is slightly less than in the previous year, but this is mainly due to the fact that the Court orders last year were for smaller amounts. I am pleased to report that many of the men have made very creditable efforts to make restitution. This is very gratifying and goes to prove that the large majority of those who are admitted to probation show their worthiness of the leniency extended to them by the Courts.

With regard to the behaviour of probationers, I have to report that less than 2 per cent. of those dealt with during the year were committed to prison for failure to comply with the conditions of their license. This compares more than favourably with previous years and should be regarded as very satisfactory.

Voluntary social workers have continued to render assistance to probationers whenever possible. The value of the splendid work which they perform for the community cannot be overestimated, and I desire to express my appreciation to each and all of them for their kindly help during the year. It would not be possible to give the necessary individual attention to certain probationers without the assistance of these understanding people who are prepared to give of their own time to help along those who have slipped in the battle of life.

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

In proportion to the steady decline in criminal statistics for this district, the number of offenders admitted to probation during the period under review has been fewer than usual. This does not imply, however, that, where the circumstances have been favourable to the adoption of such a course, the Courts have been less inclined than hitherto to make use of probation as a reconstructive agency. My experience is that possibly owing to the relatively minor offences against the law, not a few of

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.

Borstal Institutions and Crimes Amendment Act.—The statistics under this heading, dealing with those released on probationary license from various institutions, reveal that, while the total number dealt with remains approximately the same, there is an increase in the number released who came into this district.

The defaulters, including 2 of the habitual-criminal class, were more or less representative of a type unwilling or unable to adjust themselves to normal standards of life and conduct and proved impervious to advice.

While on the whole conduct has been satisfactory during the year, it may be said that the general tone of response on the part of the younger probationers has been noticeably good, and in quite a few cases consistently encouraging from time to time.

The increased opportunities provided for all types by regular and suitable employment, resulting in increased social interest, has proved an invaluable aid in the endeavour to promote the desired measure of change of thought and ultimate reform.

In the matter of securing employment, the helpful co-operation of the State Placement Service has proved of immeasurable assistance and, apart from the practical results, the sympathetic interest of the officials has been a pleasing feature and appreciated alike both by probationers and myself.

Thanks are due to members of the Voluntary Probation Committee, the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, and the Honorary Justices' Association for valued interest and practical co-operation in the work we seek to do. The sympathetic understanding of Judges and Magistrates has been greatly appreciated, as also the assistance and courtesy of police and Court officials.

The number of probationers dealt with during the year was as follows—Offenders Probation Act : Admitted during year 66, received on transfer 33, already on register 103, this total being reduced during the year by 50 completing term, 1 discharged by Prisons Board, 7 committed further offences, and 28 transfers, leaving 116 on register at the 31st December, 1936. Moneys recovered—Restitution, £109 6s. 10d.; costs of prosecution, £70 8s. 6d.; total, £479 15s. 4d.

Crimes Amendment Act.—Thirty-seven names appeared on the register at the beginning of the period, being increased by 94 new releases and 21 transfers, and reduced by 63 discharged as completed, 1 discharged by Prisons Board, 7 cancelled licenses, 1 left Dominion, and 39 transfers, leaving 41 on the register at the end of the year.

Adjutant HOPE HART, Probation Officer for Women, Auckland.

The number of probationers on the register at the commencement of the year was 33, increased by 33 admissions, 5 transfers, and 6 on license; of these, 30 completed their term, 9 were transferred, and 1 left the Dominion, leaving 37 on the register at the end of the year.

A few probationers failed to respond to the system, 3 being convicted for breaches of probation, but the majority are determined to make good and appreciate the opportunity afforded them to do so.

I wish to record my appreciation of the kindness and sympathetic understanding shown by the Judges and Magistrates, Court officials, and Police Department.

Miss A. J. SIMPSON, Probation Officer for Women, Wellington.

I beg to submit my ninth annual report as Women's Probation Officer for the City of Wellington and district for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

Women offenders admitted to probation at local Courts during the year numbered 20. Five were received on transfer from other districts and 2 were handed over to me by the Borstal Association, making a total of 25 new offenders. At the commencement of the year I had 30 women reporting to me, and these, together with the new probationers, made a total of 60 who came officially under my control during the year. Twenty-seven completed their terms more or less satisfactorily, 3 were transferred to other districts, and 1, who was charged with breach of her license, was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. Another was charged with theft and was committed to Borstal.

The majority of the untrained girls are employed as waitresses, but there are 3 probationers who are doing clerical work, 2 of them having been in the same position for a number of years, and their employers are aware that they are on probation. Then again, there is the girl who has never been controlled and who will not stay any length of time in a position. She does not need to worry, as the Women's Unemployment Bureau is always there for her to fall back upon.

As wages have improved and there is more money in circulation I am endeavouring to instil into the girls' minds a spirit of thrift. This year I have collected with very little effort £67 10s. of restitution owing, and £4 3s. 6d., being costs of prosecution.

I am indebted to the Justices of the Peace Association for a grant of money to be spent on necessitous cases, also my thanks are due to the police and Magistrates' Court staff for their courtesy and help.

Mr. H. N. RICHARDSON, Probation Officer, Gisborne.

I beg to submit my annual report as Probation Officer for year 1936.

On the register at the beginning of the year: Offenders Probation Act, 33; and under Crimes Amendment Act, 3.

Received during the year, under the Offenders Probation Act 10, and under the Crimes Amendment Act 9; leaving on the register, under the Offenders Probation Act 16, under the Crimes Amendment Act 4, at the end of 1936.

The costs of prosecution and restitution-moneys collected during the year amounted to £48 1s. 6d. Three probationers were dealt with during the year under Offenders Probation Act.

Employment has been much easier to obtain during 1936, owing to railway-works near Gisborne.

I wish to thank the Probation Committee, also the Secretary, Y.M.C.A., for their kindness and help during 1936.

Mr. M. McCORMACK, Probation Officer, Hamilton.

I respectfully report that the number of probationers reporting at 31st December, 1936, was 47. Admitted to probation during the year, 24 in Magistrate's Court and 3 by Supreme Court. Money recovered: Restitution, £67 16s. 4d.; costs, £38 9s. 6d.; total, £106 5s. 10d.

On the whole, all probationers under my charge have been reporting very well and behaving themselves. I only had occasion to bring one before the Court for failing to make restitution within specified time as ordered, and he was sentenced to fourteen days in prison.

Again my thanks are due to Mr. Frank Findlay, of Hamilton, for the interest and assistance given to all probationers.

Mr. J. R. ESSON, Probation Officer, Hastings.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

With few exceptions the conduct of probationers has been very good, and they have and are making an honest attempt to make good. Unfortunately, some of them get the idea into their heads that once they are released on probation they can do as they like. I find the Maoris the worst offenders. I have had occasions to warn both pakehas and Maoris that they must obey the terms of their release on probation, and it has had good effect. Four male probationers were convicted under the Crimes Act and sentenced to imprisonment. One female was convicted for breach of her order, and probation order extended. The sum of £38 5s. 6d. has been paid by way of restitution. Some of the cases seemed hopeless, but a little persuasion and advice had good effect.

Twenty probationers completed their term, and I am pleased to report that most of them expressed their thanks for treatment shown them.

Seven were transferred to other districts, 11 were received from other districts, 61 were dealt with during the current year, thus leaving 24 on the register. On the whole the probation system has worked well and most of the probationers have shown their appreciation of being released under the Act.

Mr. R. W. ARNOLD, Probation Officer, Invercargill.

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

Offenders Probation Act Probationers.—On the register at 1st January, 1936, 18, admitted to probation during the year 5, received on transfer 14, making a total of 37 dealt with during the year. This total was reduced by—transferred to other districts 11, reconvicted 7, completed term during the year 7, sentenced on original charge 1, convicted for breach of probation 1, leaving 10 on the register at 31st December, 1936.

In addition to the above, 1 offender was ordered to come up for sentence when called upon and ordered to make the necessary restitution.

The total amount of costs received in the year was £1, and the amount of restitution was £18 7s. 6d. In this connection I am pleased to be able to report that there was at the end of the year only one probationer on the register who has not completed payment of moneys as ordered by the Court. It is hoped in the near future to have this one completed also, as the term of probation imposed expired some time ago.

With the improved economic conditions prevailing during the past year it was very encouraging to see that some probationers, who due to unemployment had been unable to make any payments, immediately made an effort to wipe off their arrears. In the past it was necessary to make allowances in certain cases, and the excellent response would seem to indicate that this leniency was appreciated.

Crimes Amendment Act Probationers and Prevention of Crime (Borstal Institutions Establishment) Act Probationers.—On the register at 1st January, 1936, 9, received from Borstal 5, received from other prisons 7, transferred from other districts 6, making a total of 27. This total was reduced by—transferred to other districts 9, completed probation 7, reconvicted 4, license cancelled 1, leaving a total of 6 on the register at 31st December, 1936.

The conduct and response of probationers generally has been quite satisfactory. It was necessary to recommend the cancellation of probationary license on only one occasion, compared with three times in the previous year.

Little difficulty was experienced this year in finding employment, and I am indebted particularly to the officers of the Labour Department for their generous help and assistance in this respect. Having been found suitable employment, it is the invariable rule that a probationer will, with a little encouragement at times, make an effort to regain his place in society.

In conclusion, I desire to again record my appreciation of the services rendered by the Honorary Medical Officer, Dr. R. Burns Watson. Also to the members of the Toc H and Rotary for their help. The Honorary Parole Officers, Messrs. Marshall, Miller, Watts, and Pickard, have again given their assistance and help to probationers placed under their control.

Mr. C. J. McMULLIN, Probation Officer, Napier.

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

Offenders Probation Act.—At the beginning of the year there were 14 probationers on the register, 20 were admitted to probation during the year, and 7 were received on transfer from other districts.

The total restitution-money collected was £37 14s. 1d., and under the heading of costs of prosecution the sum collected was £54 2s. 11d.

The conduct of the probationers on the whole has been most satisfactory, 3 offenders being convicted of subsequent offences and sentenced to the following terms—viz., 1 sentenced to hard labour, 1 sent to a Borstal Institution, and 1 readmitted to probation.

Some of the probationers under my care gave cause for serious thought at various times, but on the whole the result of the year's work is most encouraging. I am indebted to Mr. Dyson, the local Placement Officer, for his sympathetic advice and help in procuring work for various probationers, which to my mind is the main factor in solving a difficult problem.

Crimes Amendment Act.—There were 9 probationers on the register at the beginning of the year and 19 probationers were received, making a total of 28 dealt with. Eleven completed their term of probation, 1 absconded, 6 were transferred to other districts, 1 was convicted of a subsequent offence and sentenced to hard labour, while 1 was sent to a mental hospital, leaving 8 on the register at the end of the year.

It is very gratifying to note that, with two exceptions, these probationers have been exceedingly well behaved and there was no difficulty experienced in helping them to fulfil the terms of their probation.

Mr. M. CUSSEN, Probation Officer, Nelson.

I respectfully present my report on the working of the Offenders Probation Act for the City of Nelson. Total number dealt with, 43; total number on register at present, 11. Total costs of prosecution and restitution-money paid to 31st March, 1937, £11 9s. 10d.

The conduct of the probationers has been good and all are kept in employment, all restitution and costs of prosecution money is paid up to date, and I am pleased to state by using a little persuasion I have been successful in getting all the probationers under my charge to open an account in the post-office. I keep the bank-book in my charge and bank the money for them, and I do not give them possession of the book or allow them to draw any money out of the post-office until their term of probation is completed, and at the present time they are all very pleased with the scheme.

Mr. W. DINEEN, Probation Officer, New Plymouth.

Herewith my report for the year ended 31st December, 1936 :—

Offenders Probation Act.—At the beginning of the year there were 23 probationers on the register, 23 were admitted to probation during the year, and 7 were received on transfer from other districts. This total was reduced by—completed term during the year 10, transferred 23, leaving 20 on the register at 31st December, 1936.

Of the 23 probationers received from the local Court, 15 had committed offences of dishonesty; of the remainder, 3 were convicted for unlawful conversion of motor-vehicles, 4 were sexual offences against females, 1 was convicted for being intoxicated in charge of a motor-car, and 1 was convicted of arson.

The sum of £138 5s. 8d. was collected from probationers during the year. The general conduct of the probationers has been satisfactory during the year with the exception of 1, who was charged at the Magistrates' Court with breach of probation and was awarded two months' hard labour.

Crimes Amendment Act Probationers.—There were 4 probationers on the register at the beginning of the year, 19 were received on license from institutions, and 3 were transferred from other districts. Sixteen were transferred to other districts, 1 left the country, 2 were recommitted, and 1 absconded, leaving 4 on the register at 31st December, 1936.

Two of the above have been returned to prison for further offences and 1, who had absconded, has not been seen or heard of since May, 1936. It gives me much pleasure to record my appreciation of the assistance given by the Secretary of the Y.W.C.A. in taking over the care and oversight of the female probationers during the past year.

Mr. H. COLE, Probation Officer, Palmerston North.

I beg to submit my annual report for year ended 31st December, 1936.

Received during the year under the Offenders Probation Act: Total dealt with, 60; transferred 20; expired, 11; reporting, 29.

Received under the Crimes Amendment Act, 25; expired, 11; 3 transferred, and 11 reporting.

The moneys collected during the year: Costs of prosecution and restitution totalled £92 7s. 8d.

The conduct of the probationers on the whole has been good, and the working of the system has been very satisfactory.

Mr. E. C. J. FOOT, Probation Officer, Timaru.

I have the honour to submit my report for the period ended 31st December, 1936.

The total number dealt with during the period was 50. Completed terms of probation, 22; probation remitted, 1; reconvicted, 2; transferred other centres, 7; remaining on register, 18. This shows an improvement on the previous year, and it is hoped that the improvement will continue.

The total costs of prosecutions and restitution paid during the financial year was £24.

In regard to restitution, less difficulty has been experienced in obtaining payment than existed in previous years, and with one or two exceptions the majority have been in a position to meet their obligations.

The conduct of probationers has been most satisfactory, and I believe that the leniency extended has been appreciated.

It is very pleasant to receive promises to go straight in the future and to know that, on the whole, these promises are well kept.

I have appreciated the assistance rendered by the Child-welfare Officers, the Court staff, and the police.

Mr. H. ROBINSON, Probation Officer, Wanganui.

I respectfully submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

Offenders Probation Act.—At the commencement of the year the number on the register was 20. New admissions 28, transferred from other districts 3, making a total of 51. Completed probation 9, transferred to other districts 5, leaving a total on the register at the end of the year of 37.

Moneys recovered.—Restitution-money, £79 13s. 7d. ; costs, £46 9s. 9d. : total, £126 3s. 4d.

The conduct of the probationers was good with the exception of 1, who absconded and was subsequently arrested and dealt with.

Crimes Amendment Act.—There were 13 on the register at the beginning of the year, received during the year 16 : total, 29. Transferred 4, discharged 16, leaving on register at the end of the year 9.

I am very pleased to state that all probationers are in employment and a great deal of credit is due to the Placement Officer of this district.

STATISTICS.

OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920.

AGES AND TERMS OF PROBATION OF THE OFFENDERS ADMITTED TO PROBATION DURING THE YEAR 1936.

Age, in Years.	Under Twelve Months.	One Year.	Eighteen Months.	Two Years.	Three Years.	Four Years.	Five Years.	Total.
Under 20 years of age ..	5	60	..	37	15	..	..	117
20 to 24	9	91	6	83	8	..	..	197
25 to 29	7	42	2	32	7	..	..	90
30 to 39	9	43	2	45	5	..	..	104
40 to 49	2	16	..	18	1	1	..	38
50 to 59	1	9	..	17	2	..	..	29
60 and over	2	4	..	4	..	..	..	10
Totals ..	35	265	10	236	38	1	..	585

SUMMARY OF CASES DEALT WITH DURING THE YEAR 1936.

	Admitted to Probation.	Deferred Sentence.	Total.
Number reporting on 1st January, 1936 ..	1,092	174	1,266
Admitted to probation during 1936 ..	585	228	813
Resumed probation (previously struck off) ..	3	..	3
Totals ..	1,680	402	2,082

Completed probation during 1936 ..	584	228	812
Deceased	2	2	4
Discharged by Prisons Board ..	7	1	8
Left Dominion	3	1	4
Absconded and not traced (term expired) ..	13	2	15
Resentenced on original charge ..	23	7	30
Committed further offences ..	24	4	28
Totals ..	656	245	901

Number reporting at 31st December, 1936 ..	1,024	157	1,181
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BREACHES OF CONDITIONS OF RELEASE COMMITTED DURING 1936.

Failed to report	52
Further offences	56
Absconded (still untraced)	15

COSTS OF PROSECUTION AND RESTITUTION-MONEYS COLLECTED DURING THE YEAR
ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1937.

	£	s.	d.
Amount of costs of prosecution collected by Probation Officers ..	618	3	9
Amount of restitution-moneys collected by Probation Officers ..	2,731	7	3
	£3,349	11	0

OFFENCES FOR WHICH OFFENDERS RECEIVED THE BENEFITS OF THE PROBATION ACT DURING THE
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1936.

Offence.	Admitted to Probation.	Deferred Sentence.	Total.
Theft	322	80	402
False pretences, &c. .. .	69	73	142
Breaking, entering, and theft .. .	27	2	29
Common assault .. .	27	9	36
Unlawful conversion of motor-vehicle .. .	24	10	34
Receiving stolen property .. .	11	1	12
Mischief and wilful damage .. .	11	6	17
Indecent assault .. .	11	1	12
Carnal knowledge .. .	10	1	11
Forgery and uttering .. .	9	..	9
Intoxicated in charge of vehicle .. .	9	5	14
Obscene language .. .	8	7	15
Unlawfully on premises .. .	6	5	11
Indecent act .. .	6	1	7
Arson .. .	6	..	6
Drunkenness .. .	..	5	5
Bigamy .. .	4	..	4
Resisting arrest .. .	3	..	3
Rogue and vagabond .. .	3	..	3
Desertion .. .	1	2	3
Unlawful conversion of property .. .	3	..	3
Disorderly behaviour .. .	3	..	3
Attempted suicide .. .	2	10	12
Negligent driving .. .	2	3	5
Stowaway .. .	1	1	2
Bookmaking .. .	2	..	2
Incest .. .	1	1	2
Selling liquor without license .. .	..	2	2
Breach of probation .. .	..	2	2
Assisting procure abortion .. .	1	..	1
Abduction .. .	1	..	1
Abandoning a child .. .	1	..	1
Personation .. .	1	..	1
Cruelty to animals	1	1
Totals .. .	585	228	813

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