

1939
NEW ZEALAND.

OFFENDERS PROBATION

UNDER OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920, AND CRIMES AMENDMENT ACT, 1910
(REPORT ON OPERATION OF), FOR THE YEAR 1938.

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, 11th August, 1939.

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, 1938.

I have, &c.,

H. G. B. MASON,

Minister of Justice.

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

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the work of the probation system under the Offenders Probation Act and the Crimes Amendment Act for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

The statistical tables appended hereto show details of the number of offenders dealt with, the nature of the offences, and the ages of the persons concerned.

Reports from the Probation Officers in the cities and the principal secondary towns are also attached.

In the small country towns police constables act as Probation Officers, but in any town where there is a substantial number of probationers it is the policy of the Department to appoint special Probation Officers.

Offenders Probation.—The reports from the district officers reveal a satisfactory year's work and show, with comparatively few exceptions, that those admitted to probation have responded reasonably well. The difficulties in placing men in employment have not been as acute as in past years, and this has been a factor which has made the position easier in the matter of the payment of restitution. All Probation Officers express gratitude to the Government Placement Officers for their helpful co-operation. Employment is undoubtedly an important factor in rehabilitation. With many men adversity makes them resentful and anti-social, and often a little understanding sympathy and help in finding a job transforms a feeling of "grouch" into one of gratitude.

The number of probationers who committed breaches by failing to comply with the conditions of their probation or who offended again subsequently was just over 9 per cent. of the total dealt with. This may be regarded as satisfactory.

The number of offenders admitted to probation during the year was 914, as compared with 897 for the previous year. The amount of restitution money collected from probationers was £4,703. The success in this regard has been due to the patient and discerning pressure brought to bear by Probation Officers. This requirement to make reparation is not only of advantage to the victims of the offences committed, but it is noticeable that many probationers through this means are reminded of their obligations, and they themselves frankly admit the justice of the orders to make restitution. This in itself is a step towards social readjustment.

Probation in New Zealand has been recognized by statute since 1886. The Dominion was thus one of the earliest countries to adopt the system. It has gradually been developed from originally being applicable only to first offenders until, since the passing of the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, it has applied to any offenders. The organization, both from the point of view of personnel and method, has been gradually extended and improved, and it can now be claimed that the Dominion is served by an efficient and sympathetic team of probation workers. The rationale of the system, in so far as the selection of cases and their supervision is concerned, is clearly and succinctly stated in the report of the Committee set up in England to deal with social services in the Courts. As this accords with the practice followed in the Dominion, the extract is quoted hereunder:—

“We have already referred to the need for care in the selection of cases for probation. To place persons on probation where the circumstances do not justify it imposes an unfair burden on the Probation Officer, and brings discredit on the system. Failure in unsuitable cases may even deter Courts from using probation in cases which are suitable. Probation may not always be in the best interest of the offender. Public interest also demands that it shall not be used indiscriminately without due regard to all the circumstances of the case, including the character of the offence.

“In fairness, then, to society, the offender, and the Probation Officer, no person should be placed on probation without full consideration of his previous history and present surroundings, as well as the immediate cause of his appearance before the Court. Without inquiry it is impossible adequately to take into account the conditions which the law prescribes as justifying the use of probation. Inquiry has both a positive as well as a negative value; it ensures the benefit of the system to those who are likely to profit by it, and discloses those cases where probation is not likely to have any chance of success. Moreover, the Probation Officers who gave evidence before us were unanimous in expressing the opinion that, where an offender is to be placed under supervision, it is important that the Probation Officer should make contact with him at the earliest possible stage. In this way the Probation Officer is better able to secure the confidence of the offender and to exercise his influence more effectively at a later stage.

“There should be a constructive effort by the Probation Officer, in co-operation with the probationer, to help him to fulfil his undertaking to the Court. With this object in view the environment of the probationer needs special study.

“The probationer is rarely an isolated unit in society; there are usually in the background friends or relations who may be an influence for good or ill. By obtaining the help of the family the Probation Officer may be able to strengthen his own efforts.

“Different probationers need different methods of treatment. This statement may appear obvious, but it is easily forgotten, especially if a uniform practice is adopted of requiring probationers to report at the Probation Officer's room. The high-spirited young man or woman requires widely different handling from the middle-aged father or mother of a family. It may be necessary to remit these visits or to vary the intervals at which they are required to suit the circumstances of the probationer or the progress made by him. Sometimes an older probationer may respond best by the knowledge that the Probation Officer is placing trust in him and giving him some degree of responsibility. To teach a probationer the way to help others as well as himself may be the best method of re-establishing self-respect.”

Parole.—The Crimes Amendment Act statistics show that 275 persons were released on probation during the year on the recommendation of the Prisons Board. None of these were recommitted to prison for breach of the conditions of their license; and twenty-three, including twenty-one habitual criminals, had their licenses cancelled for further offences. Considering the difficulties with which these dischargees are faced in rehabilitating themselves, the small percentage of failures can 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, 1,663 prisoners (excluding habitual criminals) were released on probation, and during this period only 120, or 7·2 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 24·71 per cent. have again been convicted subsequent to discharge.

This latter form of probation, which deals with dischargees from prison and Borstal, though different in origin from the probation referred to in the earlier part of this report, calls for the same sympathetic understanding of human nature as with probationers under the Offenders Probation Act, but, if anything, it requires a more friendly shepherding to assist a parolee during the hazardous transition period between his first emergence from the more or less artificial life in an institution and his finding his feet again as a free citizen.

Conclusion. Probation is essentially a community job. A Probation Officer is bound to rely on, and utilize, as far as available, all resources—voluntary and official, social and religious—and in this connection I desire to express the Department's appreciation of the exceedingly valuable help given by a large band of voluntary workers, who assist both individually and through committees, and of the splendid co-operation shown by the Government Placement Officers and the police. Also, grateful acknowledgments are made to the many ministers of religion, officers of the Salvation Army, and other social organizations who have helped in this important salvage work.

B. L. DALLARD,
Chief Probation Officer.

REPORTS OF DISTRICT PROBATION OFFICERS.

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

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the probation work at this centre for the period from 1st January, 1938, to 31st December, 1938.

Commencing the period under review with 195 probationers on the register, there were 246 admitted to probation from the Auckland Courts, while 89 were received on transfer from other districts, making a total of 530 dealt with for the period. Of that number, 131 completed their probationary periods, 136 were transferred to other districts, 4 were discharged by the Prisons Board, 2 left the Dominion, 8 were brought before the Court and sentenced on the original charge, while 6 came before the Court for other offences committed while on probation. The foregoing figures total 287, which, deducted from the number dealt with, left 243 probationers on the register at the termination of the period under review.

To the number of defaulters shown there has to be added 27 others who came before the Court for other offences and later reverted to the probationary conditions. A total defaulters' list of 41 is thus shown for the year, being less than 8 per cent. of the total number dealt with. There is a slight increase in the percentage over last year's figures, which can be in some degree attributed to the wider use being made of the probation system, with a consequent diversity of type. Nevertheless, from every point of view the result may be considered highly satisfactory, giving further evidence of the value and efficacy of the probation system.

The sum of £781 1s. 2d. was paid in as restitution and £112 8s. 11d. as costs of prosecution, a total of £893 10s. 1d. for the year. That total is £118 2s. 8d. above the total for the previous year.

There are many factors governing the collection of restitution and costs. In many cases difficulty is experienced in connection with these payments, and while it is pleasing to record that the conditions imposed in this respect are being largely met, care, discrimination, and discretion are necessary in enforcing payment so that there may be no undue hardship in compelling the observance of the conditions imposed by the Court in this respect.

While the number of defaulters shows a slight increase, it is well to remember that the majority have carried out in a highly satisfactory manner the obligations imposed. While there are many who do not come fully up to expectations, it is pleasing to record that so many of the probationers show, by their exemplary conduct and attention to instructions, their appreciation of what has and is being done for them.

Probationers on Release from Prison and Borstal Institutions.—At the beginning of the year there were 77 probationers in this class on the register, and 92 were received on probation from the various institutions or on transfer from other districts, showing a total of 169 dealt with. Of these, 54 completed the term of probation, 30 were transferred to other districts, 5 were discharged by the Prisons Board, 4 left the Dominion by permission, 2 died, and 21 were sentenced to terms of imprisonment for offences committed while on probation, leaving 53 probationers on the register at the 31st December, 1938.

Four of the number who committed further offences were habitual criminals whose licenses were cancelled. The number of defaulters shown in this class is 12½ per cent. of the total dealt with. Probationers in this class who completed the probationary terms, with some few exceptions, did so in quite a satisfactory manner, and appear to be doing well.

The matter of employment is one which still causes a great deal of concern to both Probation Officer and probationers, although there is a distinct improvement in this direction. Unfortunately for the offender, the fact that he has transgressed and appeared before Court very often means loss of employment and consequent difficulty in obtaining remunerative work. This is indeed a problem and one difficult to overcome. Many employers are sympathetic, and fall in with the probation idea by continuing to employ

the offender. The value of assured employment to those who have to rehabilitate themselves cannot be too strongly stressed. This is borne out by the numbers who, having been given an opportunity, successfully complete the period of probation and continue to do well. In this connection I have to place on record my appreciation of the very valued and wise assistance rendered by the Placement Officers at this centre, who have shown, by their sympathetic co-operation, their appreciation of the necessity of placing these men in work.

I must again place on record my thanks for the ready and kind assistance given by the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. Indeed, were it not for the assistance received from that quarter the Probation Officer would be at his wits end to, as it were, carry over that very difficult period between release from Court or prison and the obtaining of work. Mention must also be made of the assistance rendered by the Salvation Army officers, many social workers, and the police, whose help and understanding are valuable factors in the carrying-out of this constructive work.

Concluding this report, I have again to express my appreciation of the kindly and courteous treatment of the Judges and Magistrates at this centre.

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

In presenting my annual report on the work accomplished in the Christchurch district during the year 1938, I think it can be said quite definitely that good progress has been made. More men coming under my supervision have been in full-time work than ever before, and the conduct and work of probationers have generally been of a high standard. There have been lapses, but no more than usual, and these mostly in cases where men have been ordered to come up for sentence and make restitution. With regard to our Court work, it is regrettable to have to report that there has been a fairly large amount of serious crime among young men during the year, and in nearly all the cases the Courts have found it necessary, in the interest of the community and the offenders themselves, to commit them to reformatory institutions. In some cases lack of employment has been stated to be the cause of their downfall, but I do know that in most of the cases they were in regular employment. Furthermore, I do know that an over-indulgence in intoxicating liquor was definitely a contributing factor in several serious crimes committed by young men, and it might not be out of place to mention here the easy manner in which these young men, obviously under age, have obtained liquor, both in ordinary selling-hours and after hours.

This report would not be complete if I did not mention the splendid assistance we have received from the officers of the Government Labour Bureau in placing a very large number of our men in work.

Many voluntary helpers render great assistance, and two we come in contact with most of all are the Rev. Mr. Revell, City Missioner, and Adjutant Thorne, of the Salvation Army Men's Home. These two gentlemen have again helped us to the limit of their powers.

The statistics for the year ended December, 1938, are as follows:-

Probationers reporting at 1st January, 1938, 130; released by Courts, 94; transferred from other districts, 27; discharged or completed terms of supervision, 63; transferred to other districts, 51; sentenced on original charge and for other fresh offences, 9; and defaulted, 7: Probationers on register at 31st December, 1938, 121.

Under the Crimes Amendment Act we commenced the year with 39 reporting; received during the year 36, making a total of 75 dealt with. Licenses cancelled, 2; sent to gaol for fresh offences, 3; defaulted, 3; discharged by Prisons Board, 1; discharged during the year, 42: Crimes Amendment Act probationers reporting at 31st December, 1938, 24.

Restitution collected during the year amounted to £620 2s., costs of prosecution £5 0s. 6d., making a total of £625 2s. 6d.

Mr. E. F. MOSLEY, District Probation Officer, Dunedin.

I have the honour to submit the annual report on the probation work at this centre for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

In common with many districts, there has been a decline in the number of criminal cases coming before the Court, but this has not been reflected in the probation activities of this district. The figures for this year show that there has been a considerable increase in the number released and remaining on probation. This would seem to indicate a tendency of the Courts to apply in an increasing ratio the provisions of the Offenders Probation Act.

Whilst the number of men released from institutions is slightly more than was the case last year, there are fewer remaining on the register, this being due to a larger proportion having completed their term.

That the increased faith reposed in probation as an effective reformatory system is justified is again amply demonstrated by the small percentage of apparent failures, defaulters in all categories amounting to only 5 per cent. of the total.

The amount collected by way of restitution is nearly four times as much as last year. This increase has been made possible, no doubt, by the fact that there is more money circulating in the community as well as an increased amount having been ordered to be repaid by the Courts. It is noticed that most men recognize the justice of such orders, while they may be somewhat hesitant in carrying out the same.

In spite of the better facilities for finding men employment, this branch of the work still presents a problem that is not always quickly solved for all. The State Placement Service has been most sympathetic and helpful. Indeed, without this service one would scarcely know where to turn.

In general it may be said that the behaviour of the men has been up to the previous satisfactory standard. There would seem to be a tendency for a larger proportion of young men to be released on probation. This may be the result of the better economic conditions prevailing amongst the poorer class causing older men to have less incentive to commit crimes involving dishonesty, rather than to an increase to any extent in the incidence of crime amongst younger people.

Grateful appreciation is again acknowledged to the voluntary social workers and to the agent of the local Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society, whose co-operation and assistance is very much valued. I desire also to record my indebtedness to the officers of the Police Department, who have always given most helpful and courteous assistance.

Statistics for the year are as follows:

Offenders Probation Act.—On register at the beginning of the year 38, admitted during the year 46, received on transfer 10, total 94, which is to be reduced by 21 who completed their term, 11 transferred, 2 gone overseas, 2 defaulters, and 3 imprisoned, leaving 55 on the register at the end of the year.

Crimes Amendment Act.—On register at the beginning of the year 16, released from institutions 21, received on transfer 2, total 39, less 13 who completed period, 9 transferred, 2 recommitted to institutions, leaving 15 on the register.

Restitution payments totalled £282 and costs of prosecution £3 18s. 6d.: total, £285 18s. 6d.

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

I have the honour to submit the following annual report on the probation work at this centre for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

Statistics show that the year commenced with 131 offender probationers reporting; during the year 100 were released on probation by local Courts, while 56 were received on transfer, making a total dealt with of 287. Completing their respective periods of probation satisfactorily 72 were discharged, while 2 others were discharged by the Prisons Board, 63 were transferred to other districts, while 6 left the Dominion with prior consent. It was found necessary to deal with 7 on the original charges, while 4 others were sentenced to terms of imprisonment for subsequent offences, 1 absconded and at the end of the year remained untraced, leaving 132 reporting at the end of the period under review. Including those dealt with in the ordinary way for breach of conditions of release, the proportion of defaulters approaches 5 per cent., which may be regarded as quite satisfactory.

The total sum of £525 10s. 6d. received by way of payments towards costs and restitution may be regarded as a practical indication of response and of a desire on the part of many probationers to meet their obligations. Their capacity to make reparation in this manner has no doubt increased within recent times, although the other types who seem to require constant pressure are ever with us.

Apart from those who defaulted, many of whom were representative of a type in whom weakness seems almost inherent, response and general behaviour have maintained a fairly high standard and many seem to have completed their terms of probation with feelings of moral security, having benefited during the period of contact, which, as its name implies, proved to them a testing period. The numbers now living normal, useful lives testify to the constructive purposes of the system. The increased opportunities for suitable employment have proved of inestimable value in the matter of rehabilitation and in some measure at least may be regarded as one means by which many are attempting and many have attained more or less complete re-establishment.

Borstal Institutions and Crimes Amendment Act. The year commenced with 44 reporting under this heading, 79 were received on release from various institutions, and along with 19 received on transfer made a total dealt with of 142. Of this number, 48 have been discharged, 36 were transferred to other districts, while 2 were discharged by the Prisons Board, 4 left the Dominion with permission, in 6 instances licenses were cancelled and probationers returned to institutional control, while 5 others were sentenced for subsequent offences. At the end of the period under review 41 probationers were reporting.

Generally speaking, conduct of probationers under this heading has proved satisfactory, and response in the nature of commendable efforts towards self-re-establishment has proved encouraging in many instances. The defaulters, including two habitual criminals,

represent those who failed in varying degrees to profit by experience and who were unwilling or unable to appreciate conditional liberty as an opportunity to establish themselves. It does not appear to be inconsistent with general statistics that during periods of comparative prosperity many seem to find readjustment to normal standards of conduct more difficult, and it is felt that this has been reflected in probation work generally during the past year.

It is pleasing to record the understanding interest and assistance of the officials of the State Placement Service and others who have been instrumental in placing probationers in suitable and congenial employment consistent with their varying abilities and capacities to adjust themselves, a difficult and searching task at any time.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge with a deep sense of appreciation the practical interest of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, the Honorary Justices' Association, the Salvation Army, and others interested in social welfare, whose generous co-operation has been always available and has proved of invaluable assistance.

Appreciative reference has also to be made to the thoughtful and encouraging interest of the Judges of the Supreme Court and Magistrates, and of the assistance rendered always with courtesy by the police and Court officials.

Major HOPE HART, Probation Officer for Women, Auckland.

I have the honour to submit the annual report as Probation Officer for Women in the Auckland District.

At the beginning of the year commencing 1st January, 1938, there were 31 probationers on the register. During the year 45 were admitted from the Auckland Courts, 14 were received on transfer, making a total of 90 dealt with. Of that number, 32 completed the probationary periods, 13 were transferred away to other districts, leaving a total of 45 probationers on the register at the end of the year.

During the year there were 8 defaulters.

The collecting of restitution moneys this year has not been so difficult owing to the fact that there is more employment. The amounts of £84 13s. in restitution moneys and £3 13s. 6d. Court costs were received, making a total of £88 6s. 6d. in all.

The large majority of probationers behave well and appreciate the leniency offered them by probation, thus proving that the system of probation is a means to their becoming useful and law-abiding citizens.

I wish to record my appreciation for the kindness and courtesy received from Judges of the Supreme Court, Magistrates, Court officials, and the Police Department.

Major V. D. WOOD, Probation Officer for Women, Christchurch.

I have pleasure in submitting my annual report on numbers and progress of probationers dealt with during the year ended 31st December, 1938.

At the beginning of the year there were 9 probationers on the register. Admissions during the year totalled 12, and 3 were transferred into the district, making a total of 24 dealt with. Of these, 10 satisfactorily completed probation and 1 was transferred to another district, leaving 13 on the register at the end of the year.

Moneys collected during the year ended 31st March, 1939, amounted to £27 10s. 11d. This amount has been collected in small sums. This has meant sacrifice and consistency, but I feel it is a very helpful and necessary contribution to the character of the probationer, and in some cases the most effective way to the full realization and establishment of higher principles.

During the year it has not been necessary to bring any probationer before the Court for breach of probation.

There has been real adjustment and building during the year, with very profitable results.

It is cheering to meet frequently those who have passed through our hands in previous years and who regard us as friends still interested in their welfare.

Thanks are due to Magistrates, Court officials, and police for their understanding, assistance, and courtesy during the year.

Captain M. DICKINSON, Probation Officer for Women, Dunedin.

I respectfully submit my annual report as Probation Officer for Women for the Dunedin District for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

The number of probationers on the register at the beginning of the year was 16, 14 were admitted during the year, making a total of 30 dealt with; of these, 11 have completed their term of probation and 4 were transferred to other districts, leaving 15 on the register at the end of the year.

Received from prison reformatory, 1, having completed her term satisfactorily.

Total of restitution moneys collected during the year, £16 13s. 6d.

The majority of probationers are in steady employment and appreciate the liberty given them. On the whole, they have responded well.

I desire to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Magistrates, the Court officials, Police Department, and social workers for their courtesy and assistance during the year.

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

I beg to submit my tenth annual report as Women's Probation Officer for the City of Wellington and district for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

At the beginning of the year 28 probationers were reporting. During the year 21 were received from the Courts, 5 from institutions, and 8 on transfer, making a total of 62 dealt with. Of this number, 21 completed the period of probation, 9 were transferred to other districts, 2 were discharged by the Prisons Board, and 2 were reconvicted, leaving 28 names on the register at the close of the year.

Restitution to the amount of £38 13s. and costs of prosecution amounting to £3 9s. 6d. have been received.

All girls are at present employed, and there is no excuse for any girl to be idle, for there is work for all. A girl can always find employment through the Placement Officer.

As one probationer's home was burned down, the secretary of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society very kindly gave me an order to purchase clothing for her.

I have to thank the Justices of the Peace Association for monetary assistance to deserving cases, and the Magistrates' Court staff and the police for their ready help.

Mr. D. DAVIES, Probation Officer, Gisborne.

I respectfully submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

Owing to the amount of remunerative work offering, most probationers have been able to comply with their conditions regarding restitution to be made; and, but for one who absconded and two who failed to comply with their conditions of probation, their conduct has been satisfactory.

With pleasure I tender my thanks to the executive of the local Y.M.C.A. and the officers of the Placement Service for their kind assistance and willingness to help at all times.

Following is a summary of persons dealt with and moneys collected:—

At the commencement of the year there were 24 on the register, admitted to probation 14, deferred sentence 6, and there were transferred from other districts 8, making a total dealt with of 52.

Those who completed their term numbered 17, and transferred to other districts 13, leaving on the register at 31st December, 1938, 22.

Crimes Amendment Act.—On 1st January, 1938, there were 4 men, while received during the year were new releases 1, on transfer from other districts 2, completed sentence 1, while 1 was transferred, and 1 was convicted of other offences, thereby leaving on the list 4.

Restitution moneys collected were £52 9s. 6d. Prosecution costs recovered, £6.

Mr. A. C. A'COURT, Probation Officer, Greymouth.

I respectfully submit the annual report on probation work for the year ended 31st December, 1938. This report includes that of Mr. D. R. Lloyd, who has been transferred to the Child Welfare Department, Auckland.

Moneys recovered.—Restitution moneys collected during the year ended 31st March, 1939, amounted to £36 4s. 2d.

Offenders Probation Act.—At the beginning of the year there were 4 probationers on the register; during the year 11 were admitted to probation and 8 were received on transfer, making a total of 23 dealt with. Of this number, 8 satisfactorily completed the probationary period and 11 were transferred to other districts, leaving 4 names on the register.

Crimes Amendment Act.—Total dealt with 2, of whom 1 completed probation. The other has absconded and his whereabouts are unknown. With this exception the probationers have in all cases fulfilled the conditions of their licenses. Reports have been periodical and restitution moneys have been paid in promptly. As some of the probationers live in South Westland reports have to be made in their case by letter, but in no instance has there been any failing to report. I desire to take this opportunity of thanking the officers of the local police and my predecessor for the assistance and advice given me by them.

Mr. M. McCORMACK, Probation Officer, Hamilton.

I respectfully present my report on the working of the probation system in Hamilton for the year ended 31st December, 1938. At the end of December, 1937, I had 25 on the register. During the year 6 were granted probation by the Supreme Court and 21 by the Magistrate's Court and 46 were transferred from other districts, making a total of 98 dealt with. Costs of prosecution and restitution money paid total £119 9s. 4d.

With a few exceptions the conduct of probationers has been most satisfactory, and the majority seem determined to lead a straight life for the future. It is pleasing to note that nearly every probationer is in employment of some sort, and all appear to be happy and contented.

Appreciative reference is due to Mr. Findlay, Court officials, and police for their kindly interest and co-operation.

Mr. A. G. JOHNSTON, Probation Officer, Hastings.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

The number of probationers on the register at the beginning of the year was 23, admitted to probation at Hastings 10, received by transfer from other districts 21, total 54; less transfers to other districts 13, those who completed their term 20, and 2 released by Prisons Board, leaving 19 on the register at the close of the year.

The amount of costs of prosecution and restitution collected during the year totalled £90 8s. 6d.

In looking back over the past year it is pleasing to note the appreciation shown by probationers for the privileges of probation in that the discipline with freedom has brought a realization of the necessity for good citizenship. As one meets ex-probationers this is apparent in the steadiness that was lacking previously. Not in all cases is this so, but sufficiently so to show that probation is a worthwhile system.

Little trouble has been experienced in the majority of cases, and generally conduct has been good.

I wish to thank the local Employment Bureau and the freezing-works for assistance in finding employment for some, and also one drapery firm for supplying clothing so willingly without guarantee of payment.

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

Hereunder I submit my report on the probation work at this centre for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

Probationers under Offenders Probation Act, 1920.—There were 3 on the register at the commencement of the year, 8 were admitted to probation by the local Court, and 5 transferred from other districts, making 16 dealt with during the year. Six were transferred to other districts, 1 died, and 3 satisfactorily completed their respective periods and were automatically discharged. This leaves 6 names on the register at 31st December. Of these, 2 are required to make restitution. The remaining probationers reporting appreciate the leniency offered by probation, and behave accordingly.

Restitution money collected and disbursed amounted to £49 19s., and costs to £10: total £59 19s.

One offender dealt with by the Court under section 16 of the Act was ordered to come up for sentence when called upon within twelve months.

Probationers under Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, and the Prevention of Crime (Borstal Institutions Establishment) Act, 1921.—At the beginning of the year there were 6 probationers on the register. During the year 4 were received on release from the local institution and 10 on transfer from other districts, making 20 to be accounted for. Of these, 7 were transferred out to other districts where they had obtained work and 9 duly completed their probationary periods, thus leaving only 4 on the register on 31st December. Of these, 1 is an habitual criminal, who, however, is giving no trouble. He recently married, and appears to be settling down.

Practically no trouble was occasioned by probationers, all reporting regularly, and all in employment for the most of the time.

General.—As a rule, there is not much difficulty in securing employment when needed, and the assistance afforded by the State Placement Service and the Public Works Department in this direction is acknowledged. Various business firms and private individuals have also been helpful in offering or securing work when so requested.

There is no doubt that probation is far and away less expensive to the State than a term in custody, while in nearly all probation cases the reformatory value is just as effective.

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

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the probation work for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

Offenders Probation Act, 1920.—At the beginning of the year there were 19 probationers on the register, 26 were admitted to probation during the year, and 9 were received on transfer from other districts, making a total of 54 dealt with during the year, this total being reduced by 18 having completed their term of probation, 18 transferred to other districts, 1 discharged by the Prisons Board, 1 reconvicted, leaving 16 on the register at 31st December, 1938.

Crimes Amendment Act.—There were 7 probationers on the register at the beginning of the year, 9 were received on transfer from other districts or on license from institutions, making a total of 16 dealt with, of which number 4 completed their terms satisfactorily, 2 were transferred to other districts, and 5 were reconvicted for further offences, leaving 5 on the register at the end of the year.

The conduct of the probationers under the Offenders Probation Act, 1920, has been very satisfactory indeed, and only in one instance has there been cause for serious complaint. Those dealt with under the Crimes Amendment Act are a much more difficult problem and do not appreciate to the same extent what is being done to assist them to rehabilitate themselves.

The matter of placing men in suitable employment is of first importance, and in this connection I desire to express my appreciation of the help given by the State Placement Officer and his staff, who have at all times been anxious to assist me in this direction.

I wish to record my appreciation of the courteous and kindly treatment which I have experienced from the local Stipendiary Magistrate and the definite interest he has always taken in probation work. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Court officials and the police for their courtesy and help during the year.

Restitution payments totalled £55 5s. 2d., and costs of prosecution payments totalled £9 17s.; total collected, £65 2s. 2d.

MR. M. CUSSEN, Probation Officer, Nelson.

I have pleasure in submitting my annual report in connection with the working of the Offenders Probation Act in the Nelson District for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

During the year the total number of cases dealt with in this district was 25, the number transferred from other districts being 16.

Total amount of costs of prosecution and restitution money paid during the year was £46 4s. 6d.

The conduct of the probationers, on the whole, has been good. They have all been kept fairly constantly in work, and during the year I have had no occasion to call on any of the societies for any assistance.

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

I beg to submit my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1938, in connection with the working of the Offenders Probation Act and on probationers under the Crimes Amendment Act in the New Plymouth District.

In reference to the Offenders Probation Act, I wish to report that there were 19 probationers on the register at the beginning of the period, 15 were received from local Courts during the year, and 8 were received on transfer from other districts, making a total of 42. Of that number, 18 were transferred to other districts, 2 have failed to report and are at present being sought for breach of probation, 1 died, 2 were sentenced to terms of imprisonment for further offences, 9 have completed their terms of probation satisfactorily, leaving 10 on the register at the end of the period.

The sum of £35 2s. 1d. has been collected from probationers during the year.

The general conduct of probationers during the year has been good, with the exception of 2 who failed to report in accordance with the terms of their licenses, and 1 who was sentenced to a term of two years' reformatory detention for further offences.

Under the Crimes Amendment Act, 1920, there were 6 probationers on the register at the beginning of the year, 15 were received from prison on license, and 5 were received from other districts. Of these, 13 were transferred to other districts, 6 completed their terms satisfactorily, 1 had his license cancelled and was returned to prison for other offences, there is a warrant out for the arrest of 1, 1 absconded to Australia, and 4 remain on the register at end of the year.

The thanks of the Department and myself are due to Miss Scotter, of the Young Women's Christian Association, New Plymouth, for her valuable assistance and supervision over the female probationers. Miss Scotter has devoted a considerable amount of time and ability to the care and guidance of these women.

MR. R. G. SAMPSON, Probation Officer, Timaru.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1938, and also the incorporated financial return for the year ended 31st March, 1939.

At the commencement of the year there were 14 probationers on the register. During the year 7 were placed on probation and 5 were on transfer from another district. At the end of the year 1938 only 8 remained on the register. The disposals are accounted for as follows: Transferred to other districts, 7; terms of probation completed, 9; released by Prisons Board, 1; imprisoned for breach, 1; making a total of 18 altogether.

It is very pleasing to note that there is a decided decrease in the number of persons placed on probation during the year—only 6 cases, as against 10 of 1937. In my opinion, this is accounted for by the fact that the young people of to-day have ample opportunity of being fully employed. I am finding no difficulty in placing all probationers in work.

The general conduct of the probationers, with the exception of 1, has been good, and all have greatly appreciated the leniency and advice given them by the Courts.

Those released during the year appear to have made good.

The amount of restitution collected during the year was £30 19s.

I wish to record my appreciation of the courteous treatment and helpful advice which has been extended to me by the local Magistrate, and to thank the Court officials, police and the District Employment Officer for their assistance.

Mr. H. ROBINSON, Probation Officer, Wanganui.

I submit my annual report on the working of the probation system for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

Offenders Probation Act.—At the commencement of the year the number on the register was 22, new admissions 18, transferred from other districts 8, making a total of 48; transferred to other districts 12, completed probation 11, sent to prison for breaches of probation 4, leaving 21 on the register on 31st December, 1938.

Crimes Amendment Act. There were 14 on the register at the commencement of the year, received during year 14, making a total of 28; discharged 5, transferred 4, recommitted 3, and absconded 2, leaving 14 on the register at the end of the year.

Moneys recovered during the year were: Costs of prosecution, £29 12s.; restitution, £45 11s. 4d.; total, £75 3s. 4d.

The conduct of the probationers, on the whole, has been satisfactory. I am very pleased to state that all the probationers are in employment and are making an effort to rehabilitate themselves in the community.

STATISTICS.

OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920.

AGES AND TERMS OF PROBATION OF THE OFFENDERS ADMITTED TO PROBATION DURING THE YEAR, 1938.

Age, in Years.	Six Months or under.	One Year.	Eighteen Months.	Two Years.	Three Years.	Four Years.	Five Years.	Total.
Under 20 years of age ..	11	68	4	76	26	1	..	186
20 and under 25 ..	18	87	9	91	31	1	..	237
25 " 30 ..	6	46	2	37	9	..	..	100
30 " 40 ..	8	54	5	35	7	..	..	109
40 " 50 ..	3	17	2	24	3	..	..	49
50 " 60 ..	1	11	1	10	1	..	..	24
60 and over ..	..	6	..	2	2	..	..	10
Totals ..	47	289	23	275	79	2	..	715

SUMMARY OF CASES DEALT WITH DURING THE YEAR 1938.

	Admitted to Probation.	Deferred Sentence.	Total.
Number reporting on 1st January, 1938 ..	1,030	213	1,243
Admitted to probation during the year ..	715	199	914
Totals ..	1,745	412	2,157
Completed probation during the year ..	548	210	758
Deceased ..	5	2	7
Discharged by Prison Board ..	17	5	22
Left the Dominion ..	10	..	10
Absconded and not traced (term expired) ..	10	4	14
Resentenced on the original charge ..	29	8	37
Committed further offences ..	21	3	24
Totals ..	640	232	872
Number reporting on 31st December, 1938 ..	1,105	180	1,285

BREACHES OF CONDITIONS OF RELEASE COMMITTED DURING 1938.

Failed to report, &c. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	80
Committed further offences ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	104
Absconded (still untraced) ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	24
Totals ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	208

COSTS OF PROSECUTION AND RESTITUTION MONEYS COLLECTED DURING THE YEAR
ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1939.

	£	s.	d.
Amount of costs of prosecution collected by Probation Officers ..	403	17	3
Amount of restitution moneys collected	4,299	10	2
	£4,703	7	5

OFFENCES FOR WHICH OFFENDERS RECEIVED THE BENEFITS OF THE PROBATION ACT DURING THE
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1938.

Offence.	Admitted to Probation.	Deferred Sentence.	Total.
Theft	402	73	475
False pretences and false statements	64	40	104
Breaking, entering, and theft	47	1	48
Unlawful conversion of vehicles	43	5	48
Common assault	26	11	37
Mischief and wilful damage	11	25	36
Carnal knowledge	17	1	18
Obscene and indecent language	7	8	15
Receiving stolen property	11	2	13
Intoxicated in charge of vehicles	11	2	13
Attempted suicide	2	11	13
Unlawfully on premises	5	7	12
Vagrancy	9	..	9
Obscene exposure	9	..	9
Forgery and uttering	6	1	7
Indecent assault	5	1	6
Stowing away	3	3	6
Sheep and cattle stealing	5	..	5
Bookmaking	4	..	4
Indecent act	3	1	4
Bigamy	3	1	4
Driving vehicles without due care	3	..	3
Default of maintenance	2	1	3
Drunkenness .. .. .	..	3	3
Concealment of birth	2	..	2
Incest	2	..	2
Disorderly behaviour	2	..	2
Breach of probation	2	..	2
Released under section 15 (in lieu of bail)	2	..	2
Arson	1	..	1
Attempted buggery	1	..	1
Breach of Bankruptcy Act	1	..	1
Prostitution	1	..	1
Failing to stop after accident	1	..	1
Giving false fire-alarm	1	..	1
Resisting police	1	..	1
Assault causing bodily harm	1	1
Failing to pay unemployment levy	1	1
Totals	715	199	914

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