

hard labour shall apply to the Board for consideration of his case until he has served at least half the full term of his sentence, nor shall the Board consider a case until six months after the date of reception into prison. In regard to prisoners who have been sentenced to definite terms of imprisonment exceeding ten years, including those who have received life sentences or death sentences commuted to imprisonment for life, the period within which the Board shall first take any case into consideration shall be five years from the date of reception into prison.

Subsection (3) of section 10 of the Crimes Amendment Act provides that, subject to the regulations above mentioned, the Board may determine its own procedure. The Secretary of the Board is required to prepare and place before the Board a full statement of the circumstances connected with each case brought up for consideration. In actual practice it is customary for departmental files to be produced, from which are summarized extracts from the depositions, the evidence, and the prisoner's history and record, which contains the family history, showing mental and criminal tendencies, career of crime, mode of life, conduct, and industry whilst in detention, response to previous treatment (if any), Magistrate's report, medical reports, police and probation reports, and reports and recommendations of institutional Superintendents. The petitions of the prisoners and any representations from relatives and friends and interested social workers are also placed before the Board. By arrangement with the Mental Hospitals Department the Board in special cases where such a course is considered necessary obtains reports concerning the mental condition of prisoners who appear before it. The Board regularly reviews cases, and frequently cases are considered several times before release or discharge is agreed upon, the aim in each case being the rehabilitation of the offender without undue risk to the community.

Among other matters which the Board takes into consideration is the question of oversight and employment on release, in many cases directing the Secretary to write to interested persons likely to befriend and assist, and possibly prevent a further lapse into crime. Where there is evidence that the prisoner is addicted to drink or that his downfall has been due to drink, it is usual to make the taking-out of a prohibition order a condition precedent to release. The success which has attended the Board's efforts over the years has, in the main, been due to the care exercised in these particular matters. The splendid social service rendered by the after-care organizations and other public-spirited citizens has also been an important contributing factor.

The Board endeavours, where reasonably possible, to give inmates with good institutional records an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves in the community. Admittedly in some cases the conduct of inmates after release has shown that anticipations do not always materialize, nonetheless the Board, subject to a due regard for the interests of the community, prefers to adopt a policy of leniency rather than of harshness, and the results show that in the majority of cases this attitude has been justified.

The total number of cases dealt with by the Board in 1945 was 1,002, or 28 more than for 1944, while 544 persons were recommended for a remission of sentence, as against 559 in 1944.

A comparison of the statistics with those of previous reports shows that the percentage of offenders who make good after release has been maintained. Of the total number released on the recommendation of the Board after serving terms of Borstal detention and sentences of reformatory detention or hard labour, approximately 24 per cent. only have been reconvicted or failed to comply with the conditions of their release, while of the habitual criminals paroled since the Board was constituted in 1910, 58 per cent. have been returned to prison for non-compliance with the conditions of release or for further offences. A further 8 persons who had made good were, however, recommended for complete discharge from the Habitual Criminal Act in 1945.