

When penal servitude was abolished in New Zealand in 1893 imprisonment with or without hard labour was substituted. This form of sentence can be imposed for varying terms, from days to life, according to the gravity of the offence. The passing of the Crimes Amendment Act, 1910, thus marked a complete change of approach. (Incidentally an attitude now being given statutory recognition in England, by the Criminal Justice Bill (Imp.), which is designed to provide that instead of considering the offence chiefly, the Courts should look to the needs of the offender, the circumstances of the case, and the protection of the public.) Notwithstanding the more constructive purpose of a reformatory-detention sentence, the fiction persists that a sentence of imprisonment is more punitive and thus a more deterrent and effective form of punishment, whereas the only justification for such an assumption is that a sentence of imprisonment, as distinct from reformatory detention, is not generally reviewed by the Prisons Board until half the term of the sentence has been served. Prisoners under reformatory detention are generally sent to the prison camps and farms, where the "open" system obtains, whilst short-sentence prisoners are largely detained intra-murally in town prisons where conditions are necessarily more restrictive, but their treatment is very little dissimilar.

A further step towards the rationalizing of punishment was in the passing of the Prevention of Crime Act, 1924. This Act is designed to treat and arrest criminal propensities in young offenders in the incipient stages. The aim is for the offender to be kept in detention for a sufficiently long period to enable the reformatory influence of the discipline of hard work and training to have their full effect, in addition to removing him from the old environment and undesirable associations. The object of the system of Borstal training is a balanced round of work, education, and recreation, with the purpose of developing self-respect, self-reliance, and habits of industry in the offender, enabling him ultimately to take his place in the community when released as a dependable and worthy citizen.

In 1939 certain statutory restrictions were placed on the imprisonment of persons under twenty-one years. Under section 5 of the Summary Penalties Act, 1939, a person under the age of twenty-one shall not be imprisoned unless the Magistrate is satisfied from the character and circumstances of the defendant that no other method of dealing with him is appropriate.

It will be seen that the general idea underlying the legislation relating to crime has been to shift the emphasis from the crime to need of the criminal so far as it is consonant with the protection of society, and there is also a recognition that time is an essential element in effecting reformation. Short sentences are largely futile in this respect, and in many instances, instead of imposing them, it would be better if appropriate alternatives were tried.

Nationality of Offenders.—The following table shows the prisoners, grouped on a nationality basis, received into prison over the past ten years:—

Year.	New-Zealand-born (excluding Maoris).	Maoris.	British and Foreign.	Total.
1947	1,078	446	827	2,351
1946	1,006	422	785	2,213
1945	1,109	430	526	2,065
1944	1,105	553	441	2,099
1943	1,401	523	558	2,482
1942	1,880	450	699	3,029
1941	1,402	346	621	2,369
1940	1,257	330	614	2,201
1939	1,427	310	768	2,505
1938	1,248	252	724	2,224

It is noted that the number under each group has increased slightly. The increase in the number of prisoners from overseas was due to the influx of ship-desertion case