

I consider this case one that exemplifies in a marked degree two important factors when probation is in question—punishment by restitution, with its resulting curtailments of the offender's former practices, and the opportunity for rehabilitation of the offender. Not the least satisfactory feature of the case is that by admitting the offender to probation and ordering restitution, the complainant, who is an advanced T.B. case, is enabled with this and his other slender resources to maintain himself. There is little doubt but that, had the offender been imprisoned, both complainant and offender would have become a burden on the State. For a time the complainant saw nothing before him but to enter the Costley Home, and he has expressed his gratitude for what has been done.

There is one phase of this work which causes difficulty at times: I refer to the lack of a fund from which board, and in some instances rail fares, could be paid on behalf of those persons admitted to probation who, having no funds or immediate employment to go to, are dependent on the Probation Officer until work is obtained. In many cases it has been necessary for me to make payments for board, &c. To meet this difficulty a trust account might be arranged to be drawn on. The amount required would not be large, and there need be no cost to the Department, as probationers would be required to refund the amounts disbursed on their behalf.

REV. FRANK RULE, PROBATION OFFICER, CHRISTCHURCH.

The work done in the Christchurch probation district for the year ending the 31st March, 1923, has been very considerable. Every morning the Magistrate's Court has been visited, and while the Supreme Court is sitting in criminal session some portion of each day has been given to it.

While the reportable part of a Probation Officer's work is that of attending the Courts regularly and caring for all who are put in his charge, it is to be remembered that by far the larger part of the work that falls to a Probation Officer's lot is of a semi-confidential character that in its very nature cannot find a place in reports. While care is taken to see that those put on probation fulfil their legal obligations, much of the time of the Probation Officer is occupied in what follows of the confidential order. The effective part of the administration of the Offenders Probation Act is in the personal touch that these confidences make possible. Cases are constantly demanding attention that make this clear. For instance, a youth, the only son of a widow woman, got into mischief that led to his appearing before a Magistrate. The pathos of the case appealed to the Bench, and this lad was granted probation. From the first this youth showed that he belonged to the totally irresponsible class. Time and again it was determined to cancel his license and have him sent to Invercargill, but the widow's plea prevailed. As the result of patience, care, and attention, this youth is now doing very well and is in a fair way to become a useful citizen. It is in this personal work that the Probation Officer finds his useful sphere.

The following will show the numbers dealt with since last annual report: Sixty-nine probationers were reporting at the commencement of the year. Offenders admitted to probation at the local Courts during the year numbered sixty-six, whilst eleven were received on transfer from other districts—a total of 146. Thirty-seven completed their terms satisfactorily, seven defaulted, whilst twenty-one were transferred to other districts. As the close of the year there were seventy-four probationers on the register, an increase of five on last year's figures.

REV. F. G. CUMMING, GENERAL PROBATION OFFICER, DUNEDIN.

It is a great pleasure to be able to present a most satisfactory report on the past year's work. The year has been in every respect a most satisfactory one as far as my district is concerned. Quite a large number have been placed on probation, several offenders have also been ordered to come up for sentence when called upon. The latter class, of course, comes under the control or influence of the Probation Officer, and with rare exception all have given every satisfaction. Then, again, quite a number have finished their probationary term and are doing well. It is pleasing to record that many ex-probationers have a strong desire to keep in touch with the Probation Officer after their term has expired, and in my opinion this is a most desirable thing. This applies not only to first offenders but also to those who are released on the recommendation of the Prisons Board.

In this great work of uplift and reform there can be only one successful method, and that is to follow on the lines of the physician in dealing with his patient—full inquiry is made as to his past history, habits, and pursuits, the social conditions of his patient, and on the information gained considers his treatment. It is just so with the Probation Officer, whose duty it is, as far as possible, to seek, in season and out of season, to know his probationer, get his confidence and respect. There the real work of restoring and reforming begins. The look and sympathy of the priest and Levite is no use in this work. The Samaritan spirit and method will win. In this spirit the Probation Officer goes to work, and as a result he is able to report success at the end of each year. He sees his men and women filling good positions, gaining the confidence and respect of their employers—in brief, "making good."

I have little difficulty in placing my men in positions, and if they have failed to "make good" then the fault is their own. It is well worth recording the fine attitude taken up at this centre by the Judge and Magistrates. They are always willing to listen to any appeal made by the Probation Officer. In this respect I am most fortunate, and am indeed grateful. The more I have to do with probation work the more convinced I become of the fact that it is a most humane system. The year has in every way been successful, and one is delighted to put this on record. The total number of offenders under the Offenders Probation Act dealt with during the year was 114, and at present there are sixty-two reporting. This includes ordinary probationers under the Act and those convicted and ordered to come up for sentence when called upon, who also come under the jurisdiction of the Probation Officer.