

## REPORTS OF DISTRICT PROBATION OFFICERS.

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I have the honour to submit my sixth annual report as Probation Officer of the Auckland District, for the period ended 31st March, 1928.

During the year 111 males were admitted to probation by the Auckland Courts for terms ranging from one year to four years. While these figures show an increase of 2 over the number admitted to probation in the 1926-27 period, a considerable falling-off is shown in comparison with the two years previous to that period. The completed records show a further reduction in the number remaining on the register, there being 30 less than last year's figures.

Appended are the complete figures for the year under review :—

Probationers on register at 1st April, 1927 .. .. .	222
Probationers received from Auckland Courts .. .. .	111
Probationers received on transfer .. .. .	58
	— 169
Total dealt with .. .. .	391
Of these there were—	
Probationers discharged by Prisons Board .. .. .	5
Probationers completed probationary term .. .. .	95
Probationers transferred to other districts .. .. .	77
Probationers left Dominion by permission .. .. .	6
Probationers sentenced for other offences which the termination of the probationary period antedated .. .. .	10
Probationers who absconded and were not traced whose term expired during the period .. .. .	6
	— 199
Total remaining on register at 1st April, 1928 .. .. .	192

The number of probationers who came before the Court again charged with other offences or with breach of probation was 20. To this figure there must be added 11 probationers who absconded and were not traced, 5 of whom still remain on the register. This shows a total defaulting list of 31, which is approximately 8 per cent. of the number dealt with throughout the period, this result being much the same as that shown over the previous two years working.

The sum of £844 3s. 9d. was paid in by probationers during the year, being £699 19s. 1d. for restitution and £144 4s. 8d. as costs of prosecution.

Owing to the prevailing unemployment considerable difficulty has been experienced by many of the probationers in making the necessary payments towards restitution or costs of prosecution.

A large number of the younger probationers have not been in steady employment, some of them over long periods, and many of them are dependent on their parents and other working members of the family. It is not possible to write in more than general terms regarding the effect of unemployment, but it may safely be assumed that lack of work has had some bearing on the conduct of those who came before the Courts for breaches and other offences, and in a greater degree has affected the payments towards restitution. Lack of employment is the primary cause for there being so many probationers on the absconding list. It was noted that during some periods as many as 40 probationers were either out of work or only casually employed for a few days at a time.

The members of the Voluntary Probation Committee, which was formed at the latter end of 1927, have assisted in so far as was possible to obtain employment for those probationers who were unemployed and who were unable to get work. Several probationers were placed in positions, but, due to the prevailing unemployment in this centre, it was manifestly impossible for members to assist in this respect in any greater degree. Efforts in this direction are still maintained, and my thanks are due to the committee for their efforts and assistance along these lines. In cases where there is a good home environment and supervision on the part of parents it has not been considered necessary or advisable to enlist the voluntary aid. There are many cases, however, where some interested and friendly oversight is essential to ensure success from a probationary point of view, and in cases of this nature considerable assistance is being given by members of the Voluntary Committee.

Apart from those probationers who were brought before the Court, the majority of probationers were well behaved and reported regularly, their conduct fully justifying the action of the Court in admitting them to probation.

*Crimes Amendment Act Probationers.*—The average number reporting throughout the year was 35. Of these probationers, 27 completed the term of probation, 2 were discharged from probation by the Prisons Board, 7 committed fresh offences and were sentenced to further terms of imprisonment, 3 absconded and their licenses were cancelled, 5 left the Dominion by permission, and 1 was committed to the mental hospital, leaving 33 probationers in this category on the register at the end of the period.

With three exceptions those who completed the probationary term did so in a creditable manner, despite the fact that many of them found difficulty in obtaining steady employment owing to the prevailing scarcity of openings. Of the 10 probationers whose licenses were cancelled, 6 were in the habitual-criminal class. Failure in most cases was due to some extent to the fact that work was