

1928.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS DEPARTMENT.
PRISONS BOARD

(ANNUAL REPORT OF) FOR 1927.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM SIM (President); Sir GEORGE FENWICK, Kt.; WILLIAM REECE, Esq.; Sir DONALD MCGAVIN, Kt., C.M.G., M.D. (Lond.); D. G. A. COOPER, Esq.; JOHN ALEXANDER, Esq., C.M.G.; and B. L. DALLARD, Esq., Controller-General of Prisons.

SIR,—

13th August, 1928.

I have the honour to forward herewith the report of the Prisons Board for the year 1927.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Justice.

W. A. SIM, President.

REPORT OF THE PRISONS BOARD.

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1927.

THE Board has to report that during the year ended 31st December, 1927, it dealt with a total of 1,250 cases at meetings held at Wellington and the various prison institutions of the Dominion. The following table sets out under their respective statutory headings the number of cases considered at each meeting, together with the decisions reached:—

TABLE A.

Month of Meeting.	Cases considered of						Totals.	Decisions showing how Cases were disposed of.							Totals.	
	Habitual Criminals.	Persons undergoing Reformative Detention.	Hard-labour Prisoners.	Habitual Offenders.	Habitual Criminals for Remission of Hard-labour Sentence.	Probationers for Discharge from Probation or Variation Terms of Release.		Recommended for Release on Probation.	Petitions deferred.	Petitions declined.	Recommended for Discharge from Prison or from Probation.	Offender Probationers ordered Discharge.	Habitual Criminals Remission of Hard Labour.	Recommended Variation Terms of Probation.		
						Crimes Amendment Act.										Offender Probationers.
January ..	..	95	8	..	..	..	..	103	19	76	3	5	..	..	..	103
" ..	1	14	7	..	..	..	..	22	10	12	..	..	..	..	..	22
" ..	1	8	5	..	..	..	..	14	..	12	1	1	..	..	..	14
" ..	10	29	14	..	..	..	..	53	10	37	4	2	..	..	..	53
March ..	54	108	64	..	3	4	3	236	60	133	25	15	2	1	..	236
June ..	4	181	108	..	4	4	5	306	71	160	45	22	4	4	..	306
September	7	137	41	..	3	5	9	202	60	111	10	10	7	1	3	202
November	38	93	70	..	1	..	3	205	48	122	22	10	2	1	..	205
December	..	101	8	..	..	..	..	109	34	66	..	9	..	..	..	109
	115	766	325	..	11	13	20	1,250	312	729	110	74	15	7	3	1,250

TABLE B.—SHOWING RELEASES AND DISCHARGES, ETC., EFFECTED EACH MONTH FOR 1927.

1927.	Released on Probation.			Discharged from Prison.			Discharged from Probation.				Hard - labour missions.	Totals.
	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual-criminal Cases.	Reformativ-detention Cases.	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual-criminal Cases.	Reformativ-detention Cases.	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual-criminal Cases.	Reformativ-detention Cases.	Offender-pro-bationer Cases.		
January ..	6	..	17	4	..	8	..	..	..	..	..	35
February ..	8	..	10	2	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	24
March ..	3	..	13	4	..	1	..	..	1	2	1	25
April ..	..	16	15	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	34
May ..	8	..	8	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	19
June ..	2	1	8	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	14
July ..	4	2	9	6	..	..	..	3	..	4	3	31
August ..	8	1	8	3	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	21
September ..	3	..	6	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	11
October ..	2	1	8	3	..	2	1	2	1	7	..	27
November ..	3	1	9	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	16
December ..	2	..	4	..	..	6	..	..	..	..	1	13
Totals ..	49	22	115	31	..	26	1	5	2	13	6	270

In addition to those released on probation as shown in the foregoing table 90 Borstal detainees were granted parole, making a grand total of 360 released or discharged during the year.

OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920.

During the year twenty applications for discharge from probation were considered by the Board, and of this number fifteen were granted.

TABLE C.—REFORMATIVE-DETENTION CASES DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD FROM JANUARY, 1911, TO DECEMBER, 1927.

Total number sentenced to reformativ detention	3,206
Released and discharged on recommendation of Board	2,324
Discharged from reformatories on completion of full sentence	514
Total number released	2,838
Of whom there were—	
Returned to reformatories for non-compliance with conditions of release ..	85
Committed to reformatories for further offences whilst on probation ..	168
Sentenced for offences committed after discharge or expiry of period of probation	396
Total number returned and recommitted	649
Absconded and not traced	26
Died	7
Left Dominion to return to former domiciles	50
Known to have been killed in action while on active service	3
Returned to Weraroa	1
Transferred to Rotoroa Inebriates Institution	1
Transferred to mental hospitals	3
Transferred to Mount Magdala Home	1
Transferred to Salvation Army Home	1
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1927	56
Number who have not offended since their discharge or expiration of period of probation, and presumably doing well	2,040
	2,189
	2,838

Of the total number released after undergoing reformativ detention 22.87 per cent. have been returned to prison either for non-compliance with conditions of release or for committing further offences, 2.68 per cent. have left the Dominion or absconded, 0.60 per cent. have died or been transferred to mental hospitals, &c., leaving 73.85 per cent. who have not further offended.

TABLE D.—HABITUAL CRIMINALS DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD FROM JANUARY, 1911,
TO DECEMBER, 1927.

Total number declared habitual criminals	.. .. .	436
Of whom there were released on recommendation of Board	.. .. .	386
Of whom there were—		
Returned to prison for non-compliance with conditions of release	.. .. .	45
Committed to prison for further offences	.. .. .	137
Sentenced for offences committed after their discharge from prison or from probation	.. .. .	34
Total number returned	.. .. .	216
Absconded and not traced	.. .. .	24
Died	.. .. .	13
Left Dominion to return to former domiciles	.. .. .	49
Transferred to mental hospital	.. .. .	1
Transferred to consumptive sanatorium	.. .. .	1
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1927	.. .. .	26
Number who have not offended, as far as known, since their discharge from probation, and presumably doing well	.. .. .	56
		170
		386

Of the total number of habitual criminals released on probation, 55·96 per cent. were returned to prison either for non-compliance with the conditions of probation or for committing further offences. No offences are recorded against the remaining 44·04 per cent., but our tables show that 3·89 per cent. died or were transferred to mental hospitals, whilst 18·91 per cent. left the Dominion or absconded. This leaves a definite percentage of 21·24 who have remained in the Dominion and have not further offended.

Since 1917 the Board has dealt with the following hard-labour cases :—

TABLE E.—HARD-LABOUR CASES.

Total cases considered	.. .. .	1,938
Number discharged from prison on recommendation of Board	.. .. .	310
Number released on probation on recommendation of Board	.. .. .	449
Left the Dominion	.. .. .	21
Absconded	.. .. .	1
Recommitted for other offences	.. .. .	29
Completed probation	.. .. .	330
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1927	.. .. .	20

GENERAL SUMMARY.

The following table shows the cases considered year by year by the Board over the last decade :—

TABLE F.

Year.	Habitual Criminals and Offenders.	Reformative Detention.	Hard Labour.	Habitual Criminals for Remission Hard Labour.	Probationers for Discharge from Probation or Variation Terms of Probation.		Totals.
					Crimes Amendment Act.	Offender Probationers.	
1918 ..	87	201	92	..	..	..	380
1919 ..	97	471	115	..	18	..	701
1920 ..	74	467	75	..	32	..	648
1921 ..	75	564	167	..	18	17	841
1922 ..	93	594	271	..	19	30	1,007
1923 ..	74	671	304	4	16	24	1,093
1924 ..	80	683	302	3	13	21	1,102
1925 ..	70	747	295	1	12	9	1,134
1926 ..	49	822	237	2	12	16	1,138
1927 ..	115	766	325	11	13	20	1,250
Totals	814	5,986	2,183	21	153	137	9,294

Having but recently assumed the office of President of the Prisons Board, I do not propose to comment on the foregoing statistics except to note that the satisfactory results shown by the statistics for previous years have continued to be maintained.

It is with regret the Board records the retirement of Sir Walter Stringer and Sir George Fenwick. Sir Walter's appointment as President came to an end when he retired from the Supreme Court Bench. Sir George, who has been a member of the Board since its inception, found that with advancing years he was obliged to give up a large amount of his public work, which involved considerable travelling at all times of the year.

Both gentlemen have been untiring in their efforts on behalf of the Board, and have given their services willingly in a work which has had their keenest interest.

W. A. SIM, President.

13th August, 1928.

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