

of resolution to make good, the past year, taken on the whole, has, in point of numbers and general progress, followed closely on the lines of its predecessor, justifying to a great degree all that is claimed of probation as a humanitarian measure fitted for the benefit of those offenders whose departure from the narrow path has been merely temporary.

The Voluntary Probation Committee continues to render helpful service both in regard to securing suitable work for those admitted to probation and, what is of infinitely more value in the end, an encouraging and sustained interest in the probationer's efforts to re-establish himself as an honourable and useful member of society. To this end—anything short of which must necessarily spell a degree of failure—must our best efforts be directed, and with a return to more normal times I trust that this essential phase of the work will develop on even broader lines than has been attempted hitherto.

It is gratifying to know that as the result of a little effort, perseverance, and fostering care on the part of members of our committee, there are men to-day holding responsible positions on business executives and other walks of life grateful for the chance given them to rise from degradation and despair. What finer inspiration could one have to continue this beneficent work on behalf of those of our fellow-men who have fallen by the way!

An encouraging feature of the work has been the increasing numbers of ex-probationers who have visited my office during the year, in most cases to express good will and appreciation for little services rendered them in their hour of need. Needless to add, such visits are highly appreciated and encouraged by your officer.

As previously, I would conclude my report by placing on record the encouragement, courtesy, and kindness received from the Bench and Bar, and others associated with the Courts, also the splendid spirit of co-operation shown by social workers, without exception. To these, one and all, not omitting my associates on the Voluntary Probation Committee for many kindnesses, my warmest thanks are due.

Mr. T. P. MILLS, District Probation Officer, Wellington.

I have the honour to report that in the year just closed the numbers dealt with were much the same as last year—viz., 249. There are, however, fewer reporting at the present time, owing to a decrease in the number of new probationers.

The following particulars afford a good idea of the work done: The year commenced with 133 on the register; 75 were placed on probation, and 41 were received from other districts. The removals were as follows: 77 successfully completed the period of probation, 45 were transferred to other districts, 4 left the Dominion permanently, 4 were discharged by the Prisons Board, 8 were imprisoned, and 3 sent to a Borstal institution, the number reporting at the close of the year being 108.

Several defaulters were dealt with and punished by the Court for minor offences, only two of these requiring any further action. The fact that breaches of probation of any kind are offences in themselves is a great aid in disciplining probationers, and a prosecution is often saved by a judicious reminder.

Altogether the year has been a successful one, and especially if it is considered that variant human nature makes the probation work always experimental.

It is gratifying to report that, although the stress of unemployment is still with us, only four probationers were unemployed at the close of the period: two of these, however, are incapacitated, one owing to accident and the other to tuberculosis, so that actually two only were idle. Of course, this does not mean that all the others were constantly in work during the period. The employment offering has been intermittent, as most labour, unskilled especially, generally is, and this class of labour comprises fully 60 per cent. of the total probationers. The average number of unemployed probationers would probably be a little in excess of the stated number at the end of the year, which I think compares favourably with that of the general populace.

It may be remarked that as the industrious man rarely thieves, the type of man to which probation is extended needs a radical change in both habits and outlook. The problem of the Probation Officer is therefore to induce industry and initiative in his charges, or, where a vitiated initiative is present, to divert such into right channels. It goes a long way towards success if a probationer can secure work for himself, and the pinch of necessity often proves a good master. It has been my practice to suggest the most promising avenues of employment, and good results frequently follow. There is, however, always a considerable number of probationers who fail in that respect, it is here that the services of the Voluntary Probationary Committee are most valuable. The community is under an increasing debt of gratitude to the sympathetic efforts of these gentlemen, who so willingly devote their time and influence to the betterment of the men referred to them. It is within the scope of this report, I think, to mention that the personnel of that committee is unchanged with the exception that Mr. E. Page, S.M., acts as chairman in place of Mr. W. G. Riddell, who has lately retired from the Magisterial office.

It is interesting to record that £623 16s. 4d. was collected during the year from probationers. Restitution moneys amounted to £514 0s. 1d., and costs £109 16s. 3d.

*Crimes Amendment Act Probationers.*—Ex-prisoners on parole, and ex-inmates of Borstal institutions, are, on the whole, doing well. The year began with 29 reporting, 38 were received direct from various institutions and 15 from other districts, 82 in all passing through my hands. Of this number 6 were imprisoned or returned to a Borstal institution, 1 was discharged by the Prison Board, 17 were transferred to other districts, 30 reporting at the close of the year. There were only two unemployed at the 31st March, many of the probationers in employment having had to fit into work in which they were quite inexperienced. To their credit be it said, the majority were lasting well in their respective situations.

My experience with these men, and the first-offender probationers, has long inclined me to the view that prison discipline is the handmaid of the more lenient method of probation, and when the