

and sought an entirely new environment with the assistance of social workers, and had proved by his conduct and industry over a number of years, that he had redeemed his character. Others, whose probationary terms are definite, completed their terms with credit to themselves and satisfaction to the Probation Officer.

There are failures, but it is a pleasure to see so many men who have completed terms of probation in this and in other years doing well. One meets them every day, engaged in various occupations, living ordinary lives, and, having profited by previous experience, together with the wisdom of added years, they are now good citizens.

As year succeeds year I am strengthened in my opinion that the difficulty in obtaining employment by those men released from prison on probation is, to a great extent, the cause of the further downfall of many of them, even of those whose previous record shows many offences. This has been much in evidence recently due to the prevailing unemployment, and in a few particular cases during the past year where men have committed fresh offences, for which they returned to prison. I am convinced that had they been able to obtain employment readily, they would not have transgressed, or that transgression would certainly have been deferred.

Summarizing the work during the year with the probationers in this class, it may be said that with some few exceptions their conduct was good.

Concluding my report, I have again to express my thanks for the keen interest in and appreciation of the probationary work that is shown by the Judges of the Supreme Court and the presiding Magistrates at the Courts in this centre.

Mr. J. W. HUGGINS, Probation Officer, Palmerston North.

The number of probationers under my charge during the past year has averaged thirty-six, one-third of whom have been discharged prisoners.

The securing of employment has been the biggest problem, but, in view of the scarcity of work, it is satisfactory to record only two unemployed at present. Of these two, one is mentally weak and cannot hold a job, while the other is unable to work through an injury.

It is also pleasing to record the number of successes among the probationers—only two failures who did not take advantage of probation.

I have felt the need in this town of some small fund, which could be administered by the honorary probation committee, as a stand-by to assist distress cases among probationers. There is no Prisoner's Aid Society here, and I have, therefore, to rely on the Charitable-aid Officer, who, by the way, has always been reasonable.

I am indebted to J. L. Stout, Esq., and members of the local probation committee, for advice and help rendered to me, and the Rotary Club for gifts of clothing and offers of other help. I am also grateful to the Police and Justice Departments for their very helpful co-operation.

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

I have the honour to report that the period just closed compares favourably with other years.

The numbers dealt with show a slight decrease, 235 in all passing through my hands. The following particulars represent the year's operations: The year commenced with 108 reporting, 61 were placed on probation, and 66 were received from other districts; the removals numbered 126. Of these, 74 successfully completed the period of probation, 44 were transferred to other districts, 3 left the Dominion permanently, 1 was discharged by the Prisons Board, 2 were sent to a Borstal Institution, and 2 died, leaving 109 reporting at the close of the year.

It may be noted that the number transferred to the Wellington District exceeds that of new probationers, and is by far the largest yet recorded. It is accounted for by the fact that so many outsiders regard Wellington as a good field to secure employment. In this, quite a number were disappointed, and it has only been through much effort that these have been placed. In this connection we are again under a debt of gratitude to the members of the voluntary probation committee. The task of finding employment for probationers has been accentuated this year, and it is superfluous to refer to its cause. Employment has been more intermittent, and the number of workless probationers do not show so favourably as last year. However, it has been a very satisfactory experience to find that, with the exception of the confirmed idler, there has been a marked readiness to accept any work offering.

The lapses this year call for no special comment, except that they were fewer than last year. Four only were sentenced to imprisonment for subsequent offences—such terms being of short duration, 3 were fined, and the probationary term in 1 instance was extended. No very serious offences were committed by probationers, except that of the two youths mentioned above, who were sent to a Borstal Institution.

There has been a steady falling-off in the numbers of those who were granted probation, the figures for the last three years being 97, 75, and 61 respectively. This is accounted for partly by the Child Welfare Act, which has raised the age in the Children's Court, excluding from the operation of our own Act youths in their seventeenth and frequently some in their eighteenth year. The principal other cause was due to the frequency of breaking, entering, and theft charges, and the adoption of severer methods of punishment.