

1930.
NEW ZEALAND.

PRISONS DEPARTMENT:
PRISONS BOARD

(ANNUAL REPORT OF) FOR 1929.

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

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

Hon. Mr. JUSTICE REED, C.B.E. (President); Sir DONALD MCGAVIN, Kt., C.M.G., M.D. (Lond.); D. G. A. COOPER, Esq.; JOHN ALEXANDER, Esq., C.M.G.; THEO. G. GRAY, Esq., M.B., M.P.C.; Mrs. C. A. FRAER; and B. L. DALLARD, Esq., Contoller-General of Prisons.

SIR,—

23rd July, 1930.

I have the honour to forward herewith the report of the Prisons Board for the year 1929.

As you are aware, Sir, for the greater part of the period covered by this report I was absent on leave abroad. During this period—that is, from the 19th February, 1929, until the end of the year—the Honourable Sir Alexander Herdman, Kt., was Acting-President of the Board.

The Board desires to place upon record its profound sense of loss in the deaths of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Stout, P.C., K.C.M.G., Sir George Fenwick, and William Reece, Esq. Each of these gentlemen had been an original foundation member of the Board, and for many years rendered valuable voluntary public service in this connection.

Since the last annual report vacancies on the Board have been filled by the appointments of Dr. T. G. Gray, Director-General of Mental Hospitals, and Mrs. C. A. Fraer, of Christchurch.

Reviewing the operations of the Board briefly, the results may be regarded on the whole as satisfactory. There has been a slight increase in the number granted a remission of their sentences on probation as compared with the previous year. The percentage of lapses subsequent to release, with the exception of habitual criminals, has been small, only 16 per cent. of those ordered Borstal detention by the Courts under the Prevention of Crime Act, 1924, having again appeared before the Courts after release. In this class, if the percentage of failures is calculated on the total number who have passed through the Borstal Institutions by transfer or otherwise since their inception, the statistics show that just over 10 per cent. only have relapsed into crime subsequent to their release. The number released after serving sentences of reformatory detention or imprisonment involving hard labour, who were reconvicted or failed to comply with the conditions of their release, was just over 26 per cent. Not so satisfactory have been the results in regard to habitual criminals—57 per cent. of those who had been declared habitual criminals and released in terms of the Crimes Amendment Act since the constitution of the Prisons Board in 1911 have been returned to prison for non-compliance with the conditions of their probation or for further offences.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Justice.

J. R. REED, President.

THE Board has to report that during the year ended 31st December, 1929, it dealt with a total of 1,372 cases at meetings held at Wellington and the various 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.
	Borstal Inmates.	Habitual Criminals.	Persons undergoing Reformatory 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 Institution or from Probation.	Offender Probationers ordered Discharge.	Habitual Criminals Remission of Hard Labour.	Recommended Variation Terms of Probation.	
							Crimes Amendment Act.	Offender Probationers.									
March ..	9	9	4	1	..	..	..	..	23	3	18	1	1	..	..	23
" ..	3	20	23	..	..	..	..	..	46	15	24	..	7	..	..	46
" ..	27	8	77	43	..	1	..	..	156	43	82	20	10	..	1	156
" ..	4	2	36	27	..	..	..	6	75	18	28	3	20	6	..	75
April ..	1	5	3	..	..	..	..	..	9	5	4	..	..	..	..	9
" ..	37	12	56	40	..	..	..	1	147	45	94	7	1	..	..	147
" ..	209	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	214	66	146	1	1	..	..	214
May ..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
July ..	42	5	48	48	..	..	4	..	149	42	79	22	6	..	..	149
" ..	21	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	21	9	10	2	..	..	..	21
" ..	..	2	19	10	..	..	..	..	31	9	14	1	7	..	..	31
" ..	..	..	26	12	..	..	..	..	38	18	16	1	3	..	..	38
October	70	3	71	53	..	..	..	3	200	58	86	35	18	2	..	200
November	52	45	74	83	..	3	1	4	262	82	141	25	9	2	3	262	
Total ..	466	87	446	346	1	4	6	16	1,372	413	743	118	83	10	4	1,372	

TABLE B.—SHOWING RELEASES AND DISCHARGES, ETC., EFFECTED EACH MONTH FOR 1929.

1929.	Released on Probation.				Discharged from Prison.				Discharged from Probation.					Totals.	
	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual-criminal Cases.	Reformatory-detention Cases.	Borstal-detention Cases.	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual-criminal Cases.	Reformatory-detention Cases.	Borstal-detention Cases.	Hard-labour Cases.	Habitual-criminal Cases.	Reformatory-detention Cases.	Borstal-detention Cases.	Offender-probationer Cases.		Hard-labour Remissions.
January ..	6	2	10	22	4	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	46
February ..	5	..	6	10	3	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	26
March ..	12	1	17	21	2	..	4	1	..	..	..	..	6	1	65
April ..	5	1	12	6	4	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	31
May ..	13	2	19	56	5	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	99
June ..	10	..	15	7	3	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	36
July ..	9	3	9	13	6	..	6	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	48
August ..	12	..	8	7	4	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	33
September ..	7	1	9	9	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	29
October ..	1	1	11	24	9	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	51
November ..	8	1	13	4	3	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31
December ..	2	2	13	8	1	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	34
Total ..	90	14	142	187	46	..	30	3	..	1	..	..	10	6	529

OFFENDERS PROBATION ACT, 1920.

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

TABLE C.—REFORMATIVE-DETENTION CASES DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD FROM JANUARY, 1911, TO DECEMBER, 1929.

Total number sentenced to reformatory detention ..	..	..	..	..	3,534
Released and discharged on recommendation of Board ..	..	..	..	2,608	
Discharged from reformatories on completion of full sentence ..	..	..	..	568	
Total number released ..	..	..	..	..	3,176
Of whom there were—					
Returned to reformatories for non-compliance with conditions of release ..	..	..	..	89	
Committed to reformatories for further offences whilst on probation ..	..	..	..	184	
Sentenced for offences committed after discharge or expiry of period of probation ..	..	..	..	494	
Total number returned and recommitted ..	..	..	..	767	
Absconded and not traced ..	..	..	..	26	
Died ..	..	..	..	8	
Left Dominion to return to former domiciles ..	..	..	..	59	
Known to have been killed in action whilst on active service ..	..	..	..	3	
Returned to Wairarapa ..	..	..	..	1	
Transferred to Rotorua 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, 1929 ..	..	..	..	81	
Number who have not offended since their discharge or expiration of period of probation, and presumably doing well ..	..	..	..	2,225	
					2,409
					3,176

Of the total number released after undergoing reformatory detention 24.15 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, 0.57 per cent. have died or been transferred to mental hospitals, &c., and 72.60 per cent. have not further offended.

TABLE D.—HABITUAL CRIMINALS DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD FROM JANUARY, 1911, TO DECEMBER, 1929.

Total number declared habitual criminals	..	..	..	..	..	..	464
Of whom there were released on recommendation of Board	..	..	..	..	..	..	417
Of whom there were—							
Returned to prison for non-compliance with conditions of release	..	..	..	..	..	..	46
Committed to prison for further offences	..	..	..	..	..	..	150
Sentenced for offences committed after their discharge from prison or from probation	..	..	..	..	..	..	42
Total number returned	..	..	..	..	..	..	238
Absconded and not traced	..	..	..	..	..	..	33
Died	..	..	..	..	..	..	14
Left Dominion to return to former domiciles	..	..	..	..	..	..	52
Transferred to mental hospital	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Transferred to consumptive sanatorium	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1929	..	..	..	..	..	..	26
Number who have not offended, as far as known, since their discharge from probation, and presumably doing well	..	..	..	..	..	..	52
							179
							417

Of the total number of habitual criminals released on probation 57.07 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 42.93 per cent., but our tables show that 3.59 per cent. died or were transferred to mental hospitals, whilst 20.39 per cent. left the Dominion or absconded. This leaves a definite percentage of 18.95 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	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,605
Number discharged from prison on recommendation of Board	..	..	..	..	..	..	396
Number released on probation on recommendation of Board	..	..	..	..	..	..	596
Left the Dominion	..	..	..	..	..	..	32
Absconded	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Recommitted for other offences	..	..	..	..	..	..	35
Completed probation	..	..	..	..	..	..	422
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1929	..	..	..	..	..	..	37

TABLE F.—BORSTAL CASES DEALT WITH BY THE BOARD FROM JANUARY, 1925, TO DECEMBER, 1929.

Total number committed to Borstal Institutions	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,089
Released and discharged on the recommendation of Prisons Board	..	..	..	..	..	..	565
Released on expiration of term	..	..	..	..	..	..	87
Total number released	..	..	..	..	..	..	652
Of whom there were—							
Returned to institutions for non-compliance with conditions of release	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Recommitted to institutions for further offences whilst on probation	..	..	..	..	..	..	43
Sentenced for offences committed after discharge or expiry of period of probation	..	..	..	..	..	..	58
Total number returned and recommitted	..	..	..	..	..	..	109
Reporting on probation at 31st December, 1929	..	..	..	..	..	..	208
Number who have not been recommitted since their discharge or expiration of period of probation, and presumably doing well	..	..	..	..	..	..	335
							543
							652

Of the total number of 652 released since the coming into operation of the Prevention of Crime Act, 109 have subsequently been recommitted, or 16.71 per cent. only.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

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

TABLE G.

Year.	Habitual Criminals and Offenders.	Reformative Detention.	Hard Labour.	Borstal Detention.	Habitual Criminals for Remission Hard Labour.	Probationers for Discharge from Probation or Variation Terms of Probation.		Totals.
						Crimes Amend-ment Act.	Offender Probationers.	
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
1928 ..	72	386	321	554	11	6	16	1,366
1929 ..	88	446	346	466	4	6	16	1,372
Total ..	790	6,146	2,643	1,020	36	147	169	10,951

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