

REPORTS OF DISTRICT PROBATION OFFICERS.

Mr. J. ANDERSON, District Probation Officer, Auckland.

I respectfully submit the annual report on the probation work at this centre for the period ending 31st March, 1936.

Mr. W. J. Campbell, who had been Probation Officer of the Auckland District for the past fourteen years, and with whom I had been associated as Assistant Probation Officer throughout that period, retired on superannuation on the 9th March last. The work for the year under review, therefore, was under his control.

As Mr. Campbell's successor, and his associate for so many years, it is fitting that I should place on record an appreciation of the good work performed by him during the period of his service, work which was known and appreciated by the Judges, Magistrates, solicitors, social workers, and police of this city. This appreciation was shown by the eulogistic remarks made by the Magistrates and members of the Bar, social workers, and police on the occasion of Mr. Campbell's retirement.

At the beginning of the year there were 184 offender probationers on the books, 95 were admitted to probation during the year, and 42 were received on transfer, making a total of 321 dealt with. Of these, 72 satisfactorily completed the term of probation, 49 were transferred to other districts, 9 were discharged by the Prisons Board, 5 left the Dominion, 5 were imprisoned on the original charge, and 11 were sentenced for other offences, leaving 170 on the books at 31st March last.

In addition to the 16 defaulters shown, 1 probationer was convicted of breach of probation and resumed reporting, while 5 probationers failed to report and had not been located up to the end of the period. Three of the 11 probationers sentenced on other charges later resumed reporting.

The foregoing figures show a total of 22 defaulters for the period under review, that number being approximately 7 per cent. of the total number dealt with.

The total amount collected during the period in respect of costs of prosecution and restitution ordered to be paid was £694 2s. 7d. This represents £511 4s. 8d. restitution-moneys, and £182 17s. 11d. paid for costs of prosecution. These figures, in comparison with those shown for the previous period, indicate an increase of £227 3s. 8d.

While some of this may be put down to the fact that there was a larger aggregate sum ordered to be paid, much of the increase is a reflection of the slightly better earning conditions noticeable during the period.

Apart from the defaulters shown, the majority of the probationers behaved very well indeed, and showed by their conduct their appreciation of the chance given to prove themselves and to "make good." Experience in this work has shown that, in most cases, the chance given has proved to be a definite turning-point, and very many instances could be cited of past probationers who are now in steady work, many happily married, good citizens, who are assets to the community, and outstanding proof of the merit of the probation method of dealing with certain offenders.

Thanks are due to the members of the Probation Committee for assistance rendered in the work during the period.

Probationers on release from Prison and Borstal Institutions.—The total number dealt with was 209, of whom 72 completed the probationary term. Of those who completed their terms, all, with the exception of 4, whose conduct was doubtful, did so with credit to themselves and to the satisfaction of the Probation Officer.

Three probationers were discharged by the Prisons Board, 4 left the Dominion by permission, 1 was committed to the Mental Hospital, and 1 probationer committed suicide because of domestic infelicity.

One probationer in the habitual-criminal class who committed an offence was sentenced to a further term of imprisonment, and his license was cancelled. Seven who had been released on probation after serving part of their terms of reformatory detention, and 7 released on probation from Borstal Institutions again came before the Court, and were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment for further offences committed, while 5 probationers failed to report as required, and had not been traced up to the end of the period under review.

The foregoing figures show a total defaulters' list of 20. The number remaining on the register at the 1st April, 1936, was 80.

There are always those who, under any conditions, will again transgress, but, as has been the case for some years past, the difficulty experienced in obtaining steady employment has, in some degree, been the cause of the failure to "make good." The Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society has done much to assist in very many cases, and much credit is due to that society for their invaluable assistance, which did much to lessen the problems of the Probation Officer in dealing with those released on probation.

The results obtained during the period under review may be considered very satisfactory in view of the difficulty in getting steady and assured employment by this class of probationer.

This report would not be complete without recording an appreciation of the courtesy and sympathetic understanding shown by the Judges and Magistrates, and of the assistance given by the social workers and the police at this centre.