

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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Report of the  
Director of New Haven

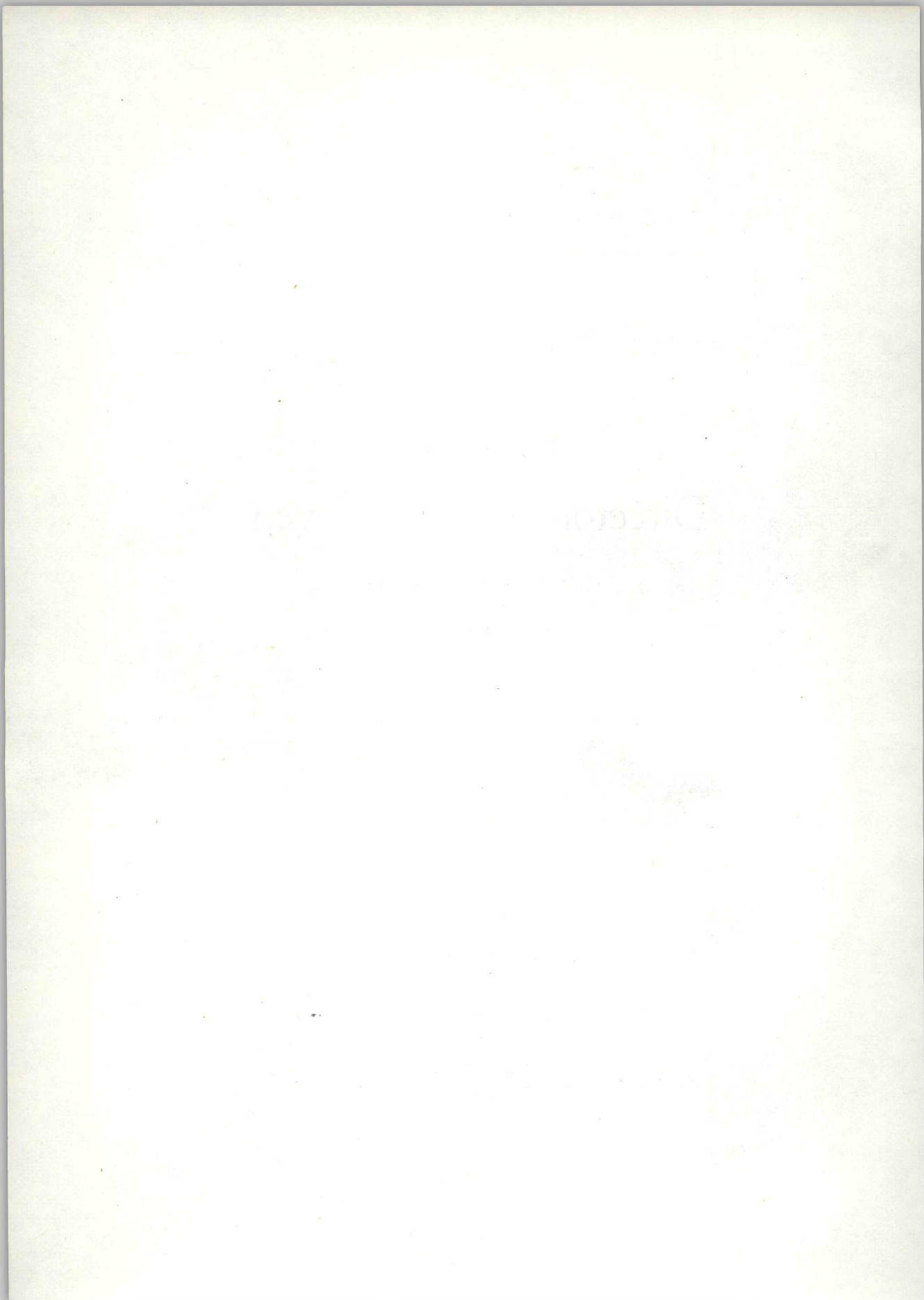
For the Year Ended December 31st

1952



VICTORIA, B.C.

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1953



*To His Honour CLARENCE WALLACE, C.B.E.,  
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

The undersigned has the honour to submit herewith the Report of the Director of New Haven for the year ended December 31st, 1952.

R. W. BONNER,  
*Attorney-General.*

*Attorney-General's Department,  
Victoria, B.C., February 3rd, 1953.*

NEW HAVEN, SOUTH BURNABY, B.C., FEBRUARY 1ST, 1953.

*The Honourable R. W. Bonner, Q.C.,  
Attorney-General, Province of British Columbia,  
Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C.*

SIR,—In accordance with section 13 of the "New Haven Act," 1949, I have the honour to submit my annual report, setting forth a record of the work of the institution during the year ended December 31st, 1952.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

S. ROCKSBOROUGH SMITH,  
*Director.*



# Annual Report of the Director of New Haven

For the Year Ended December 31st, 1952

On November 25th, 1947, after many months of careful planning and preparation, New Haven was officially reopened as a training centre for young adult offenders. During the years 1942 to 1947 it had been closed, and the buildings and grounds were taken over by the School for the Deaf and the Blind.

The year 1952 marks the completion of the first five-year period since New Haven was reopened. I feel that I cannot let this pass without a word concerning the development of the institution during this period. These five years have not been uneventful. They have seen the introduction of a complete Borstal training unit, the first in Canada, with all that that entails.

Some of the difficulties and complexities of that first organizational period will be realized when I say that there was no legal framework within which to operate a Borstal-type institution. Facilities for the three essentials of Borstal training—(1) proper selection, (2) institutional training over an indefinite period, and (3) release on licence or parole under supervision—did not exist. However, within two years the Federal Statutes had been amended to allow the Courts of British Columbia to commit young men between the ages of 16 and 23 to New Haven for definite plus indeterminate periods; a Screening Board had been set up to select suitable candidates for the institution; a comprehensive system of training had been established; a three-man Parole Board had been appointed to approve the release on licence of those who had graduated from their training; and a Province-wide volunteer after-care association had been formed to supervise and assist those lads who would be released from the institution. I should like to say something about each of these three, for they form the foundation upon which the whole system of training rests.

## SCREENING

It was realized at the outset that if New Haven was to be operated as an "open" Borstal—that is, a Borstal without locks or bars and run on the honour system, and be limited to accommodate forty youths—then it would be necessary to select those who were most likely to benefit from training in such an institution—lads with sufficient intelligence to profit from vocational training and with sufficient stability to be able to appreciate the comparative freedom granted in an "open" institution. Absconding, or running away, has always been a problem in "open" institutions, and probably always will be. It is of the essence of the Borstal system that safe custody cannot be an overriding consideration. Committal to an "open" institution presents a very real temptation to the immature, unstable youth who is still perhaps fretting over his sentence or wondering how much of it he will have to spend in the institution. Youths of this type being what they are, to run away from trouble is perhaps their natural course. No amount of screening will entirely eliminate absconding, nor will severe punishment deter those who have no thought but for the moment. This does not mean that great care is not taken to prevent it, where possible. As most absconders are new lads unused as yet to the discipline and routine of institutional life, every effort is made to indoctrinate new-comers as quickly as possible in order to bring about their early adjustment.

## SYSTEM OF TRAINING

To describe the system of training at New Haven is not easy. As in any type of Borstal training, all parts of the system form an integrated whole and are not easily separated for convenient description. It has best been described perhaps as coming under the general heading of character-training. The importance of the various individual



members of the staff cannot be overestimated in a system which relies primarily on personal influence. No hard and fast rule can be laid down as to how such personal influence is to be used, but the aims and principles must be definitely understood, and all must work as a team shooting toward a common goal. The "house system" helps to intensify personal influence and serves also a second purpose, that of bringing into play corporate spirit, the public opinion of the lads themselves, which may be even more potent than that of the staff. Due to the limited accommodation at New Haven, we have only one "house"; this is where the lads live and have their recreation—it is their home, as it were, while they are at the institution, and the housemaster and the Supervisors act *in loco parentis*.

The framework of the New Haven day is eight hours' solid work. Sticking at a job, working hard, and seeing it through are not characteristics which belong to the average youth who reaches Borstal. All too many have developed poor work habits, and are inclined to be shiftless drifters moving from job to job, with gaps of unemployment in between, because they didn't like the job or the boss, or perhaps because they were not too fond of work. It is not unusual to find a youth who has worked at half a dozen to a dozen logging camps. These lads must be taught to work and, above all, to stick at a job. The desire to throw up a job the moment it gets tough or boring is one of the first things to be fought in Borstal training. Each reception during his first month at New Haven is tested vocationally before he starts his trade-training. During this period he works on the cleaning staff. When the psychologist has completed his tests and the boy has been checked by the medical officer and psychiatrist, it is decided into which of the four trade-training groups he should go—woodwork, metal-work, cooking and baking, or farming. Once he has been assigned to his trade, he remains with it until his release. As his proficiency increases, so his small weekly pay increases, with which he can purchase cigarettes or tobacco if he smokes, or such other comforts as the institution canteen provides. A certain portion of his pay is retained as savings. Each trade has its foreman, one of the lads who is responsible under the instructor for the well-being and order of the shop. Though, generally speaking, lads are not at the institution for a sufficiently lengthy period to master more than the fundamentals of a trade, they should be able to develop good work habits and learn lessons of industry, application, and persistence.

Along with this day-time work, each youth is enrolled in an educational course. This course is decided on as a result of his testing and following discussion with his housemaster. Courses are provided by the Correspondence Division of the Department of Education. A wide variety are available, extending from Grade III to university level and embracing a multitude of subjects, both academic and vocational. Course work is done at night after supper and is part of the evening educational programme. This programme includes also an evening of hobbies and handicrafts and an evening of physical education in the gymnasium. New Haven has made a name for itself in the excellence of its hobby work. For the last four years it has been awarded the grand silver medal for the most outstanding group exhibit at the Pacific National Exhibition Hobby Show. Under the general heading of hobbies are such spare-time activities as a public-speaking class, a glee club, a weekly discussion group, play-readings, musical appreciation, and so on.

Sport is not neglected. New Haven softball, basketball, and table-tennis teams compete in friendly rivalry with local teams. The standard of play and sportsmanship has done much to give the institution a good name in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Another interesting departure is camp. For the last four years two ten-day camps have been arranged, in the late spring and early fall, when a group of selected lads go up the coast to Camp Artaban on Gambier Island. Here they spend their mornings at work, improving the camp-site, cutting wood, repairing docks, painting buildings, while their afternoons and evenings are free for organized recreation. Short two-day week-end camps were introduced two years ago to good effect, a small party of lads with a supervisor going off for the week-end to a selected camp-site in the country.



All these multifarious activities, it must be remembered, take place in the leisure time of the boys, when their work and classes are done, and all form a valuable part of their social education.

This necessarily brief description gives the merest outline of the type of training followed at New Haven and some of the methods employed.

### INDETERMINATE SENTENCE

A dominating factor of the training is the system of progressive grades. Lads who have reached a certain stage in their training, and who may be trusted to exercise a good and helpful influence in the general interests of the community and are capable of setting a good example to others, are promoted to "senior men." This is part of the training in responsibility. It is a position of trust rather than privilege, though certain privileges do go with each grade. The real purpose of the grade system is to record progress in the attainment of that self-discipline and sense of responsibility which must reach a certain stage before the youth is ready for release. The criterion for release is fitness. It will be appreciated that in any system of training no two people with differing personalities and widely divergent backgrounds will necessarily respond in the same manner and achieve the required standard in the same period of time. Some will require short, others perhaps longer, periods of training before they are considered fit for release. The indeterminate sentence is therefore an essential part of any correctional programme.

### THE PAROLE BOARD

With the implementation, early in 1949, of the indeterminate sentence, a three-man Board of Parole was appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council "to inquire from time to time into the cases of prisoners sentenced to New Haven, . . . and where as a result of such inquiry the Board thinks proper, it may permit prisoners serving indeterminate sentences to be paroled under conditions approved of by the Minister of Justice. . . ." The Board meets monthly at New Haven. At its monthly meetings the members listen to each case presented to them; they hear of the lad's background, the probable cause of his delinquency, the progress he has made at the institution, his assets and liabilities, and his plans for the future. Following this, the boy is introduced to the members for a personal interview, when they have the opportunity of asking him any questions and of observing him and sizing him up for themselves. Those whose discharges are approved then know that in two months' time they will be released on licence. This two months' waiting period is intended to give the lad and those who are responsible for his future time to make their final preparations.

### AFTER-CARE

Lads released on licence come under the care and supervision of a volunteer association known as the "British Columbia Borstal Association," formed in 1948. This association is a remarkable example of what can be achieved by volunteer effort. With its headquarters in Vancouver, its tentacles spread out to thirty-two different communities throughout the Province. At each of these points small units of the association have been formed, so that any youths returning to these places on release will be looked after and supervised while they are on licence. Although the association is made up of volunteers, it has also an official capacity, for it has the authority to recommend a youth's return to New Haven should he fail to co-operate or break the conditions of his licence. Entirely financed by voluntary subscription, the association has a full-time, paid field secretary, a graduate social worker, who works from an office in Vancouver. The field secretary maintains very close contact with New Haven and acts as liaison between the institution and the various Borstal Association units. When a youth has been approved for release



by the Board of Parole, the secretary pays special attention to him and in his final two months at the institution smooths out any wrinkles in his discharge plan. The association unit at the boy's home town is informed of his coming, suggestions are made as to the type of work he desires, and any difficulties are noted. At the same time a sponsor, one of a group of men within the association specially selected for the work, is chosen for him. Where possible, sponsor and lad meet at New Haven several times before the day of release in order to build up a good relationship before that time. Should problems arise, the sponsor has the field secretary, to whom he reports monthly, to assist and advise him if necessary. The sponsor's task is not an easy one—to guide, to lead, often to admonish, with a firm but sympathetic hand, calls for a high degree of understanding and judgment. Some remarkable relationships have been formed between sponsors and their lads, which shows what can be accomplished by the right type of man.

In the five years that New Haven has been operating, some 175 youths have been released from the institution, the majority on licence. Approximately 20 per cent of that number have been reconvicted. Some, after a temporary lapse, have got back on their feet and been successful since. When it is remembered that the majority of these lads are not first offenders, that many have been tried on probation or been inmates of juvenile reform schools or prisons and have failed, the results, one must feel, are good. Perhaps most encouraging of all is the large number of graduates who write us from all over the world, or who return to visit us. During the last two years we have had over 100 such visits.

I cannot conclude this brief summary of the development of New Haven over the past five years better than by giving one or two excerpts from letters I have received from graduates. They speak for themselves.

"Fred," who was discharged over three years ago and returned to his home in Fort William, writes:—

Speaking of New Haven, it is just lately that I realize the value of your establishment and what it has done for me and can do for lads in the future. I certainly hope that you can get the methods employed by the English system in practice here in Canada. My only regret is that the other nine Provinces in Canada have not started this. When I left there I didn't think I'd be praising New Haven, but since I came to realize its importance I have taken the liberty to spread in what little way I can the work done there.

"Elmer," now a stoker in the Royal Canadian Navy, writes from Nova Scotia:—

Do you know that if it wasn't for my training at New Haven I guess I would be in some real trouble by now. I have not known temptation since I left the Borstal. This I appreciate very much. And I thank you for making a man of me. It feels good to be trusted.

"Vic," a particularly difficult lad in his early days with us, writes now from Korea:—

Give my regards to . . . I don't forget what each and every one of them done for me and how each and all helped me even though I probably was a great strain on their nerves.

"Frank," now training in the Royal Canadian Air Force in Quebec, writes:—

I haven't been getting into any trouble and I have been trying to live up to the standards that have been made for me. I do not want to bring any shame on you or the rest, as I consider all of you as my friends, and I always will.

"Bob," released nine months ago and now living in Toronto, writes:—

I suppose you are wondering why I am dropping you a letter after the way I acted while I was in there. But I know now it did me a lot of good for me to spend a short while in New Haven. So the only way I can repay you is by this letter, and I do want to thank all of you for what you put up with while I was in New Haven. It put me in my right mind anyways. So I guess I have you and the rest that had anything to do with it to be what I am now. I sure wish I would of realize it at the time I was in New Haven. Well anyways keep up the good work.



## ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES, 1952

The following is a table of the admissions and discharges during the year 1952:—

	Admitted	Released
January .....	10	—
February .....	12	2
March .....	7	3
April .....	—	—
May .....	4	2
June .....	5	4
July .....	3	5
August .....	3	5
September .....	3	6
October .....	4	2
November .....	10	3
December .....	10	6
Totals .....	71	38

The average monthly population was 32.

The following table shows the ages of those received at the institution at the time of their reception:—

Age	Number	Age	Number
16 years .....	3	20 years .....	13
17 „ .....	11	21 „ .....	7
18 „ .....	14	22 „ .....	3
19 „ .....	19	23 „ .....	1

The average age was 19 years.

Of the seventy-one youths received during the year, fifty-eight were committed for offences against property and thirteen for offences against the person, as detailed hereunder:—

Robbery with violence .....	5
Robbery .....	2
Assault with intent to rob .....	3
Breaking and entering and theft .....	32
Attempted breaking and entering and theft .....	3
Theft of auto .....	21
Attempted theft of auto .....	1
Taking auto without the owner's consent .....	2
Theft over \$25 .....	14
Theft under \$25 .....	12
Attempted theft .....	2
Retaining stolen property .....	3
Forgery .....	4
Conspiracy to defraud .....	2
False pretences .....	4
Contributing to juvenile delinquency .....	2
Breach of recognizance .....	1

The lack of uniformity of sentence for similar offences has presented a very real problem. Two illustrations are given below.

Sentences awarded for theft of auto have varied from three months definite and nine months indeterminate to six months definite and two years less one day indeterminate and, in one case, one year definite and six months indeterminate.



Sentences awarded for breaking and entering and theft have varied from six months definite and six months indeterminate to six months definite and two years less one day indeterminate and, in one case, one year definite and one year indeterminate.

### TRAINING

#### VOCATIONAL

The following table shows the distribution according to vocational training during the year. As a result of testing, lads are assigned to a trade and normally stay with that trade, working a forty-hour week, until their release.

Woodwork .....	24
Metalwork .....	25
Cooking and baking .....	15
Farming .....	14
Office work .....	2
Maintenance .....	2

#### EDUCATIONAL

The accompanying table shows the educational standing by grades of those received at the institution in 1952. It will be seen that the average grade level was slightly higher than Grade VIII.

Grade		Grade	
III .....	2	IX .....	17
IV .....	—	X .....	10
V .....	2	XI .....	3
VI .....	5	XII .....	3
VII .....	15		—
VIII .....	14	Total .....	71

During the year eighty-seven lads were enrolled in courses from the Department of Education, Correspondence Division. Fifty-eight of these were in the high-school division and twenty-nine in the elementary division. Those in the high-school division took courses in twenty-six different subjects, ranging from straight academic to technical and vocational. Those in the elementary division were restricted to the three "R's." Most of those in this division had been away from school for some years and needed to brush up on the essentials.

Ten lads in the high-school division completed their courses during the year and received certificates from the Department of Education. One passed his final test with 100 per cent and another with 98 per cent. This is an indication of the interest shown by some of the senior students in their class work. Another case worthy of note was that of a lad who completed his Stationary Engineering Course by correspondence and was taken to Vancouver to sit for his fourth-class engineer's ticket. He successfully passed the examination set by the Provincial Government Boiler Inspector and received his certificate. Later, on release, he was found employment by the Borstal Association as a fourth-class stationary engineer.

#### RELIGIOUS

In all Borstals, religion is awarded the first place among all forms of character-training. We have been most fortunate in having two part-time chaplains—a Protestant and a Roman Catholic—both of whom come weekly for Sunday morning service and classes of instruction during the week. The Rev. Grant Hollingworth, who succeeded the Rev. Harold Berry in May, has made a very definite contribution to the life and atmosphere of the institution. The role of the chaplain is not an easy one, particularly in an institution where many have never learnt the first rudiments of their professed faith. It is



not always easy for the average lad to believe what he is told or what he reads, but he will believe what he sees. It is by example rather than precept that the chaplain must make his influence felt.

During the course of the year the Protestant chapel was completely renovated with furnishings made in the institution's woodwork-shop.

### HEALTH

As in previous years, the level of health of the lads was high. The majority gained in weight, and there were no epidemics.

All receptions were examined on arrival, and the medical officer, Dr. R. G. E. Richmond, paid weekly visits to the institution. All lads in their reception stage were tested by the psychologist, Mr. R. McAllister, and interviewed by the psychiatrist before proceeding with their training.

During the course of the year thirty-one were treated for minor ailments in the institution's infirmary, seven received surgical treatment in civilian hospitals, nine had X-rays taken, seven had eye examinations, six were fitted with glasses, and three with dentures. All those requiring dental attention were treated at the out-patients' clinic at the Vancouver General Hospital and every lad was X-rayed for tuberculosis at the New Westminster chest clinic.

### AFTER-CARE

The work of the Borstal Association during the year was, as always, outstanding. Under the chairmanship, for the second year in succession, of R. J. Lecky, the association increased the number of its branch units throughout the Province to thirty-three. Employment was found by the association for all but two of the thirty-eight youths released on licence from New Haven, before they left the institution. This is a remarkable achievement and is an indication of the vigour and enthusiasm of the members of the association. Great credit for the year's success must go to the field secretary, J. D. Rickaby, whose energy and resourcefulness have been unbounded. Mr. Rickaby has kept in close touch with New Haven at all times, interviewing new lads on reception, attending meetings of the institution and Parole Boards, counselling and advising those who are preparing to leave the institution, selecting suitable sponsors for each lad, arranging for employment interviews, and finally taking those released on licence to their homes on the day of discharge. This, in addition to managing the Borstal Association office in Vancouver and tending to the many calls of those already on licence, has given Mr. Rickaby little free time, yet he managed during the year to fit in a speaking tour covering many points of the Interior of the Province, interpreting the work of the association.

The work of the Borstal Association is so closely interwoven with the training programme at New Haven that it is difficult to determine where one commences and the other leaves off. It could best be described perhaps as a true partnership. Were it not for this close co-operation, it is certain that the success we have had could not have been achieved.

### STAFF

There was only one staff change in 1952, when Mr. Dudley vacated the position of farm instructor. This vacancy was filled by Norman Milne.

In-service training was continued from last year on a limited scale, and all members of the staff took part in a weekly discussion seminar during the first three months of the year.

I cannot speak too highly of the spirit of co-operation, the loyalty, and general harmony of my staff. Over and above their ordinary duties, each member has interested himself voluntarily in some special phase of the life of the institution. In this way it has been possible both to expand our programme and also to afford individual staff members

an opportunity of establishing a point of contact with individual lads based on some mutual interest. Week-end camps, athletic fixtures, a public-speaking course, dramatic performances, hobby interests, and employment surveys have all been sponsored by various members in their free time. In a system of training which relies to such a great extent on personal influence and example, this has been of the greatest value.

In conclusion, I should like to gratefully acknowledge the kindness and consideration I have always received from Colonel Pepler, Deputy Attorney-General; Mr. Selkirk, Departmental Comptroller; and the members of the head-office staff of the Attorney-General's Department; the patience and understanding of the chairman and members of the Board of Parole; the splendid spirit of co-operation of the directors and members of the Borstal Association; the assistance afforded me by the Inspector of Gaols, Provincial Probation Department, the Western Representative of the Remission Service, the John Howard Society, the National Employment Service, and the many individuals and organizations that have given so freely of their time and skill in a sincere desire to be of service.

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