

It may be that self-preservation of the interest of the individual members of the Group whereby they have, within the overall authority of the prison administration, some autonomy. It is the manner in which they manoeuvre to extend the area of this autonomy that is interesting and requires close observation.

Probably a reply to a question put to a prisoner who had been to Parramatta Gaol, but had not been a member of the Resurgents' Group gives a clue. Although he had not been a member he was exercising some interest, if not pride, in that this group had existed within a gaol where he served some of his sentence of imprisonment.

The fact that this and several other group activities were available for these prisoners who were prepared to make themselves acceptable to a group of their particular interest, may have had a side effect on the general atmosphere of the gaol.

LETTER TO "THE AUSTRALIAN"

In November last year the national newspaper "The Australian" published a series of articles on the prison system. In reply to an article which said that "the Council met every two years to discuss all the items under its title, but presses nobody" our President wrote the following letter which was published in "The Australian".

Dear Sir,

May I commend your recent series on the prison system and necessary reforms therein. As I now proceed to comment upon one aspect of the series I wish to make clear my view that articles such as these can only do good, the more public discussion the better.

However, one article in the series did seem to suggest that the Australian Crime Prevention, Correction and After-Care Council is somewhat ineffective and with this suggestion I wish to take issue. The objects of the Council are.-

- (a) To assist and promote the work of crime prevention, correction and the after-care of offenders.
- (b) To co-ordinate the activities of all persons and bodies interested in such work.
- (c) To provide a forum for the free discussion of all matters of interest amongst those concerned with crime prevention, correction and after-care.

In furtherance of these objects the Council has in the past arranged bi-ennial conferences for workers in the criminal justice field and has brought to Australia distinguished foreign experts to impart some of their knowledge to these conferences. A similar conference is being arranged for

August 1971 in Brisbane. In addition, through executive meetings and the circulation of a newsletter the Council endeavours to disseminate information of general interest. At present the Council has two committees, each headed by a Supreme Court Judge studying particular subjects: one the question of alternatives to imprisonment and the other the problems of confidentiality which arises in connection with pre-sentence and similar reports. The reports of these committees will be presented at the Brisbane conference. A similar study on parole practice and legislation was presented to the 1965 conference.

The Council does not seek to point out to Governments the present deficiencies in the prison system: its members include the Controllers of Prisons of all States who are already only too well aware of them, but it regards as of great importance its committee on alternatives to imprisonment and will in due course be presenting Governments with its findings.

I am sure you will agree that such research and the publication of findings is essential if progress is to be made - and I believe the Australian Crime Prevention, Correction and After-Care Council is playing its full part in this. Donations to further its work will be welcome'

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) E. M. Bingham,

President
Australian Crime Prevention, Correction
and After-Care Council

THE WORK RELEASE PLAN N.S.W.

On 27th February, 1970, the Hon. J. C. Maddison, B.A., LL.B., M.L.A., Minister of Justice, officially opened Silverwater House, a Work Release Centre at Silverwater, on the site of the old Newington State Hospital. The building, which had previously been used as the nurses' quarters, had been completely renovated and fitted with modern equipment to provide a most desirable standard of accommodation for the inmates. At the time of the opening, ten work release inmates were housed at the Centre which has an accommodation capacity for thirty persons.

The work release plan provides a form of treatment which is new within the Australian penal system. It is a programme for carefully selected inmates wherein they accept the responsibilities of citizenship, engage in full-time employment and return to custody each evening and each weekend. The participants in the work release plan remain wholly within the custodial jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Corrective Services. The social, educational and economic implications of the work release plan are far reaching.

As the scheme has been in force for over eighteen months, recently I paid a visit to the Centre to talk with Mr. Jack Jones, the Administrator.