

PRISON VISITING

A development of interest to all Council members has been the prison visiting project which commenced twelve months ago at the complex of prisons at Long Bay. A group of University graduates and under-graduates, who have visited regularly the Resurgent Society at Parramatta Gaol, received permission from the Commissioner of Corrective Services to visit the prison complex at Long Bay. The project was coordinated by the Director of Probation and Parole Services and has been widened to include some twenty citizens. These visits, though mainly to the prison hospital area, included also the Metropolitan Reception Prison, the Central Industrial Prison and the Metropolitan Remand Centre.

The primary purpose of the visiting has been personal contact with prisoners. Apart from its initial accreditation and the meeting of security requirements, the project was unstructured to avoid being too formal and in this way through its flexibility to gain more quickly the confidence of prisoners. Through the personal contact made by the visitors, further assistance has been given to treatment personnel, particularly the parole officers. The contact made by the visitors enables preliminary steps to be taken in helping those prisoners with whom the visitor is in contact and information accordingly is passed on to the parole service. It also enables citizens to work with the parole officers in the later resettlement of prisoners contacted. Comment has been made by the hospital staff on the influence of the prison visitors in reducing tension and aggressiveness.

In December the first of a series of seminars was held at the prison hospital with the prison visitors and voluntary workers from the Civil Rehabilitation Committees to enable a survey to be made of the prison visiting scheme and to examine its work generally. The success of prison visiting so far has been demonstrated in the good relationships established; the practical help that has been given individual prisoners and their families, and the good will and interest shown by citizens towards the work of the Department.

ADULT PROBATION SERVICE

The New South Wales Adult Probation Service has recruited thirty-five additional officers to enter a training school extending over approximately one year.

This is the second group to undergo training as part of a plan to provide probation facilities to Courts of all jurisdictions in the Metropolitan Area of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. The plan envisages eventual extension to some sixteen country centres.

The Service at present caters for the Courts of Quarter Sessions in Sydney, Parramatta, Campbelltown, Wollongong and Newcastle and the complex of Courts at Central Petty Sessions in the city.
