

The report for 1908-09 of the inspectors of penitentiaries draws attention to the results of ten years' application of the parole system under the act of 1899 for the conditional liberation of penitentiary convicts (62-63 Vict. c. 49). The total of 2,515 convicts have during the ten years 1899-1909 been released on parole. Of these the licenses of 99 were revoked through non-compliance with conditions, 54 were forfeited by subsequent convictions, and 1,483 completed their sentences on parole, leaving the number remaining on parole at 879. Thus the number of convicts who broke parole during the ten years was 153 or 2.1 per cent. These figures represent not merely a material gain to the State by saving of the expense of maintenance, but also a moral reclamation which is of infinitely greater importance. The inspectors state that when the parole system was established it was criticised as a 'dangerous innovation' and that after a year's experience this was modified to a 'doubtful experiment'. Now after a decade of operation the wisdom and success of the system are fully recognised. They describe the method of release on parole as beyond doubt the most important and useful penological reform yet introduced into this country.

On the other hand the inspectors comment strongly upon the present system of fixed sentences under which every week notorious and habitual criminals who have evinced no intention of reform are set free merely because the judge or magistrate has fixed the limit necessary for the protection of society in their cases. They recommend a change of policy in the direction of sentences of indefinite duration for habitual offenders.

The progress of the Dominion experimental farms was reported in the Year Book for 1907, pp. xviii-l. Another branch experimental farm has now been put into operation at Rosthern in northern Saskatchewan, fifty miles south of Prince Albert on the line of railway from Regina to Prince Albert. The farm is about one mile from the railway station at Rosthern. The area of land secured in this instance is 155 acres. It is proposed to test all farm crops likely to succeed in this district and to conduct experiments to demonstrate the advantages of rotation of crops and of adopting the best methods of preparing the land for crop. Trials will also be made of many sorts of fruits and forest and ornamental trees. At the eastern extremity of the Dominion, in Prince Edward Island, a branch experimental farm has recently been established near the city of Charlottetown. This farm consists of about 60 acres and adjoins the city. It is bounded by the railway and is well seen from every passing train. Experimental work with many varieties of cereals, fodder plants, small and large fruits and ornamental shrubs and trees will be begun during the spring of 1910. The Dominion experimental farms are now nine in number. They consist of the central farm at Ottawa and of eight branch farms located at Nappan, N. S.; Charlottetown, P.E.I.; Brandon, Man.; Indian Head, S. Sask.; Ros-