

1942.  
NEW ZEALAND.

## EDUCATION: CHILD WELFARE, STATE CARE OF CHILDREN, SPECIAL SCHOOLS, AND INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION.

[In continuation of E-4, 1941.]

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

SIR,—

11th August, 1942.

In presenting my report on the work of the Child Welfare Branch for the year ended 31st March, 1942, I would refer interested readers to my previous reports regarding the functions of the Branch and other details.

Although the permanent staff has been depleted, an endeavour is being made by the appointment of temporary officers to keep the work up to an efficient standard.

*Institutions.*—The new Training Centre at Levin for older boys which was opened during the year is now in full working order. On an average there were 36 boys in residence.

At Caversham the new Boys' Home was completed during the year and is now in occupation.

*Conference of Child Welfare Officers.*—The first conference of Child Welfare Officers in the Dominion took place at Wellington last October. This conference was limited to representatives from the four main centres and managers of the larger institutions. It was rather a working conference to prepare the way for regional conferences to be held later at which all officers would attend.

*Co-ordination of Welfare Services.*—The matter of ensuring better co-ordination of all services, both government and private, in matters affecting child welfare in all its aspects—the goal for some years now—progressed a further stage during the year by closer co-operation with certain other Departments of the Service. The next step is closer co-operation with private organizations; it is hoped to arrange meetings with representatives in the main centres in the near future.

*Preventive Work.*—I look upon preventive work as the most important activity of the Branch, and the whole policy is centred around the preservation of the family unit.

*Child Placement.*—The first aim is to deal with a child in its own home. Failing this, placement in a selected foster-home is regarded as the next best procedure. Under present conditions increasing difficulty is being experienced in finding a sufficiency of suitable foster-homes.

*Education.*—At the 31st March, 1942, 244 children under guardianship were receiving post-primary education. Of these, 97 were taking technical courses, 22 commercial, 9 home science, and 10 Maori children were attending Maori colleges. The remainder were taking professional and other courses.

*Placement in Employment.*—Every effort is made to place each child in the most satisfactory way when the time comes for him to enter employment. His own vocational preferences, as well as his aptitudes, are investigated, and every endeavour is made to place him in accordance with sound principles of vocational guidance.

*Discharge.*—During the year 469 children were discharged from control. The average age on discharge was 16 years 5 months. Each child is given his discharge as soon as he has reached a position where he no longer requires the Department's assistance either in regard to his support or in regard to the stabilizing of his conduct.

*Children's Courts.*—In Table 2 I have for comparative purposes included the Court appearances for the past three years. These indicate a fairly satisfactory position in that there has been little increase in the total numbers of children appearing for offences. As more parents are required to be absent from their homes for war purposes increasing difficulties in this regard will, it is anticipated, be met.

Some difficulty arises in this matter owing to a lack of uniformity in laying charges or informations against children, but it is hoped to remedy this in the future. Meanwhile the totals taken one year with another give some indication of the incidence of delinquency as a whole.

*Children placed under Legal Supervision.*—The tendency is for the Courts to use increasingly the facilities afforded under orders of supervision by Child Welfare Officers. The total number under supervisory orders at the end of the year was 1,123. I am pleased to report that the majority of the children make good under this form of control.

*Honorary Child Welfare Officers.*—I desire to express grateful appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by honorary officers, men and women (about two hundred), who assist not only at the Courts but with child welfare work generally.

*Previous Offenders.*—The records show that of the children brought before the Courts 305 had at some time appeared previously for offences; only a small minority of these were actually under the control of Child Welfare Officers at the time of their appearance this year.

*Illegitimate Children.*—With a view to ensuring that adequate provision was made, Child Welfare Officers made inquiries in the cases of 1,281 illegitimate births notified confidentially to them by Registrars. In most instances the mother or other relative was able to care satisfactorily for the child, but where necessary the Welfare Officer arranged for assistance, which in certain cases includes help in the initiation of affiliation proceedings.

*Committals and Admissions.*—During the year 356 boys and 208 girls were committed by Courts to my care for the following reasons: Indigent, 139; not under proper control, 133; living in detrimental environments or neglected, 110; delinquent, 182. In addition to the above, 110 children were temporarily admitted by arrangement or under warrant from the Court.

*Adoptions.*—The number of orders for the adoption of children made by Magistrates during the year was 605, a record. The average number of children adopted annually during the past five years was 530. A most satisfactory feature is that during this same period the Court ordered only 7 cancellations.

*Edward Costley Trust, Auckland.*—I wish to again thank the trustees for the continued help which they have given in a large number of deserving cases of children requiring help with educational courses or in the early years of apprenticeship.

*Special Residential Schools.*—School for the Deaf, Sumner: The number of children on the roll at Sumner was 110 at the 31st December, 1941. Owing to the buildings being in occupation by the military authorities the school was not reopened at the usual time—the beginning of February. A separate school for the South Island children will be opened shortly in Christchurch. Arrangements for accommodation of the North Island children are in hand.

Special School for Boys, Otekaike, and Special School for Girls, Richmond: The total number in residence at these two institutions for backward children at the 31st March, 1942, was 183. At Otekaike the admission of a number of children had been held over pending the appointment of necessary teaching staff.

New Zealand Institute for the Blind: At the 31st March, 1942, there were 19 Government pupils in residence at the New Zealand Institute for the Blind at Auckland. Other children at the Institute are arranged for privately. This institute is administered by an independent Board of Trustees on which the Government is represented.

*Registered Children's Homes.*—Two additional homes were registered during the year, making the total 85. All these homes were inspected by Child Welfare Officers during the year.

The total number of children in residence at 31st December, 1941, was 2,970, as compared with 2,854 in the previous year. In the case of 227 children both parents were dead, in the case of 247 the father was dead, and in the case of 629 the mother was dead.

Many of the institutions reported that programmes they had in view for renovations and improvements had to be held over for the present.

*Maori Children.*—It is the policy of the Department to deal with these children by remedial treatment in their own homes and localities as far as this is practicable. Very considerable help in this connection has been given by the honorary Child Welfare Officers, including representatives of the Maori race.

Considerable success has followed the plan of placing older delinquent Maoris under close supervision in situations some distance away from their own homes. Care is taken in these cases to ensure that their wages are suitably apportioned, that clothing is provided, and that pocket-money is no greater than is necessary.

*Infant-life Protection (Infants Act, 1908).*—The number of homes registered under the Infants Act is 572 and the number of children in them is 627.

Child Welfare Officers were appointed in 33 cases as conciliators under the Domestic Proceedings Act, 1939. Reports by Child Welfare Officers were also asked for in 41 cases by Magistrates and Judges where the custody of the children was concerned.

*British Children.*—I am happy to report that these children, numbering 203, are still progressing very favourably in their new surroundings. Their health during the past year has on the whole been very good. I wish to express grateful appreciation of the gratuitous services rendered where necessary to these children by members of the British Medical Association and the New Zealand Dental Association.

The reports on the children indicate that they are progressing very favourably indeed in their various classes and that they show continued interest not only in their lessons, but in all school activities. The number of children attending the various types of schools on the 31st March, 1942, were as follows: Kindergarten, 1; primary schools, 96; post-primary schools, 86; University college, 1. Nineteen children have left school and are placed in various approved positions: they are doing well.

Early in the year the local representative of the Children's Overseas Reception Board, Major Bavin, O.B.E., was transferred to Australia. His successor, Mr. W. Garnett, was also transferred to Australia. Mr. R. Sedgwick, who is Official Secretary to Sir Harry Batterbee, is now acting.

I am pleased to be able to state from first-hand knowledge as well as from reports received that these children are a healthy, happy, and contented group, and a credit to any community.

J. R. McCLUNE, Superintendent.

The Director of Education.

TABLE 1.—NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER CONTROL AND SUPERVISION.

The total number of children under the supervision of the Child Welfare Branch as at the 31st March, 1942, was 8,424, classified under the following headings, the corresponding number for the previous year (ended 31st March, 1941) being also given :—

	1940-41.	1941-42.		1940-41.	1941-42.
State wards—			Other than State wards—		
In foster-homes, hostels, and with friends	2,559	2,563	Young persons supervised by Child Welfare Officers in their own homes, with relatives or with friends, pursuant to Orders of Courts	1,109	1,123
In situations (includes 24 absent without leave at 31st March, 1941, and 20 at 31st March, 1942)	986	1,106	Infants supervised in foster-homes registered under the Infants Act	581	627
In Government institutions, receiving-homes, &c.	229	231	Pupils at the School for the Deaf, Sumner (at 31st December, 1941, for current year)	117	110
In private institutions .. .. .	105	127	Pupils at schools for mentally backward (Otekaieke and Richmond)	47	52
In Roman Catholic institutions recognized under the Child Welfare Act	77	98	Children supervised as preventive cases	1,739	1,960
In special schools for backward children ..	189*	131	Children in New Zealand Institute for the Blind for whom the Department makes payment	24	19
In refuge or cognate institutions .. ..	51	36			
In hospitals, convalescent homes, &c. . .	30	26			
In residential colleges (mostly Maori children)	14	12			
British children .. .. .	202	203			
	4,442	4,533		3,617	3,891
			Total .. .. .	8,059	8,424

\* Correcting error in E.—4, 1941.

TABLE 2.—TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN APPEARING BEFORE CHILDREN'S COURTS.  
(Classified according to reason for appearance.)

	1939-40.	1940-41.	1941-42.
Indigent .. .. .	161	208	141
Not under proper control .. .. .	206	175	212
Living in a detrimental environment ..	91	97	83
Neglected .. .. .	31	30	79
	489	510	515
Offences against morality .. .. .	4	9	25
Offences against the person .. .. .	90	81	30
Other offences—			
(a) Theft .. .. .	1,049	1,121	1,037
(b) Conversion of motor-vehicles .. ..	117	133	87
(c) Miscellaneous (including offences against rights of property, mischief, &c.)	308	507	557
Delinquent .. .. .	201	66	207
Breaches of Court supervision orders ..	7	10	19
Breaches of special Acts or Regulations—			
Railways .. .. .	2	40	33
Fire brigades .. .. .	10	4	12
Acclimatization .. .. .	4	9	5
Licensing .. .. .	7	23	2
Arms .. .. .	38	43	34
Post and Telegraph .. .. .	67	68	81
Shipping .. .. .	4	..	4
Traffic .. .. .	47	173	62
Motor-vehicles .. .. .	212	55	11
City or borough by-laws .. .. .	297	82	215
	2,464	2,424	2,421
Total .. .. .	2,953	2,934	2,936

TABLE 3.—THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPARATIVE STATEMENT SHOWING THE ACTION TAKEN IN RESPECT OF CHILDREN WHO APPEARED BEFORE CHILDRENS' COURTS.

	1939-40.	1940-41.	1941-42.
Committed to the care of Superintendent .. .. .	509	548	564
Placed under supervision .. .. .	798	862	867
Supervision extended .. .. .	24	23	32
Supervision with residence .. .. .	10	7	14
Informal supervision .. .. .	1	1	..
Admonished and discharged .. .. .	715	798	582
Admonished, discharged, and ordered to make restitution .. .. .	233	198	242
Admonished and ordered to pay costs .. .. .	13	31	20
Admonished and fined .. .. .	..	10	36
Adjourned .. .. .	79	43	91
Adjourned <i>sine die</i> .. .. .	24	24	29
Dismissed .. .. .	53	70	47
Committed to Borstal .. .. .	24	40	36
Convicted and fined .. .. .	6	4	3
Convicted and discharged .. .. .	4	5	1
Convicted and ordered to come up for sentence .. .. .	1	1	..
Returned to the care of the Superintendent .. .. .	73	60	68
Withdrawn .. .. .	27	11	23
Ordered to come up for sentence .. .. .	7	16	6
Probation .. .. .	8	13	10
Referred to the Magistrates' Court .. .. .	4	1	4
Fined .. .. .	25	85	65
Ordered to pay costs .. .. .	3	..	..
License cancelled .. .. .	10	1	2
Remanded .. .. .	5	6	..
By-law Cases—			
Admonished and discharged .. .. .	153	34	105
Admonished and ordered to pay costs .. .. .	2	..	..
Convicted and fined and ordered to pay costs or convicted and ordered to pay costs .. .. .	..	..	2
Fined and ordered to pay costs or ordered to pay costs .. .. .	135	41	77
Dismissed .. .. .	3	1	6
Adjourned .. .. .	1	..	3
Convicted and discharged .. .. .	3	..	1
Total .. .. .	2,953	2,934	2,936

TABLE 4.—CHILDREN PLACED UNDER SUPERVISION OF CHILD WELFARE OFFICERS BY COURTS DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1942.  
(Classified according to reasons for appearance.)

	Boys.	Girls.	Totals.
Charged with an offence .. .. .	596	53	649
Delinquent .. .. .	136	19	155
Not under proper control .. .. .	40	27	67
In detrimental environment .. .. .	1	8	9
Indigent .. .. .	4	..	4
Neglected .. .. .	10	10	20
Total .. .. .	787	117	904

NOTE.—Table 3 regarding Court Records shows 867 placed under supervision. The difference is accounted for by the number of adjourned cases from the previous year being dealt with during 1941-42.

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