

We endeavour by all available means to adjust the conditions affecting a potentially delinquent child in his home and in the community so that he will develop good habits. In this way it is hoped to avert the possibility of Court appearances. Besides this, we seek to assist the handicapped child in any way which will help him to overcome the effects of his disadvantages. In the course of this preventive work it is obvious that attention must be paid not only to individual cases, but also to general social measures.

The Child Welfare Officer when visiting the home to investigate conditions endeavours as a first essential to gain the confidence of the parents and enlist their co-operation, without which little can be done. Fortunately, in the majority of cases it has been found that parents welcome and adopt sympathetic suggestions and advice regarding the training of their children. If necessary, the assistance of outside agencies is utilized in helping to bring about a satisfactory adjustment. In cases presenting unusual difficulties the expert services of psychologists attached to the Department or to the University colleges and of psychiatrists attached to the Mental Hospitals Department are available and are freely utilized in both our preventive and our Court work.

The number of children being dealt with under "preventive" supervision during the year was 1,629.

I am satisfied that as a result of these preventive measures many children are kept from committing offences, and in this way the need for Court appearances is avoided. To ensure the best results, however, it is essential, when symptoms of incipient mal-adjustment are observed, that appropriate measures be undertaken at the earliest possible stage.

Further, it must be recognized that the well-being of children and the safeguarding of their interests can never be the responsibility entirely of any one section of the community and that the best results can be obtained only by securing the fullest co-operation of all, including parents, teachers, clergymen, police, Court officials, social-service organizations, and private citizens having the interests of young people at heart. It is the Department's endeavour to foster this co-operation.

The provision of funds by the Government in recent years to enable the Branch to carry out more effectively the "preventive" section of its activities has been of vital importance in this social constructive work. Practical assistance given at the time when it is most needed is of first importance in dealing with families who, through misfortune or other sufficient cause, are in need of material help. The effects of this policy are far-reaching, as improved conditions tend not only to preserve the family unit, but also to eliminate those factors in the home which may easily lead to disruption and eventually to child delinquency.

#### EDWARD COSTLEY TRUST, AUCKLAND

During the year the trustees financially assisted 47 children in the Auckland district with educational courses, apprenticeships, &c. This assistance took the form of grants for books, school uniforms, fees, travelling-expenses, and clothing, and was granted upon favourable recommendations being received from the District Child Welfare Officer, who made careful inquiry into each application. The majority of the children helped were fatherless or the parents were not in a position at the time to provide the necessary help.

The assistance given was highly appreciated by the parents and the children themselves, and is looked upon by this Department as a most valuable adjunct to child welfare services in the community.

#### BRITISH CHILDREN IN NEW ZEALAND

On the 31st March, 1946, there were 46 British children remaining in New Zealand, a total of 145 having returned to the United Kingdom during the year. Although the official Children's Overseas Reception Board Scheme terminated at the end of 1945, it was deemed advisable to keep in force the British Children Regulations in the meantime, so that some measure of official oversight could be retained over those children