

1948
NEW ZEALAND

EDUCATION :

CHILD WELFARE, STATE CARE OF CHILDREN, SPECIAL SCHOOLS, AND INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION

[In continuation of E-4, 1947]

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

14th June, 1948.

SIR,—

In presenting my report on the work of the Child Welfare Branch for the year ended 31st March, 1948, I refer those interested to E-4, 1946, for fuller information about the functions of the Branch.

STAFFING

Although there has been little change amongst the senior positions in the Branch except through retirements normally expected, the same stability has not been evident in more junior positions, where there has been more than average movement of staff in and out of the Service. This is probably linked with the fact that so far there has been little noticeable response to the new salary scales for field officers approved by the Public Service Commission last year.

The establishment, recently announced, of a School of Social Work at Victoria University College should provide officers in the Service and prospective appointees with better opportunities for improving their academic qualifications.

HONORARY CHILD WELFARE OFFICERS

At the 31st March, 1948, there were 223 honorary officers holding office in various parts of the Dominion under authority given them by the Hon. Minister. The Branch is fortunate in being able to call on the services of these men and women, whose gratuitous assistance with the supervision of children, with the selection of foster-homes, and with other miscellaneous duties, particularly in outlying districts, constitutes a valuable community work.

CHILD WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

The destruction by fire, during the year, of the Receiving Home at Greenmeadows, Napier, and of the Trade Training Section attached to the Boys' Training Centre, Levin, was a serious loss to the Department, particularly in view of the current shortage of building materials and labour. A start has already been made with the replacement of the latter building, which is the more urgently required,

New premises at Wadestown were acquired for use as a girls' hostel in Wellington, replacing the former premises in Tinakori Road, which had not at any time been entirely suitable for the purpose and which lacked adequate ground space for recreational activities.

The new hostel for business girls at the Girls' Training Centre at Burwood was officially opened by the Hon. Miss Howard and is now in full occupation.

Alterations and renovations have been carried out or commenced at the Auckland Boys' Hostel, Palmerston North Receiving Home, Wellington Boys' Home, and Dunedin Boys' Home.

Despite the difficulty, during the present man-power shortage, of maintaining full staffs at all the Branch's institutions, it has been possible to meet the demands on them for the accommodation of children. These demands have remained fairly constant throughout the year. The inadequate number of satisfactory foster-homes offering is no doubt partly responsible for this position, one which would not be expected to accompany a general decrease in recent years in the numbers of children under the control of the Branch.

The following are extracts from the reports of the Manager, Boys' Training Centre, Levin, and the Principal, Girls' Training Centre, Burwood :—

(a) *Levin* :—

An up-to-date trade training wing is now nearing completion, the work being done by the boys under the supervision of the carpentry instructor and the technical instructor.

When completed, this unit will enable us to give a sound training in all branches of carpentry and cabinetmaking, thus forming a very valuable pre-apprentice training section, besides giving those trainees who will not follow on with the trade the ability to use tools correctly.

The tone at the Centre during the year has been very high, and the very pleasing spirit of co-operation between the staff and boys is responsible for this. No opportunity is lost to impress on the trainees the fact that the Centre is not just a group of buildings in pleasing surroundings, but it represents the combined efforts of all who come within its scope so to fit each new boy that he will be better able to return to the community.

Accommodation at the senior section has been fully taxed throughout the year, but there was a pleasing decline in admissions from the lower-age groups :—

Roll, 30th March, 1947	..	..	..	..	..	60
Admissions .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	54
Discharges .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	62
Roll, 30th March, 1948	..	..	..	..	..	52

The boys at the senior section all attend at their own Church in Levin on Sundays, and the policy of permitting this to be unsupervised has proved highly successful. The various ministers visit fairly frequently, and keep in touch with boys of their own denomination.

I can again report a high standard of health among the trainees, and the complete absence of any epidemic or serious illness.

New boys on admission are usually kept working in the villa for the first month, after which they decide for themselves whether they will join the farm or trade section, and the free choice has always been such that we have been able to maintain an equitable distribution of labour at the Centre. The farm is just sufficiently big to enable all types of farm-work to be demonstrated, and also to keep the senior section and the Hokio section adequately supplied with meat, milk, eggs, and vegetables.

(b) *Burwood* :—

It is of paramount importance in the rehabilitation of unsettled maladjusted girls that the atmosphere and spirit which surrounds them during their training period should be friendly, helpful, and stable. So many of the girls who are admitted to this Centre have known strain and insecurity in their homes, and have often been insufficiently loved and cared for, to have developed healthy attitudes towards life.

Out of the 69 girls living in the Centre, 42 come from broken homes—that is, the parents are either separated or divorced or live together in disharmony. Twelve girls come from homes where either one or both parents are dead.

This year a Girls' Council has been formed, which is composed of elected representatives from each of the four houses. It meets weekly to discuss matters of interest to the girls and arranges the sports programmes and social evenings, &c. Besides providing a good training in democratic methods, it is playing an important part in creating a good atmosphere in the Centre.

One of the most important events during the year was the opening of the Business Girls' Hostel.

The month following the opening, the first wedding was held there. The business girl who was married was given away by the Principal and attended by another business girl as bridesmaid. The reception was held in the hostel dining-room. There were forty guests, including business girls, staff, and friends.

Girls have received training in all branches of housework, cooking, including baking, preserving, and jam-making, laundry-work, gardening, and sewing.

The sewing-room trainees, under instruction, make all the dresses, suits, coats, and underwear for the girls in the Centre, besides being responsible for making sheets, pillowcases, curtains, and cushions as required. This year, as well as the sewing for the Centre, they have made curtains and cushions for the School for the Deaf, Sumner.

Girls have been placed in positions in hospitals, at shop-work, office-work, laundry-work, tailoring, and dressmaking.

The leisure-time activities this year have increased in scope and variety. They include drama, poetry-reading, first-aid and home nursing, singing and music, impromptu speaking and debating, painting, attendance at pictures, full use of the library, inter-house competitions, concerts and parties, as well as all branches of handwork such as embroidery, weaving, tatting, crocheting, the making of toys, dolls, and baby and children's clothes.

Each Sunday morning the girls attend their own local Church and each Sunday afternoon Bible classes are held in the Centre by visiting teachers.

We are glad to be able to report that the girls have joined with the Bible classes in their own Churches in rallies, socials, dances, &c., and a fine spirit has been built up between the local girls and the girls from the Centre.

A small group of older girls acted as staff at a holiday school for younger primary-school children in the term holidays. During a Community Project Week, our girls helped to look after the crèche each day.

Swimming sports, tennis tournaments, and athletic sports were held alternately. During last winter our "A" basketball team played in the second-grade basketball competition in town and took third place. Four of our girls were picked for the representative trials (the most chosen from any team), and the captain from our team was chosen as a Canterbury representative player and travelled to Wellington and Timaru with the team. The "B" team played a town team at the Centre each Saturday, and entertained them afterwards to afternoon tea.

An instructor from the Physical Welfare Branch has come weekly to the Centre during the winter and spring to take "keep fit" classes.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Schools for Backward Children.—At the Special School for Boys, Otekaieke, which provides for mentally retarded children who cannot for one reason or another be taught at an ordinary school or in a special class, there were 107 boys in residence at 31st March, 1948. Of these, 78 were in the day-school section and 29 in the industrial section. In addition, 5 boys were on holiday. During the year 36 new pupils were admitted and 39 left. Of those who left, 33 returned to active life in the community and 6 were found to be unsuitable for special-school training. Five of the 6 were transferred to a custodial home and one to the Boys' Training Centre, Levin.

At the Special School for Girls, Richmond, which is similar in function to Otekaieke, there were 44 girls in residence at 31st March, 1948. Because of the epidemic restrictions, 7 girls were on extended holiday, and for the same reason several entrants from the Auckland Province could not be admitted. During the year there were 19 new admissions, 11 girls were placed out in the community in other districts, 5 were returned to relatives or friends, 3 were transferred to the Girls' Hostel, Wellington, and 6 to other appropriate institutions.

Schools for the Deaf.—At Sumner there were 154 pupils (88 boys and 66 girls) on the roll at 31st March, 1948. There were 27 new admissions during the year and 21 children left. Of the 27 admissions, 5 had previous training in a school for the deaf, 21 were congenitally deaf or became deaf before reaching school age, and 1 was hard of hearing and failed to make progress in a public school.

Substantial progress has been made to improve facilities and to provide additional amenities for the pupils and staff. Further, a comprehensive programme of works to be undertaken in the near future has been drawn up. When these are completed, the School will be well equipped in all branches.

At Titirangi there were 97 pupils (48 boys and 49 girls) in residence at 31st March, 1948. There were 2 new admissions during the year and 7 children left. The poliomyelitis epidemic seriously interfered with school activities in the early part of 1948.

During the year twelve new class-rooms in two blocks of six, together with a dormitory block, were erected. The buildings contain several modern and special features which should make possible a higher standard of work to that attainable under earlier conditions. Further additions and renovations to the buildings and grounds are being undertaken and will make available greatly improved teaching and recreational facilities.

REGISTERED CHILDREN'S HOMES

Seventy-eight children's homes are conducted by private organizations registered under the provisions of the Child Welfare Amendment Act, 1927. These homes are subject to inspection by officers of the Branch. At the end of last year there were, according to their returns, a total of 2,418 children in residence, as against 2,570 the previous year.

It was reported that in the case of 99 children both parents were deceased, in 236 cases the fathers were deceased, and in 426 cases the mothers were deceased. It is understood that in many other cases the parents were separated or were missing.

In some of the institutions where building or improvement projects are in hand the controlling authorities have of necessity been required to postpone full or even partial implementation of their plans for the time being until the general building situation improves.

PLACEMENT IN FOSTER-HOMES

As indicated in the paragraph on child welfare institutions and in earlier reports, difficulty has been experienced in securing and keeping available a sufficiency of suitable foster-homes. Since the boarding-out system is one of the essential features of child welfare work in this country, considerable attention has been devoted to measures designed to improve the situation or, at least, to arrest the decline.

At the 31st March, 1948, there were 1,747 children placed in foster-homes.

EDUCATION

With very few exceptions, State wards attend the ordinary schools in the community. Where justified, they are encouraged to continue with post-primary schooling, and when further education appears warranted the Department assists them to attend the University Colleges.

At the 31st March, 1948, 332 of the children placed in foster-homes were receiving post-primary education and 12 Maori children were residential pupils at Maori colleges.

PLACEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT

At the 31st March, 1948, there were 1,063 (719 boys and 344 girls) State wards in employment. Of these, 59 (57 boys and 2 girls) were apprenticed to various trades, and, of the total number, 266 (149 boys and 117 girls) in the early stages of their employment were receiving assistance from the Department with their board, clothing, books, fees, &c. Boys were employed as follows: farm hands, 336; factory hands, 99; shop-assistants, 28; labourers, 37; and the remainder, 219, in various other occupations. Girls were employed as follows: domestics, 126; factory hands, 77; shop-assistants, 48; clerical workers, 35; nurses, 31; and the remainder, 27, in various other occupations.

Where possible, the services of the Department's Vocational Guidance Officers are used in an endeavour to ensure that State wards requiring to be placed in employment go to suitable and congenial positions.

COMMITTALS AND ADMISSIONS

The number of committals by Courts was 434, as against 449 for the previous year. Private admissions by arrangement with parents was 115, as against 140.

DISCHARGES FROM CONTROL

During the year 657 children were discharged from control. The average age on discharge was sixteen years and eight months. The Department relinquishes control of State wards at the earliest age consistent either with their ability to exercise independent management of their own affairs or with the provision by parents or other persons of adequate alternative measures for their care and protection.

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS

Confidential inquiries were made by Child Welfare Officers in all cases of illegitimate births notified to them by Registrars. In most instances it was found that the mother or other relatives had been able to make satisfactory arrangements for the care of the child and that no further action by this Branch was required.

During the year ended 31st March, 1948, 1,466 illegitimate births were notified to Child Welfare Officers. Of these infants, 737 were residing with their mothers and 32 with other relatives, 35 were committed to the care of the State, 316 were in registered foster-homes or nursing homes, and 253 were adopted. In a number of cases inquiries have not been completed or the child died.

The number of illegitimate births, as recorded by the Registrar-General, over the period 1st January to the 31st December, 1947, was 1,727, compared with 1,824 the previous year. The difference between our total, 1,466, and that supplied by the Registrar-General, 1,727, is no doubt due in part to the different periods represented and also perhaps to the time lag between recording and notification.

INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION

The number of persons licensed under Part V of the Infants Act, 1908, at the 31st December, 1947, was 710 and the number of children placed in their homes was 772. The foster-homes were visited regularly by Child Welfare Officers to ensure that the health and general welfare of the infants were safeguarded.

ADOPTIONS

The number of adoptions completed in the year ending 31st December, 1947, was 1,285. Although this is 98 lower than the number for the previous year, it is higher than that for any other year, and it should not be concluded that there has been any decrease in the general demand for children for adoption.

The figures for the previous ten years are as follows: 406, 516, 518, 604, 605, 685, 854, 1,065, 1,151, and 1,383.

Most of the applications for adoption are received from (a) couples who have no children of their own, (b) parents who wish to have a companion for their only child, and (c) mothers of illegitimate children who wish to adopt their own children upon subsequent marriage.

Children may be legally adopted up to the age of twenty-one years, but the great majority of those adopted were in the group from infants up to five years of age. Although there is provision in the Act for premiums to pass at adoption, this rarely takes place. There was only one such case last year. Applications to adopt infant girls usually predominate, but the orders actually made reflect the number and sex of the children available. Last year 631 boys and 654 girls were adopted. Of the 1,285 children adopted, 991 (498 boys and 493 girls) were illegitimate.

CHILDREN'S COURTS

(1) *Total Appearances.* Table 2 shows that the figure for all children appearing before the Children's Court is almost exactly the same as that for last year. An increase of only 4 is negligible as a proportionate increase, and the figures would justify the assumption that the comparatively satisfactory position arising out of reductions in Court appearances over the previous four years has been maintained.

(2) *Analysis of Total Appearances.* (a) Complaints under the Child Welfare Act: Children appearing under this section were indigent, not under proper control, living in a detrimental environment, or neglected. There were 443 cases, as against 458 for the previous year, 454 for 1945-46, and 517 for the year 1944-45.

(b) *Offences:* The total number of appearances before the Courts for all offences, including breaches of special Acts, regulations, and by-laws, over the past four years are as follows: 1944-45, 2,012; 1945-46, 1,786; 1946-47, 1,568; and 1947-48, 1,589.

(3) *Repeaters.*—The number of children who, on appearing before the Courts last year, were making a second or subsequent appearance for offences was 340. The corresponding numbers for the four previous years were: 1944, 368; 1945, 302; 1946, 339; and 1947, 365. In determining these cases a very wide interpretation is given to the term "repeater." No time limit is set between the child's first and his second or subsequent Court appearance for offences, nor is the degree of seriousness of an offence taken into account. The total includes, therefore, many cases of offences of a minor nature, and frequently a considerable period has expired before an appearance at Court is repeated.

(4) *Trend over Recent Years.*—In the reports during recent years an indication of trend has been given by comparing the annual figures and the rates per 10,000 of the juvenile population (aged seven to seventeen) since the year 1938 for (a) total Court appearances, (b) appearances under the heading "theft," and (c) appearances for the more serious cases, taking in those under the first six headings in Table 2. The following is a repetition of these tables brought up to date by the inclusion of the figures for 1948:—

—	1938.	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.	1943.	1944.	1945.	1946.	1947.	1948.
(a) TOTAL COURT APPEARANCES											
Total ..	2,447	2,218	2,464	2,424	2,421	2,446	2,493	2,012	1,786	1,568	1,589
Rate ..	85	79	87	87	88	90	93	75	66	58	58
(b) APPEARANCES UNDER THE HEADING "THEFT"											
Total ..	957	818	1,049	1,121	1,037	1,127	1,132	993	847	703	782
Rate ..	33	29	37	40	37	41	42	37	31	26	28
(c) MORE SERIOUS OFFENCES											
Total ..	1,313	1,245	1,507	1,437	1,469	1,593	1,614	1,402	1,243	1,086	1,174
Rate ..	46	44	53	51	53	59	60	52	46	40	43

Variations in this year's figures over last year's are of such a minor nature that it would be unwise, or even dangerous, to treat them as any more important than normal fluctuations. Any other interpretation would be mere conjecture.

PREVENTIVE WORK

The observations in the reports for 1946 and 1947 on the steps being taken to extend and intensify the preventive work of the Branch still apply. Effective preventive work is of first-rate importance, and I am convinced, firstly, that success has attended the

specific measures taken in recent years to assist materially those families whose living-conditions could lead to lowered behaviour standards in their children, and, secondly, that such success has been reflected in other aspects of the work.

EDWARD COSTLEY TRUST, AUCKLAND

During the year the trustees assisted 48 children in the Auckland District engaged in 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 their parents were not in a position at the time to provide the necessary help.

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

C. E. PEEK,
Superintendent.

The Acting Director of Education, Wellington, New Zealand.

TABLE I.—NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER CONTROL AND SUPERVISION OF THE CHILD WELFARE BRANCH AT 31ST MARCH

	1946.	1947.	1948.
<i>State Wards—</i>			
In foster-homes	1,924	1,858	1,747
With relatives or friends	520	464	455
In employment (includes 16 absent at 31st March, 1946, 15 at 31st March, 1947, and 9 at 31st March, 1948)	1,006	922	862
In Government receiving homes	153	137	135
In Government hostels	31	26	14
In Government residential institutions	132	143	141
In private children's homes registered under the Child Welfare Act ..	105	95	63
In Roman Catholic institutions recognized under the Child Welfare Act ..	82	74	52
In special schools for mentally backward children (see also pupils under "Other than State Wards")	129	127	116
In refuges	49	38	12
In hospitals, convalescent homes, &c.	40	32	37
In residential colleges	13	18	20
	4,184	3,934	3,654
<i>Other than State Wards—</i>			
Young persons supervised by Child Welfare Officers in their own homes, with relatives, or friends, pursuant to orders of Courts	1,026	915	879
Infants supervised in foster-homes registered under the Infants Act ..	909	788	772
Pupils at Schools for the Deaf, Sumner and Titirangi	238	250	251
Pupils at schools for mentally backward children (Otekaieke and Richmond) (see also under "State wards")	45	45	44
Children supervised as preventive cases	1,629	1,569	1,645
Children in New Zealand Institute for the Blind for which the Department makes payment	17	24	22
	3,864	3,591	3,613
	8,048	7,525	7,267

Children in Mental Hospitals.--During the year ended 31st March, 1948, 36 State wards were admitted to mental hospitals. At that date there were 170 State wards in these institutions, as against 162 at the 31st March, 1947. In accordance with an arrangement with the Mental Hygiene Division of the Health Department, these children are not discharged from our control, as in the event of their return to the community the Department is enabled to resume control and assist where required.

TABLE 2.—NUMBER OF CHILDREN APPEARING BEFORE CHILDREN'S COURTS
(Classified according to Complaints or Charges Laid)

	1945-46.	1946-47.	1947-48.
Complaints under Child Welfare Act—			
Indigent	165	144	99
Not under proper control	172	182	197
Living in a detrimental environment	76	94	79
Neglected	41	38	68
	454	458	443
Offences—			
(1) Against morality	6	6	9
(2) Against the person	56	55	56
(3) Theft	847	703	782
(4) Conversion of motor-vehicles	48	38	50
(5) Other conversions	55	51	46
(6) Delinquent	231	233	231
(7) Miscellaneous (chiefly mischief)	296	263	181
(8) Breaches of Court supervision order	10	9	9
(9) Breaches of special Acts and regulations—			
(a) Railways	5	7	1
(b) Fire brigade	7	4	11
(c) Acclimatization	2	8	17
(d) Licensing	20	17	11
(e) Arms	41	30	40
(f) Post and Telegraph	18	15	20
(g) Shipping	2	4	5
(h) Immigration	1	..	..
(10) Breaches of Traffic Regulations—			
(a) Cycles	71	58	68
(b) Motor-vehicles	5	3	8
(c) Other	34	27	31
(11) Breaches of city or borough by-laws—			
(a) Cycle	16	22	13
(b) Other than cycling	14	15	..
	1,786	1,568	1,589
	2,240	2,026	2,032

TABLE 3.—COMPARATIVE STATEMENT SHOWING THE ACTION TAKEN IN RESPECT OF
CHILDREN WHO APPEARED BEFORE THE CHILDREN'S COURTS

	1945-46.	1946-47.	1947-48.
Committed to the care of the Superintendent	446	440	431
Placed under supervision	755	607	660
Supervision extended	53	51	24
Supervision with residence	16	13	11
Admonished and discharged	428	422	461
Admonished, discharged, and ordered to make restitution	170	137	134
Admonished and ordered to pay costs .. .. .	..	4	4
Admonished and fined	29	19	39
Adjourned	93	68	45
Adjourned <i>sine die</i>	18	37	11
Dismissed	38	18	32
Committed to Borstal	21	21	20
Convicted and fined	4	3	4
Convicted and discharged	1	1	..
Convicted and ordered to come up for sentence	1	..	..
Returned to the care of the Superintendent	64	71	87
Withdrawn	11	24	16
Ordered to come up for sentence	2	..	..
Probation	11	12	14
Referred to Magistrate's Court .. .. .	..	4	..
Fined	42	33	23
Licence cancelled	2	..	..
Restitution order cancelled	2	2	..
Committed to Supreme Court for sentence	1	2	2
Committed to prison	1	..	..
Committed to mental hospital	1	..	1
Re-admitted to Salvation Army Home .. .. .	..	1	..
By-law cases—			
Admonished and discharged	19	20	4
Admonished and ordered to pay costs	1	..	..
Ordered to pay costs or fined and ordered to pay costs	5	8	..
Licence cancelled .. .. .	..	1	..
Fined	4	7	9
Dismissed	1	..	..
	2,240	2,026	2,032

TABLE 4.—CHILDREN PLACED UNDER SUPERVISION OF CHILD WELFARE OFFICERS BY COURTS DURING YEARS ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1947 AND 1948
(Classified according to reasons for appearance)

	Boys.		Girls.		Totals.	
	1946-47.	1947-48.	1946-47.	1947-48.	1946-47.	1947-48.
Charged with an offence	396	411	44	41	440	452
Delinquent	127	139	14	10	141	149
Not under proper control	33	35	28	19	61	54
In detrimental environment	6	7	6	12	12	19
Indigent	6	2	4	1	10	3
Neglected	1	7	2	7	3	14
	569	601	98	90	667	691

NOTE.—Of the totals for 1947-48, 24 (19 boys and 5 girls) were again before the Court during their period of supervision and the period was extended, 37 (22 boys and 15 girls) were again before the court during their period of supervision and committed to the care of the State, 3 boys were ordered to spend a period in an institution, 63 (61 boys and 2 girls) had previously been under supervision which had expired, 25 (14 boys and 11 girls) had previously been held on warrant, 5 (3 boys and 2 girls) had previously been temporary inmates, and 5 (3 boys and 2 girls) subsequently were temporary inmates or held on warrant.

TABLE 5.—CAUSES OF COMMITTAL AND ADMISSION, 1947-48

	Boys.		Girls.		Totals.	
	1946-47.	1947-48.	1946-47.	1947-48.	1946-47.	1947-48.
Indigent	76	44	51	50	127	94
Not under proper control	53	70	45	40	98	110
Delinquent	50	37	12	16	62	53
Charged with an offence	47	68	17	13	64	81
Living in a detrimental environment	43	22	35	31	78	53
Neglected	7	20	9	21	16	41
Breach of supervision order .. ..	..	1	4	1	4	2
Supervision with residence	6	8	5	3	11	11
	282	270	178	175	460	445
Admitted under section 12, Child Welfare Act, 1925	14	9	11	3	25	12
Admitted on warrant	30	37	21	25	51	62
Admitted under section 127, Education Act, 1914	39	25	25	16	64	41
	83	71	57	44	140	115
	365	341	235	219	600	560

NOTE.—Of the total for 1947-48, 112 or 20 per cent., were known to be illegitimate. In addition, there were 11 children (4 boys and 7 girls) temporarily admitted to child welfare institutions during the year, as against 13 (8 boys and 5 girls) for the preceding year.

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