

Another important provision contained in the Act authorizes the Children's Court to exercise jurisdiction over any young person under eighteen years of age charged with any offence. Such cases would be referred, of course, by a Stipendiary Magistrate or Judge of the Supreme Court.

In order to provide for the greater protection of infants of unmarried mothers and for the assistance and guidance of the mothers themselves, there is provision for Child Welfare Officers, on being notified of such births, to investigate each case and to render such assistance as is required, either in placing the child in a suitable foster-home or in advising the mother in the matter of affiliation proceedings, or in assisting her in obtaining employment, &c.

In addition to the work in connection with the maintenance and education of destitute, neglected, and delinquent children committed by the Courts, the Child Welfare Branch (1) supervises all infants and young children under the age of six years who are living apart from their parents; (2) makes inquiry through its field officers, for the information of Magistrates, of all applications for the adoption of children and for widows pensions; (3) supervises all children and young persons placed under the field officers by order of the Court; and (4) provides for the maintenance, education, and training of all afflicted children who are deaf, blind, feeble-minded, or have speech-defects.

The total number of children under the supervision of the State in 1925-26 was 5,352, classed under the following headings:—

Boarded out, industrial schools, receiving-homes, &c.	..	..	..	3,859
Juvenile probation	..	..	..	323
Infant-life protection	..	..	..	771
Deaf children	..	..	..	116
Feeble-minded children	..	..	..	283
Total	..	..	..	5,352

The number of children committed to the care of the State during the year ending 31st March, 1926, was 440, classified according to reason for committal, as follows: Destitution, 160; vagrancy, 8; associating with disreputable persons, 9; not under proper control, 179; uncontrollable (complaint by parents), 6; transferred from gaol, 4; accused or guilty of punishable offences, 72; section 47 of the Infants Act, 2; and, in addition, 63 were admitted by private arrangement.

Classified according to age at the time of admission the numbers are as follows: Under six months, 42; over six months and under one year, 18; from one to five years, 100; from five to ten years, 100; from ten to fourteen years, 109; and over fourteen years, 71.

NUMBERS UNDER CONTROL.

At the end of the year there were 3,859 children under control (excluding those mentioned under separate headings below), and of these 214 were in residence at Government receiving-homes, probation homes, training-farms, and training institutions, and 76 in private industrial schools; 1,819 children were boarded out in foster-homes, 838 were in situations, and 541 residing under license with relatives and friends. The remainder were in various homes or institutions.

Of the boarded-out children 95 are over the age of fourteen years and are still attending primary schools, 45 are receiving higher education (30 technical and 15 secondary), and a number are apprentices partly maintained by the State.

The children over school age in employment number 751 males and 342 females (included in the total of 3,859). Of the males 517 are farm workers, 73 are apprentices, and 161 others are employed in various trades. Of the girls there are 288 domestic workers, 37 factory employees, and 17 engaged in various employments such as shop-assistants, nurses, dressmakers, typists, &c.

SYSTEM OF SUPERVISION BY CHILD WELFARE OFFICERS.

The Child Welfare Act authorizes Children's Courts to place children under the supervision of Child Welfare Officers in cases where it appears undesirable or unnecessary to remove them from their own homes, and generally in all cases where