

**NO. 2.—STATEMENT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE  
CHILD WELFARE BRANCH  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1931.**

**INVESTIGATION AND SUPERVISION OF CASES APPEARING BEFORE CHILDREN'S COURTS.**

The number of cases dealt with by the Children's Courts last year was 2,373, and of these 642 were placed under the supervision of Child Welfare Officers. Of the children placed under supervision, 28 were subsequently committed. The number actually admitted to institutions such as receiving homes, special schools, training-farms, &c., was 603; but all of these, with the exception of 140 who required further training, were suitably provided for in the community before the close of the year. The other children appearing before the Courts were dealt with in a summary manner not calling for supervision by a Child Welfare Officer.

At the 31st March, 1931, there was a total number of 952 children under the supervision of Child Welfare Officers by Order of the Courts. Of the number, 642, placed under supervision this year, 53 had previously been dealt with by the Courts. The Magistrate had also ordered 7 children to spend a period in institutions.

The following statement indicates the numbers (other than those placed under supervision or committed) appearing before all such Courts and the methods of disposal: Admonished and discharged, 683; withdrawn, 3; returned to institutions, 34; dismissed, 44; adjourned, 42; committed to Supreme Court for sentence, 2; committed to borstal, 30; convicted and discharged, 2; convicted and birched, 1; convicted and fined, 38; convicted and probation, 10; convicted and ordered to come up for sentence, 2; committed to mental hospital, 1. By-law cases: Dismissed, 5; convicted and fined, 76; convicted and costs, 31; admonished and discharged, 122; adjourned, 2. Total, 1,128.

Of the above, 268 were charged with theft; 151, wilful damage; 22, false pretences; 2, loitering; 15, trespassing; 10, cruelty to animals; 2, attempted suicide; 2, indecency; 9, smoking; 88, mischief; 3, forgery; 24, stone-throwing; 38, possessing firearms; 17, disorderly conduct; 7, obscene language; 13, assault; 48, breaking and entering; 14, not under proper control; 36, conversion; 9, receiving; 16, discharging firearms; 4, vagrancy; 7, indecent assault; 10, carnal knowledge; 4, detrimental environments; 1, breach of Defence Act; 34, breach of Motor-vehicles Act; 11, breach of Railway Act; 3, breach of Acclimatization Act; 4, breach of Post and Telegraph Act; 1, breach of the Gaming Act; 1, breach of Pure Food Act; 1, breach of Marriage Act; 13, breach of Licensing Act; 1, breach of Public Works Act; 3, breach of Arms Act; and 236, breach of by-laws.

In addition to the above, there were 79 cases dealt with by Magistrates under the provisions of section 17 of the Amendment Act, 1927, and the information dismissed as trivial, while there were also 110 cases in which, as the result of consultation between the Child Welfare Officer and the police, the informations were regarded as of insufficient importance to warrant Court action—the children concerned being adequately dealt with otherwise, usually by being regarded as preventive cases under the supervision of a Child Welfare Officer for a period.

**CHILDREN UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CHILD WELFARE BRANCH.**

At the end of the year there were 4,910 children under control (excluding those mentioned under separate headings below), and of these 290 were in residence at Government receiving-homes, &c. (many of these, of course, only temporarily), training-farm and training institutions, 269 in special schools for mentally backward children, 87 in the four private Roman Catholic schools recognized under the Child Welfare Act; 2,365 children were boarded out in foster-homes, 990 were in situations, and 671 residing under license with relatives and friends. The remainder were in various private institutions. Young persons over school age in employment number 858 males and 498 females (a number of whom are residing with friends), included in the total of 4,910. Of the males, 634 are farm workers (279 skilled in dairy work and cheesemaking, and 355 competent to milk and carry out general farm work), 46 are apprentices (of which number some are receiving assistance), and 178 others are employed in various trades. A number of these are also receiving assistance. Of the girls, 369 are domestic workers, 69 factory employees, and 60 engaged in various employments, such as shop-assistants, nurses, dressmakers, &c. A number of the girls are also receiving assistance.

**CHILD-PLACING SYSTEM.**

*Assisted Service, Higher Education, and Employment of State Children over School Age.*

At the end of the year 138 State wards over fourteen years of age were in attendance at primary schools and maintained by the Department, 67 were attending secondary schools, and 31 technical schools.

Of the State wards in employment, 132, mainly apprentices, were being partly maintained by the Department.

**INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION (INFANTS ACT, 1908).**

At the end of the year 1,280 infants and young children were supervised in 1,032 licensed foster-homes. Of these, 854 homes had one child each, 132 had two children each, 29 had three children each, 12 had four children each, 4 had five children each, and 1 home had seven children.

**ADOPTIONS.**

By an arrangement with the Department of Justice, applications for adoptions are investigated by Child Welfare Officers before being dealt with by a Magistrate. During the year, 371 children were adopted, and in 21 of these cases premiums were received by the Department's agents, and paid out