

The Service very infrequently refers boys or girls to casual employment—*i.e.*, of a duration of less than one week—hence this classification used by the adult Placement Service is not employed by the centres. Actually both enrolment and placement figures appearing in the above table do not represent a complete twelve months' operations as far as all the centres are concerned. The Wellington centre did not commence operations until later in 1938, and statistics furnished by it are available from July of last year only. Similarly, arrangements with the Dunedin Vocational Guidance Association for the furnishing of returns required were not made until October of last year.

Table XIV attached to the Appendix of this report gives particulars of the age-groups and the month of enrolment of all boys and girls who sought the assistance of the Youth Centres during the twelve months 1st April, 1938, to 31st March, 1939. From this it can be seen that 432 of the 2,656 boy enrollees and 189 of the 1,787 girl enrollees were under fifteen years of age. Considered from the school-leaving-age aspect, these figures merit close attention, especially in view of the widespread public support for the raising of the minimum school-leaving age to fifteen and of the widely remarked tendency for juveniles in this age-group to be absorbed into factory employment. The comparatively large number of enrolments of fifteen-year-old children (boys, 824; and girls, 370) suggests that the advantages of high-school and technical education are in many cases for various reasons discounted considerably by the too-early cessation of school attendance—especially among male enrollees, who in this age-group exceed female enrollees by some 450. This conclusion is also supported by reference to Table XV of the Appendix, which classifies all enrollees according to month of enrolment and prior status. Table XV also shows that far too many young people seek the assistance of the centres not immediately when they leave school, but after they have failed at some form of employment or have found that such employment does not offer reasonable prospects of a career. The number of youths possessing employment experience as well as a secondary school education (boys, 538; and girls, 399) enrolling at the centres is significantly high, and offers very good reason why the Youth Service should as soon as possible extend its activities until all school-children—primary, technical, and high school—are receiving vocational guidance and placement assistance. By this means the wastage of higher education arising from the drift of well schooled juveniles into blind-alley and other occupations, for which they are temperamentally or otherwise unsuited, would be largely eliminated. The number of school-children enrolling at the centres *during* the school year also emphasizes the need for an extension of the Centres' activities among students.

Table XVI of the Appendix gives details of the industrial groups into which children in the different age-groups have been placed in permanent positions. Noteworthy in this table is the number of positions filled in the following industrial groups—No. 13 (engineering and allied trades): Boys, 388; girls, 44. No. 22b (clothing, &c.): Boys, 40; girls, 195. No. 35 (commerce): Boys, 437; girls, 375. The high level of positions filled in these occupations indicates a state of buoyancy.

Table XVII shows the number of temporary positions filled during the twelve months ended 31st March, 1939, in relation to the permanent placements effected during the same period. Temporary placements aggregating 574 amount only to approximately 17½ per cent. of the total permanent placements filled. On the assumption that the permanent placements recorded have been for the most part in accord with scientific vocational recommendations, the exceedingly small proportion of temporary to permanent placements discloses a very satisfactory position as far as the placement-work of the Youth Service is concerned.

PROBLEM WORK AMONG JUVENILE JOB-SEEKERS.

The youth centres come into contact with many young people who, from the aspect of assignment to careers, are definite problems. Approximately five of such youths are dealt with by the centres each week, unstinted effort being expended to set these boys and girls upon an occupational path which, it is hoped, will give some promise of happiness and economic security.

In type, problem cases which come before the centres vary considerably. Some young people, indifferent to work of any kind as a career, require only an interview with an officer of the centre to adjust their attitude to employment; others—definitely psychopathic—are much more difficult to handle; and, of course, physically disabled or medically unfit enrollees must also receive special attention.

Where enrollees presenting a "work attitude" problem do not respond satisfactorily to an interview, steps are taken to test for general intelligence, manual dexterity, and mental set. Co-operation with University authorities is frequently necessary in the psycho-analysis of cases which are clearly psychopathic. The degree of success attained in attempts to secure the adjustment of unusual mental outlook among this type of enrollee has been considerable.

Particular attention is given by the youth centres to the placement of partially disabled or crippled children. Scope for the industrial absorption of these unfortunates is distinctly limited, but the view is taken that every effort should be made to give juveniles suffering from physical handicaps an occupational opportunity and interest which will enable them to become contented and possibly economically valuable units of society. It is natural that the centres in their contacts with youth should meet with instances of juvenile delinquency. Very often cases of this kind are products of adverse home and neighbourhood environments. Much can be done for them if these children can be given the opportunity to start afresh in congenial work surroundings and among people of a better social type. Environment in many of these cases is, however, a problem which can be attacked by the centres in only the most incidental and piecemeal way.