



REPORT
 ON
 Child Welfare, State Care of Children,
 Special Schools,
 and Infant-life Protection
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED
 31 MARCH 1959

*Presented to the House of Representatives by
 Command of His Excellency*

BY AUTHORITY:
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3 July 1959.

The Director of Education, Wellington.

SIR,
I have the honour to present my report on the work of the Child Welfare Division for the year ended 31 March 1959.

C. E. PEER, Superintendent.

INTRODUCTION

1. The year under review has been an eventful one for the Division. Perhaps the most important single incident was the passing of the Child Welfare Amendment Act 1958 which made provision for regulations to be gazetted under which "child care centres", commonly referred to as day nurseries, are to be registered and supervised. The necessary draft regulations are in preparation.

2. It is pleasing to be able to record that the steady increase in Children's Court appearances which set in about eight years ago has not continued. Total appearances for the year were only 11 greater than last year's peak figure of 4,366. As the child population was bigger than in 1957-58, it follows that the rate of Court appearances on a population basis has fallen slightly. Fluctuations from year to year are extremely difficult to interpret and, while I welcome the slight reduction in the overall rate, I do not attach much significance to it nor take much comfort from it. In common with all overseas authorities of whose work I am aware, we have a long way to go before we can be confident that we fully understand the causes of delinquency and the most effective ways of treating it. Surveys referred to later in this report continue to reveal a disquieting position concerning the incidence of repeated offences, offences by Maoris, and offences by older boys and girls.

3. The public continues to make increasing calls on the services of our field staff, and throughout the year the numbers of cases in almost all categories have risen above those for any previous year. This is seen to a marked degree in that area of our work where the public voluntarily seeks our assistance. These "miscellaneous" and "preventive" cases have since 1956 increased from 8,000 to over 16,000.

4. The experimental work of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Section set up in Christchurch by the Police developed very satisfactorily during the year. This involved close cooperation between specialist police officers and Child Welfare Officers in discussing the cases of children and young people who came under police notice as delinquents or potential delinquents. The experiment worked so well that the Minister of Police approved the expansion of the scheme throughout the Dominion. I am sure that the scheme, when fully operative, will enable Child Welfare Officers and police officers to give more effective and better coordinated help, and to more children than has been possible in the past.

5. The Inter-departmental Committee on Adolescent Offenders on which this Division is represented held numerous meetings during the year and made considerable progress in its inquiries. I understand that the work of the committee will be discussed in the report of the Minister of Education for the year ended 31 December 1958.

Inset

6. The continuing expansion of population in the vicinity of Auckland brought about the need to open a new office in Takapuna. This office was staffed by four field officers and associated clerical staff transferred from the Auckland city office. We are now able to give a more efficient service to the public in the North Shore area.

7. Two new boys' homes built during the year in Hamilton and Lower Hutt relieved our accommodation problems for boys, but our facilities for girls continue to operate under undue strain. The most urgent need is for additional accommodation for older difficult girls.

8. Late in September the major part of the boys' residential accommodation at the School for the Deaf, Sumner, was destroyed by fire. The value of regular fire drill was amply demonstrated on this occasion and, although the fire occurred at midnight, spreading within minutes to destroy the building and most of the personal property of all the boys and several staff members, no one was injured. We were very fortunate to secure within a short time satisfactory alternative accommodation at Lyttelton and the work of the school has suffered surprisingly little interruption.

9. During the year I had the privilege of being awarded a United Nations Technical Assistance Fellowship. This enabled me to visit social service agencies and administrators in the United Kingdom, Sweden, the United States, and Canada over a period of six months from February to August 1958. The experience has been of great help to me in crystallising my views on some of the desirable future developments in our service.

THE WORK OF THE DIVISION

10. Child Welfare Officers are called upon to provide a wide range of services for children and parents. This year I have not attempted to give full descriptions of all aspects of our work; for fuller information on some topics reference can be made to my annual reports for recent years, especially those issued from 1955 onwards.

ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN

11. Child Welfare Officers have a statutory obligation to investigate all illegitimate births in order to ensure, as far as possible, that the welfare of the children and of the mothers is safeguarded. These investigations always require extreme tact and delicacy and often involve the expenditure of a great deal of time. Many unmarried mothers understandably go to some trouble to conceal their true circumstances, frequently going under assumed names and often moving to the large cities for confinement and leaving as soon as possible afterwards. The mother is required to register her infant in its correct name, but she herself may use a false one and for this reason it is often very difficult for an officer to associate the baby with its mother. Thus, a baby who is registered in the name of Smith may be the child of a mother who is known as Mrs Brown and who lives in some other part of the country. It is hardly surprising that each year there are some children notified to us who cannot be traced immediately, although most of them are eventually located.

12. When classified according to their circumstances, illegitimate babies fall into three main groups. A large proportion are born to couples who are living together on a stable basis but who for one reason or another are unable to marry. On the whole, these children are assured of a permanent home and good care, and no special measures are required of our officers. In another group are those for whom the mother has made prior arrangements for adoption from birth. I have reported on our work with these children under the section dealing with adoptions. A third group comprises the more difficult cases where the mother hopes to keep her child with her or has not decided what to do. She will usually need immediate help in finding a suitable position, say as a housekeeper, or in securing financial support from the child's father, or in finding a suitable person who will care for the child while she herself goes to work. Practical help of this kind is obviously very important but even more important in some cases is the need to help the mother face up to her own problems. Sometimes the investigating officer can assist by bringing about a reconciliation between the girl and her parents, or by helping her to think out her attitude to marriage or to the adoption of her child. If the mother decides to have her child adopted she will often need moral support and encouragement to face what might be for her a painful decision. The women officers who handle matters of this sort have a heavy responsibility as their advice and action have profound effects on the lives of the infants and their parents.

13. During the year Child Welfare Officers made inquiries into 3,229 illegitimate births (compared with 2,962 the preceding year). Of these, 2,954 were notified during the year, and 267 cases were brought forward from the previous year, as inquiries were incomplete on 31 March 1958. In eight cases infants who had previously been classified as untraceable were located during the year.

*

14. The table below shows what happened to these infants in each of the last two years.

	1957-58	1958-59
Inquiries completed—		
Infant legitimated by marriage of parents	47	77
Infant remaining with mother (parents cohabiting)	778	823
Infant remaining with mother (parents not cohabiting)	577	531
Infant placed with relatives	112	111
Infant placed with strangers with a view to adoption	935	1,090
Infant placed with strangers, no expressed intention of adoption	79	71
Infant placed in children's home, residential nursery, hospital, or other institution on a long-term basis	20	19
Infant committed to the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare	23	8
Infant could not be traced	73	45
Infant died	46	68
Other	5	11
Subtotal	2,695	2,854
Inquiries incomplete on 31 March—		
Infant in hospital or other institution on short-term basis	37	71
Infant in other short-term placement	9	7
Infant not yet visited	221	297
	267	375
Total	2,962*	3,229

*Corrected figure.

ADOPTED CHILDREN

15. The popularity of legal adoption is a comparatively recent phenomenon, mainly a development of the last 20 years. It was in 1939 that my predecessor in office first reported that the Branch was "unable at times to find suitable children for applicants". In the same year he reported that the number of adoption orders had exceeded 500 for the first time. Only six years later the number of orders made in a year passed the 1,000 mark.

16. The excess of "demand" over "supply", an intermittent difficulty in 1939, has for a long time now been the normal situation except for children of mixed racial background. Even though 1,719 adoption orders were made during 1958 (82 more than the previous year's record figure), and even though at the end of the year 1,341 children were placed for adoption, there were still 1,759 unsatisfied but apparently suitable applicants on our waiting lists, together with an unknown number on the waiting lists of private agencies which specialise in the care of unmarried mothers. There is no sign of any decrease in the demand.

17. There can be little doubt that increased financial prosperity and improved standards of living have been important influences on the growing popularity of adoption. However, it seems that more subtle factors have also played a part. Childless couples seem to be more ready than they used to be to seek medical and other advice and to be more ready to accept somebody else's child into their home if they are unable to have children of their own. Adoption is a matter which has received a good deal of publicity over recent years and married couples seem to speak more openly about adopting a child. The result seems to be that adoption is both more common and better known and, therefore, more acceptable than it was. However, not all adoptions are by childless couples. In many cases a stepmother or stepfather will legally adopt his or her partner's children. Adoptions in these circumstances do not usually involve any outward change in the lives of the children, but merely give legal recognition to an existing situation. Nearly a quarter of all adoptions in 1958 were of this kind.

18. The following tables show the age and legitimacy of the children adopted in 1958, and the previous relationship (if any) between them and the adoptive parents. Comparative figures are also given for 1957.

Age and Legitimacy of Children Adopted

Age Group	Legitimate				Illegitimate				Total			
	1957		1958		1957		1958		1957		1958	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Under one year	53	3.2	47	2.7	677	41.4	771	44.9	730	44.6	818	47.6
One to six years	137	8.4	156	9.1	484	29.5	403	23.3	621	37.9	559	32.4
Six years and over	162	9.9	249	14.5	124	7.6	93	5.5	286	17.5	342	19.9
Total	352	21.5	452	26.3	1,285	78.5	1,267	73.7	1,637	100.0	1,719	100.0

Relationship to Child of Adopting Parents

Child Adopted by	1957		1958	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Strangers:				
(a) Child under six years	1,087	66.4	1,122	65.3
(b) Child six years or over	74	4.5	18	1.0
Total	1,161	70.9	1,140	66.3
One parent and husband or wife	311	19.0	393	22.9
Other relations, close friends	160	9.8	186	10.8
Relationship not shown	5	0.3	..	..
Total	1,637	100.0	1,719	100.0

19. Child Welfare Officers report to the Courts on nearly all applications for adoptions, the only exceptions being cases where one of the applicants is the mother or father of the child concerned and where the Court does not ask for a report. Two reports are usually made, one within a few weeks of the child's placement in the home, and

another about six months later. The amount of work involved is shown by the fact that 2,946 reports were prepared by Child Welfare Officers during 1958, an increase of 10 per cent on the figure for 1957. But our officers are responsible for much more than the preparation of reports. Each placement must be supervised. In the early stages many inexperienced adoptive parents welcome the advice and support of the supervising Child Welfare Officer. In addition, officers must be prepared to act promptly if the placement proves unsuitable for any reason, or the applicants decide not to proceed. Even more arduous than these responsibilities is that of deciding whether or not to approve placements which have yet to be made. This responsibility arises from the new adoption legislation introduced in 1955, which requires all applicants to obtain the approval of a Child Welfare Officer (or an interim order issued by the Magistrate's Court) before taking a child into their homes with a view to adoption. It is quite lawful for any person or agency to arrange a placement for adoption provided that the child does not enter the home until the necessary approval or Court order has been obtained. Most of the persons and agencies arranging these placements take a responsible view of their obligations, but we still find that some give too much attention to the wishes of applicants who are not the most suitable available and too little attention to the best interests of the child. Placements of this kind may prove to be reasonably satisfactory but they are often much less satisfactory than others that could have been arranged. In present circumstances, with so many suitable applicants available, officers quite naturally would like to see children placed to the best possible advantage. However, it is not within their province to deny a child to applicants merely because they know a better placement could be made. Approval can be withheld only if applicants can be regarded as unsuitable.

20. During 1958 there were 1,140 adoptions by persons classified as strangers. Tabulated below are particulars of the persons or agencies responsible for this kind of placement over the past two years.

Adoption Arranged by	1957		1958	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Child Welfare Officers	397	34.2	421	36.9
Private organisations specialising in the care of unmarried mothers	268	23.1	382	33.5
Maternity homes and doctors	393	33.8	237	20.8
Other professional persons (e.g., solicitors, clergymen)	37	3.2	17	1.5
Natural parents or grandparents	47	4.0	60	5.2
Others	11	1.0	23	2.1
Not known	8	0.7	..	..
	1,161	100.0	1,140	100.0

21. It seems reasonable to expect that among the hundreds of placements made in any one year some breakdowns and failures would occur during the six months trial period before the making of the final order. However, the number of cases in which a final order is not made is smaller than one would expect. Only five interim orders of adoption were cancelled or revoked during 1958, and in each case the child

concerned was placed with other applicants. One of these orders was revoked because the adoptive mother had died, another because the adoptive mother became pregnant and was advised not to proceed with the adoption, two because applicants changed their minds, and one because the placement proved to be unsuitable. In seven other cases at the expiry of the interim order the applicants did not seek the making of a final adoption order. Suitable alternative arrangements were made for three of the children, but the position of the remaining four is not yet determined. Two of them are suffering from serious physical disorders and will probably require permanent institutional care. The remaining two are still with the adoptive parents. No final adoption order was cancelled or revoked during the year. Two children died after the making of an interim order.

22. During 1958 only eight payments were approved by the Courts. In each case the payment was made by the adopting parents to the agency which cared for the child's natural mother, being intended to reimburse the agency for expenses involved. The position was quite different in former years when it was common for the natural parents to pay "premiums" to the adopting parents. Thirty years ago, for instance, payments were approved in respect of more than a tenth of all adoptions.

INFANTS LIVING APART FROM THEIR PARENTS

23. Persons who care for other people's children under six years of age for longer than seven consecutive days are required to have their homes licensed and visited by Child Welfare Officers. This is a very desirable protection for the infants concerned, and also has advantages for parents and foster parents. The parents are reassured by the knowledge that their child's placement is being supervised by experienced, independent persons, while the foster parents are given a measure of protection against irresponsible or capricious parents, although the legal rights of the latter are not affected in any way. In the past our responsibility was more in the nature of supervising placements arranged by others, but increasingly in recent years the emphasis has changed and our officers are being asked to arrange placements themselves. A father who is left with young children when his wife dies, enters hospital, or deserts the family, is now more likely to seek our help in finding placements for his children.

24. At the beginning of the year under review there were 727 infants being cared for in foster homes under the supervision of Child Welfare Officers. During the year 1,331 new placements were made and, for the reasons given below, 1,249 infants left their foster homes or ceased to be supervised.

	1957-58	1958-59
Child removed by parents	827	1,072
Order of adoption made	48	67
Child attained six years of age	61	58
Child committed to the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare	11	21
Child died	5	7
Child placed in institution or hospital	15	18
Other	6	6
Total	973	1,249

The 809 infants being supervised at the end of the year were in 654 foster homes, 549 of which held one child, 81 two children, and 24 three or more children.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

25. In addition to operating two residential schools for the deaf and two for mentally backward children, the Division is able to help children who suffer from other physical or mental handicaps. Our officers are sometimes the most accessible sources of advice to parents about facilities available for children who need special help. This is particularly so in country districts. We are not ourselves experts in the care of crippled, spastic, or blind children, but we can help parents to get competent advice. Sometimes we can assist by supplying to medical and other specialists information they require about the family and the child. Apart from more tangible help of this kind we often assist parents with advice and friendly discussion. They may need help to decide whether they should keep their child at home or send him to an institution and sometimes they need advice about opportunities for employment. In this kind of work we cooperate with the Mental Hygiene Division, the Vocational Guidance Service, the Crippled Children Society and other agencies.

Special Schools for the Deaf

26. The Division is responsible for the administration of the two schools for the deaf at Sumner and Kelston and works in closely with inspectors of schools and other professional officers of the Department of Education. In order to get their education many of the more seriously deaf children must of necessity spend the greater part of their school lives away from home. This places on us a particular responsibility to provide conditions that are as homelike as possible.

27. *School for the Deaf, Sumner, Christchurch*—On 31 March 1959 there were 118 pupils (71 boys and 47 girls) attending the school. Seventy-six were boarding pupils. The remainder lived in the Christchurch area and through the provision of transport to and from school were enabled to attend as day pupils. Fourteen new pupils were admitted during the year and 36 left. Until recently the numbers of children being admitted to the school steadily increased each year, but they have now decreased.

28. In September all but one of the boys' dormitories were destroyed by fire. Unfortunately they had just been redesigned and renovated. The fire, breaking out at midnight, spread with amazing rapidity and it was only because of the automatic fire alarm system and regular fire drill practice that all the children and staff managed to leave the buildings without injury. While alternative arrangements were being made, the parents of day pupils generously billeted some of the boys, and others were placed temporarily at our Boys' Home, Christchurch, and our Girls' Training Centre, Burwood. Most fortunately the Department of Labour was able to make its immigration hostel at Lyttelton available almost immediately. It required little modification and we were able to occupy it within a few weeks. There was surprisingly little disruption to the work of the school.

29. Points made in the Principal's report for the year include the following:

The success and further development of the recently introduced visiting teacher service.

The Principal's attendance at the International Congress on the Modern Educational Treatment of Deafness held at Manchester University, and his visits to schools in the United States, the United Kingdom, Holland, and Australia.

The opening of a school assembly hall.

The inauguration, in response to suggestions made by the Home and School Association, of regular "classes" for mothers of pupils.

The formation of a boys' cricket team, and surprisingly, a recorder group which was commended for its playing in the Primary Schools' Musical Festival.

30. *School for the Deaf, Kelston, Auckland*—The principal event of the year was the official opening of the new classroom block at Kelston by the Hon. P. O. S. Skoglund, Minister of Education. The boarding pupils are still accommodated in the old school at Titirangi and in a hostel at Mt. Wellington. Good progress has been made with the building of residential and administration blocks on the new school site and it should not be long before the children are able to move over. The grounds have already been developed and the children now have adequate playing areas with tennis and basketball courts and a football field.

31. On 31 March 1959 there were 162 (101 boys and 61 girls) on the school roll. Fifty-eight were day pupils and 104 were boarders. Twenty-six new pupils were admitted during the year and 45 left. The recent falling trend in numbers continued this year, although it was not as marked as in the other school for the deaf at Sumner.

32. Items of interest referred to by the Principal in his report on the work of the school included:

Financial and other support from the parents' association which helped the Principal to attend the International Congress at Manchester and to visit schools in other countries.

The discovery by the newly appointed specialist visiting teachers of unexpectedly large numbers of partially deaf children.

The educational tour of the Rotorua, Urewera, and East Coast districts by a group of senior boys who played rugby en route.

The assistance received from the principal, staff, and pupils of the adjoining Kelston High School, who readily accepted deaf pupils into their school and in doing so helped with the adjustment and integration of our pupils into the community.

Special Schools for Mentally Backward Children

32. Special classes attached to some primary schools provide for most backward children. However, residential education is necessary for some for a number of reasons. There may be no special class in their area, their home may not be a stable one, or their behaviour may require their removal from home. Residential education is provided at the Special School for Boys at Otekaike in North Otago and at the Special School for Girls at Richmond, Nelson. About half of the children in these schools have been admitted by arrangement with the parents. The remainder are State wards.

34. In both schools, as at the schools for the deaf, the Division cooperates closely with inspectors of schools and other professional officers of the Department of Education. Both of these schools cater also for children who are over the school-leaving age and who have gone as far as they can in formal school work. Vocational training under sheltered conditions is provided for them in a variety of suitable occupations. Child Welfare Officers are concerned with the selection of children for admission to the schools, with arranging holidays, and with providing after-care and supervision for those who pass through.

35. *Special School for Boys, Otekaike*—At the end of the year 107 boys were resident at the school 62 of them in the junior or primary section and 45 older boys in the senior section where they were receiving vocational and social training. Thirty-five of the school boys and 17 of the older boys had been admitted by arrangement with their parents. The remaining 27 schoolboys and 28 older boys had been committed to my care for reasons apart from their educational needs. Thirty-three boys were admitted during the year and 36 left.

36. Items mentioned by the Principal in his report for the year included:

A pleasing increase in the number of visits by parents—not always easily arranged because of the school's distance from the main centres of population.

A continuing reduction in the number of boys admitted to the school who later prove to be ineducable, indicating that selection procedures are working satisfactorily.

An increasing demand for admissions of older boys to the senior section for social and vocational training.

The valuable help provided by members of various branches of the Women's Division of Federated Farmers, and of the Oamaru Rotary Club, who have written to and sent birthday presents and other gifts to boys whose own parents do not write to them.

37. *Special School for Girls, Richmond, Nelson*—At the end of the year 43 girls were in residence. Thirty-three of them were in the junior, or school, section, and 10 were in the senior, or house, section, where they were receiving domestic and social training. Twenty-one of the schoolgirls had been admitted by arrangement with their parents, and 12 were in my care for reasons apart from their educational needs. Three of the 10 older girls were admitted under private arrangement. During the year 20 girls were admitted and 15 left. The number of Maori girls attending the school continues to be high and this year constituted 30 per cent of the total roll. Appreciation is due to local church groups and other organisations for their continued interest in the school and for providing opportunities for the pupils to gain valuable community associations.

CHILDREN WHO ARE NEGLECTED OR CRUELLY TREATED

38. In any community there are parents who, because of emotional difficulties, ill health, incompetence, or carelessness, do not provide adequate care for their children. It is one of the duties of the Child Welfare Division to protect children from neglect or cruelty, preferably by support and guidance to the parents but also, if necessary, by removing the children to a place of safety. Fortunately, deliberate cruelty to children is not common in our community, but neglect in one form or another is reported fairly frequently. The investigation of complaints alleging neglect or cruelty occupies a substantial part of the time of our

officers, more especially of the women officers, as small children are usually the victims. Investigations into these matters are often difficult assignments for Child Welfare Officers. Some complaints are malicious or false, some are misguided or based on misinformation, some leave room for honest difference of opinion as to whether particular actions complained of amount to neglect or cruelty. Further, neglect or cruelty is extremely hard to prove because admissible evidence of conditions such as malnutrition or injury is often difficult to secure. Furthermore, witnesses who know the facts are sometimes reluctant to testify in Court because it can often be embarrassing for them to have their identity revealed. Despite these difficulties our officers are often able to do successful work with these cases. The mere fact that a complaint has been made and is being officially investigated is sometimes enough to make offending parents realise the consequences of their actions and mend their ways. More often there is an underlying problem which parents are relieved to be able to discuss with someone prepared to help them. They may realise that they have been acting wrongly but have not known what to do.

39. Experience has shown that the best and most lasting results can be achieved if parents can be helped to solve their own problems. This often means leaving the children at home rather than taking steps to remove them from their parents' care. However, parents cannot be expected to change their habits overnight and good progress is often hindered by temporary setbacks. Children left with their parents will sometimes unfortunately suffer some form of neglect while the situation as a whole is being remedied. This state of affairs is difficult for onlookers to understand when they do not know the full story, and our officers are sometimes unfairly accused of lack of action. In fact, they are working quietly and unobtrusively, and with gratifying success in many cases, for the rehabilitation of the whole family.

40. There are times of course when it would be quite unfair to children to subject them to the danger of remaining with unworthy parents. In cases of emergency Child Welfare Officers, by executing a warrant issued by a Justice of the Peace, may remove children immediately, as, for instance, was done recently when a small child as a punishment for some misdemeanour had his hand held down on a hot electric stove. The fact that the mother was mentally unwell, and deserving of sympathy rather than of blame, and was passionately devoted to the child, could not affect the officer's obvious duty to remove the child immediately. Any case in which a warrant has been executed is reviewed within a short time by a Children's Court, and all parties have an opportunity then to put their side of the case before any binding order is made. In other cases, where the urgency is not so extreme as to require a warrant but where authoritative measures seem necessary, Child Welfare Officers may initiate legal proceedings in the Children's Court. If, after hearing the evidence, the Court is satisfied with the truth of the allegations, it may either commit the child to the care of the Superintendent, or may place it under the supervision of a Child Welfare Officer for a specified period.

41. During the year 136 children were committed to my care or placed under legal supervision on complaints that they were neglected or living in a detrimental environment. In addition, officers investigated some 1,100 complaints alleging neglect, cruelty, and the like, in which no Court action was required.

CHILDREN IN DAY CARE

42. It is becoming increasingly common for mothers to leave their young children in the care of others while they go shopping or to work. Nurseries which may or may not be run for profit have sprung up to supplement neighbourly help in meeting the demand for child care on an organised basis.

43. During the year a particularly distressing case came to light in which no fewer than 29 small children were found to be in the care of one woman who was subsequently convicted of neglecting one of them. The resulting outcry gave support to the case for legislative control, and led to the passing of the Child Welfare Amendment Act 1958. When regulations are gazetted under this Act the Child Welfare Division will have the responsibility of registering and supervising all day nurseries, creches, and private kindergartens.

44. The formulation of minimum standards which are reasonable and fair, but effective and enforceable, is a very complex matter because of the wide differences in purposes and methods of the existing child-care centres. There must be standards, but they should not be so strict that they force centres providing a needed service reasonably well to close down. A preliminary survey has been made of conditions in centres already known to our officers. This shows that non-profit nurseries are often conducted on a mutual-help basis by a group of mothers, sometimes with financial or other support from a committee of public-spirited citizens. Nurseries run primarily as a source of income differ widely from these in many ways. In the main they provide for the same children all day for five days a week. Some of them provide residential accommodation; others do not. Some furnish meals and have adequate facilities for daytime rest. A small number of nurseries accept babies only a few weeks old but most do not take children under two years of age. The standards necessary for nurseries of this type which take the same children for five full days a week will obviously differ in many respects from those required of a voluntary play centre staffed by mothers on a roster system, and open for maybe only two mornings a week.

45. Inspection of day nurseries already known to us indicates that deliberate exploitation of children for profit is not a major problem, but that some centres should be required to achieve a better standard of facilities and care. The major difficulty seems rather to be the irresponsibility shown by a comparatively small number of parents who appear oblivious to the effects on the mental health and future development of their children, of attendance day after day at understaffed centres providing reasonable material care but little or no stimulating or constructive activity and virtually no emotional warmth. Some parents, and particularly unmarried or deserted mothers, have little freedom of choice but, even so, it is hard to understand the action of parents who, for instance, continue to send their children to a centre where the proprietor refuses to allow them to look inside the premises. In some other cases parents bring or send the children to the nursery early in the morning and appear most reluctant to call for them again in the evening, leaving it very late to do this and sometimes only after prompting by the proprietor. There can be no doubt, therefore, that although official oversight of child care centres is necessary, a more responsible and vigilant attitude on the part of many parents is equally necessary.

CHILDREN IN REGISTERED CHILDREN'S HOMES

46. Although the Division has no direct control over the policies of the authorities (mainly the principal churches) administering children's homes nor over the individual children in the homes, we are nevertheless required by statute to inspect the homes to ensure that the children are adequately provided for.

47. The authorities controlling the 66 homes which were operating on 31 December 1958 reported that on that date they were caring for 1,703 children as against 1,789 the year before. Although most people speak of these homes as "orphanages", only 49 of the 1,703 children, or 2.8 per cent, had lost both parents; 335, or just under 20 per cent, had lost one parent. One small home closed temporarily during the year. Another new institution was registered after 31 December and is not included in the figures above.

48. Most of the homes now receive the Government capitation subsidy of 10s. per week per child which was instituted in 1956. During the year £44,864 was paid out under capitation subsidies. In addition £13,381 was paid during the same period as subsidies on capital expenditure on new buildings or on extensions or alterations to existing buildings. These subsidies are intended to help the authorities to improve the facilities in existing homes rather than to encourage the building of new institutions.

FAMILIES IN NECESSITOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

49. Most foreseeable events which can cause interruption or cessation of earnings are provided for in social security legislation. Nevertheless, there are quite a number of special situations which can bring about financial difficulty for a family, and which, in the interests of the children, require special forms of assistance. Ill health may permit only intermittent work. A divorced father may not be able to contribute adequately to the maintenance of his former wife and their children without neglecting his second wife and their children; he may refuse to pay, or pay just enough to stave off prosecution, or he may disappear from time to time. Where parents are living together, poverty and distress may be caused by mismanagement or expenditure on gambling, recreation, or liquor. Whatever the cause of the financial difficulty, if the result is that the interests of the children are likely to be seriously impaired, Child Welfare Officers cannot stand idly by. Our officers need to have a thorough knowledge of potential local sources of financial help which they may call upon in appropriate cases. In addition grants may be made from the Division's own limited funds. During the year expenditure under this heading totalled £13,232 which was given in respect of 1,027 children in 232 families. This is £3,082 more than was spent last year.

50. The value of this financial help should not be measured solely or even mainly in terms of the money spent. It will be clear from the cases cited above that financial help alone is often not enough. All of the situations outlined obviously call for more than just material help. As a matter of practice, we do not give financial assistance from our own funds unless some continuing case work with the family is needed. All other cases for special financial assistance come within the province of the Social Security Department.

PREVENTIVE WORK

51. It will be seen that a great part of the work of Child Welfare Officers is concerned with helping parents to provide for their own children rather than, as was once generally but mistakenly thought, with taking children away from their parents. But what I have so far said tells only a part of the story of that aspect of our duties which we call "preventive work" and which is directed towards remedying situations likely to lead to delinquency or neglect. Most people have now come to expect Child Welfare Officers to undertake preventive work, and requests for our assistance come from a wide range of sources including parents, teachers, neighbours, friends, relations, nurses, doctors, lawyers, police officers, public and voluntary agencies, and clergymen.

Short-term Work

52. Sometimes the problem posed is not deep seated or is only of a temporary nature. For instance, a young boy may on the spur of the moment run away from home. He may be located and brought to a Child Welfare Officer who returns him to his home. The parents will probably be worried in case there is something seriously wrong, and may be apprehensive about any official probing into the circumstances. However, friendly discussion may satisfy them that there is nothing to worry about. In these circumstances one or two interviews may be all that is required. In other cases some weeks of oversight and assistance may be needed. A great deal of the time of Child Welfare Officers is taken up with inquiries of this kind. They are urgent and important at the time and could develop into a serious situation, but if dealt with promptly and effectively, often do not involve prolonged work. This sort of work is extremely difficult to record uniformly unless more time is to be spent writing about it than doing it. However the available figures for "miscellaneous inquiries" handled by officers in the last few years show very clearly that increasing calls are being made for this sort of help. The statistics of investigations which did not result in Court proceedings or long-term supervision are:

	1955-56	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59
(a) Complaints of truancy	332	242	530	518
(b) Complaints of mis-behaviour	1,001	1,138	1,464	1,446
(c) Complaints of neglect	709	1,073	1,234	1,130
(d) Other cases	2,655	2,872	4,697	7,577
	4,697	5,325	7,925	10,671

53. The "other" cases in the table account for a large proportion of the Division's short-term preventive work. Some typical situations included under this broad heading are: advice for parents of handicapped children; advice about securing maintenance payments for deserted or separated mothers; arranging financial help from local agencies; arranging, at the request of parents, private foster home or institution placements for children; arranging holidays for mothers and children; returning runaway children to their homes; investigating reports that children are left unattended or kept away from school; interviewing children or young people who wish to leave home; investigating marital disputes involving children.

54. In addition to the figures quoted above, more than 130 reports were prepared for Courts on marriage conciliation cases and custody disputes about the children of separated or divorced parents; 120 families were helped to secure housing; more than 1,000 reports were prepared for other Government Departments; nearly 500 talks or lectures on child welfare topics were given by officers to many organisations - Rotary clubs, junior chambers of commerce, church mothers' groups, parent-teacher associations, professional bodies, and many others.

Long-term Work

55. Many of the problems reported to us are not capable of quick or easy solutions, and intensive long-term work is needed. To return to our earlier example of the runaway child: running away, in another case, may well be the first sign that there is something radically wrong at home and that action must be taken if the family is to be kept intact or the child is to be protected from neglect or delinquency. Troubles of this kind have usually been a long time in the making and are therefore not likely to yield quickly to remedial action. Well established habits of undue harshness, inconsistency, or laxity of parental discipline, or bitter argument between parents, cannot be rectified overnight. When continued work with children or parents is necessary we place the family or child under what we term "preventive supervision".

56. Work done under this heading covers a wide variety of activities: visiting parents who are prone to neglect or ill-treat their children; encouraging healthy interests in a boy who has too much leisure time; helping a father to see for himself, and not just because we tell him, that there are other ways of disciplining his children than by thrashing them; helping a mother to see that her daughter will not thank her for her efforts to stop her growing up; working with the school towards a child's better adjustment; assisting in finding suitable work for a youth and sometimes for a parent; arranging specialist help where needed.

57. More detailed and precise records are kept of cases in this category, and here again the volume of work has increased considerably over the last few years. At the beginning of the year 2,484 children were being supervised in this informal way. During the year 1,587 new cases were taken on and supervision was terminated in 782 cases, so that the number being supervised at the end of the year had risen to 3,289.

COURT WORK

58. Not all of our work can be carried out without recourse to the Court. It is inevitable that we do not hear of many problems until matters have gone too far to be handled informally. Sometimes the problem is so serious and urgent that no risks can be taken and firm action is called for. Sometimes, too, the help we have been giving informally proves inadequate and breakdowns occur despite our best efforts. In some of these circumstances our officers, and occasionally the Police, must initiate complaint proceedings in the Children's Court. In other cases, the Police must initiate Court action because offences have been committed. Whenever a child is brought before a Children's Court for any reason a Child Welfare Officer is required to investigate and report on the circumstances. The preparation of these reports is an important part of a Child Welfare Officer's work. Moreover, because

the people involved are naturally distressed and sometimes feel aggrieved, and because there is almost always an element of urgency, it is difficult and delicate.

59. During the year our officers reported on 5,007¹ cases before the Children's Courts. I have commented in detail on these cases in the section of this report dealing with Court statistics.

CHILDREN UNDER SUPERVISION ORDERED BY THE COURT

60. One of the special powers of the Children's Court is that it may place a child under the supervision of a Child Welfare Officer for a specified period, usually one or two years. This supervision order gives legal sanction and support for the same kind of work that has been described under the heading of "preventive work". An order of this kind does not affect parents' rights of guardianship and the child usually remains in his own home. Sometimes, however, it is best for the child to leave home for a time and, if the parents agree, Child Welfare Officers often assist in making suitable placements. During the year 1,357 children were placed under supervision and the number being supervised at the close of the year was 1,641 compared with 1,599 last year.

THE CARE OF STATE WARDS

61. The most serious decision made by the Children's Court is that of depriving parents of their legal rights by committing a child to the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare. Both the Courts and Child Welfare Officers are reluctant to countenance a step involving the child's removal from his home. Unfortunately, however, there are a number of cases each year in which no other action can properly be taken.

Foster Homes

62. We believe that if a child cannot live in his own home with his own parents it is, in general, best that he should live as normal a life as possible as an ordinary member of another family. We have gone further than most countries in developing a foster home service. At the close of the year, 1,539 State wards were being cared for by foster parents and I would like to take this opportunity of paying a tribute to these people for the valuable work they are doing. We pay them allowances which are intended to meet out-of-pocket expenses and we also provide clothing for the children, but there is no element of profit in the rates paid. As far as we can ensure, State wards are treated no differently from other children. They attend the same schools, wear the same kind of clothes, take part in the same activities and have the same opportunities for education and choice of occupations.

Institutions

63. It often happens that children coming into our care are not ready for placement in a foster home. They may be suffering from emotional strain, physical neglect, or ill treatment, or they may be far too aggressive or disturbed to be cared for by foster parents. In these cases the children are sometimes admitted to one of our small institutions.

¹This number differs from the total shown in tables 2 and 3 because the latter does not include cases dismissed, withdrawn, discharged, or adjourned.

64. *Boys' Homes*—In five of the main centres the Division maintains small institutions which provide short-term care and training for boys aged from about eight to 16 years. These homes range in size from the smallest in Dunedin, which accommodates up to about 16 boys, to the largest in Auckland, which provides for about 42. During the year two new homes of identical plan, and providing for 25 boys each, were built at Hamilton and Lower Hutt. The latter replaced an old institution at Wellington, which had outlived its usefulness and was closed.

65. *Receiving Homes*—Institutions similar to boys' homes are maintained in six main centres for girls and small boys. During the year a problem which had been developing for some time became particularly pressing. These small homes, ever since their inception, have had to provide both for difficult, older girls who require training, and for young children, frequently infants, who require only temporary shelter care. This situation has always caused some difficulties in the institutions, but until now these have been overcome reasonably well. Within the last few years, however, the number of older girls admitted because of their own misconduct has increased, and, in addition, there has been a much higher incidence of violent outbursts and disruptive behaviour. Attention is being given to plans for separating the two groups, a development which will inevitably involve the building or purchase of one or two new homes.

66. The small institutions described above are not intended to provide for the more seriously disturbed or delinquent children and adolescents who require long-term training and rehabilitation. Their needs are met by the training centres.

67. *Girls' Training Centre, Burwood, Christchurch*—This institution caters for about 75 difficult adolescent girls aged from about 14 to 18 years who require comparatively long-term training. Classroom teaching or supervised Correspondence School courses are provided for all girls of school age, and for those older girls who wish to continue their education either full time or part time. The institution's resources were severely strained during the year by an unusually high number of girls requiring admission and by shortages among senior staff members, caused by retirements, resignations, and sickness. At the end of the year 79 girls were in residence. There is no indication of an early reduction in the number of admissions and it is clear that we shall have to provide additional facilities.

68. The following are some matters of interest referred to by the Principal in her report:

A welcome increase in the time during which the services of the consultant psychiatrist are available which permitted the strengthening of existing arrangements for case discussion and staff training talks under his guidance.

A survey conducted by the consultant psychiatrist which showed that of nearly 200 girls he had interviewed over several years, only one-third came from homes in which the parents were living together.

A special visit, much appreciated by the Maori girls, by the Right Reverend W. N. Panapa, Bishop of Aotearoa.

An unusually large number of visits by former inmates, often accompanied by husbands and children.

69. *Boys' Training Centre, Levin*—This institution operates in two separate sections, about 5 miles apart. The senior section, near Levin, caters for about 70 delinquent adolescent boys aged about 14 to 17 years and the junior section, at Hokio Beach, provides for about 30 difficult boys of primary-school age who receive their education on the institution premises. At the end of the year 66 boys were resident in the senior section and 26 boys in the junior section.

70. Some points of interest taken from the Manager's report are:

An unusually high rate of admissions and discharges (93 admissions and 87 discharges).

Two short but severe "epidemics" of abscondings, which spoiled what would otherwise have been an unusually good record.

Continuation of the building programme involving the completion of another cottage for boys and a new wing to the office. (A good deal of this work was done by the boys under the supervision of tradesmen.)

The introduction, in collaboration with the visiting educational psychologist, of standardised tests of ordinary everyday skills which could reasonably be expected of adolescents. (Tests administered to boys shortly after admission showed that more than half failed in seven tasks out of 20. The tasks included such items as finding names in a telephone directory, giving change, filling in a Post Office Savings Bank deposit slip, reading a bus timetable, and using a set of weighing scales. These results point to the need for strengthening of facilities for teaching at the institution.)

71. There are two other small institutions which do not fit into the categories described above.

72. *Fareham House, Featherston*—Some difficult Maori girls over school age receive suitable training in this small institution which provides accommodation for about 20 girls. At the close of the year there were 16 girls in residence, 24 having been admitted during the year and 28 discharged. Many of the girls admitted were very unsettled and abscondings were a problem during the year.

73. *Girls' Hostel, Wellington*—This is a small hostel accommodating about 12 working girls, who, for one reason or another, cannot be placed in their own homes or in private lodgings. On 31 March 1959 there were 10 girls in residence, 23 having been admitted during the year and 21 having left. The matron reported that the girls admitted during the year tended to be more difficult and disturbed than in former years. For this reason it was difficult to maintain active interest in organised sporting activities.

Family Homes

74. These homes have to serve two purposes in most districts. They must provide for those children who are suited for placement neither in a foster home nor in an institution. They must also take children for temporary care in those areas which lack boys' homes and receiving homes. The two needs cannot be met very satisfactorily under one roof and, until there are sufficient family homes to provide for both types of case, existing family homes will come under undue strain and will be handicapped in carrying out their special purposes. The family homes

are large residences, usually built especially for the purpose, which are occupied rent free by selected foster parents who agree to care for the children placed with them. There are now 10 of them, new ones having been opened at Invercargill and Timaru during the year.

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

75. During and after the Second World War the Child Welfare Division assumed responsibility for immigrant children from Great Britain and Europe who arrived in New Zealand without a parent. Almost all of these children have now grown up. Only four of more than 700 Polish children, none of the 73 postwar refugees from Europe, and only 40 of the 600 British children who came to New Zealand under a scheme instituted in 1948 now remain under our supervision. The scheme for immigration of British children has now virtually ceased to operate and in practice is limited to a few youths between 17 and 18 years of age, only nine of whom came out during the year. Our supervision in these cases is nominal, as satisfactory arrangement for employment and accommodation are made before the young people leave Great Britain. Orphan children of any age are also eligible for immigration under this scheme but none has arrived in recent years.

STAFFING

76. The following table sets out the staffing position of the Division on 31 March 1959. It will be seen that staff shortages in institutional work were serious enough to occasion some inconvenience and concern. Most of these vacancies were among domestic and attendant staff.

	Approved Establishment on 31 March 1959	Staff Actually Employed on 31 March 1959	Positions Vacant on 31 March 1959
Field staff (Child Welfare Officers)	177 ¹	172 ²	5
Clerical staff (district offices)	123	122	1
Clerical staff (institutions)	15	15	..
Administrative and clerical staff (Head Office)	40	41 ³	1
Institutional staff (excluding teachers)	301	276	25
Social science cadets, social work trainees .. .. .	..	4 ⁴	..
Total	656	630	32

NOTES—¹Excludes some Head Office staff previously counted under this heading. ²Excludes four field officers awarded study leave to attend the School of Social Science. ³Includes two clerical officers temporarily surplus to establishment. ⁴All these appointments are surplus to establishment.

In addition to the paid staff listed above, the Division has the assistance of 164 honorary Child Welfare Officers who give valuable service by visiting children and by making local inquiries when requested, particularly in areas removed from our districts' headquarters.

77. Movements among field officers were rather more numerous than in the previous year. Fourteen officers (three men and 11 women) left the Division and 16 new officers took up appointments on the field staff. Internal transfers and promotions brought the total movements in and out of our district offices to 55 during the year.

Staff Training

78. The Public Service Commission awarded three Child Welfare Officers special leave of absence for full-time study at the School of Social Science at Victoria University of Wellington. Four officers graduated from the school at the end of 1958 and resumed positions on the field staff of the Division.

79. Almost all junior field officers attended short residential courses of one week each which were held during the May vacation at the School for the Deaf, Titirangi, Auckland. Several speakers from outside the Division were kind enough to give lectures and lead discussions. In addition to these courses officers in two districts arranged weekend courses for themselves. In so doing they showed commendable initiative and demonstrated the importance the staff themselves place upon training.

Preparatory Training for Social Work

80. The Division continued, in conjunction with the Public Service Commission, to supervise the training of social science cadets. These are young people who are placed in various Government Departments and who undertake relevant university studies in order to qualify for a career in social work. On 31 March last there were 11 cadets, placed in offices in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin. Three of them were attached to the Child Welfare Division.

81. During the year the Public Service Commission instituted a new type of position for persons training to be social workers. This position is that of a social work trainee and it has a status between cadetship and full appointment to a field position in a social service Department. Only two social work trainees have so far been appointed. One of them, formerly a social science cadet, has been attached to this Division.

OVERSEAS VISITORS

82. The Child Welfare Division cooperated with the Department of External Affairs and other Departments concerned in arranging a six-months tour of observation and training for two women social workers from Indonesia. These visitors came to New Zealand under the auspices of the Colombo Plan.

CHILDREN'S COURT STATISTICS

TOTAL APPEARANCES

83. The total number of appearances¹ during the year ended 31 March 1959 was 4,377 (4,366),² an almost insignificant increase over the number for the previous year. Five hundred and forty-nine (490) children—511 boys and 38 girls—made more than one appearance during the year, so that 3,828 (3,876) individual children—3,157 boys and 671 girls—were dealt with during the year.

"COMPLAINT" CASES

84. During the year there were 752 appearances resulting from "complaints" (a technical legal term) made in respect of children. Complaint cases fall into three main categories:³

- (a) Cases in which children have committed offences but are not charged with them, although they could have been. In these cases a complaint that the child is delinquent, is not under proper control, or has failed to comply with the terms of a supervision order, may be made. Throughout our statistics they are counted under the offences with which the children could have been charged. There were 279 cases of this kind in 1958-59, compared with 317 in 1957-58. They are included in the figures discussed in later sections of this report.

¹Appearances are counted only when guilt is established or a complaint is upheld by the Court and the case is finally dealt with. Dismissed and withdrawn cases are not included in any of the figures in this report, except table C.

²The figures given in parentheses throughout this section of the report are the corresponding figures for the year 1957-58.

³It will be seen that the same legal complaint can be used to cover more than one of the categories.

- (b) Cases involving misconduct which does not amount to a statutory or classifiable offence against the law. Persistent truancy, running away from home, sleeping out, keeping bad company, or general intractability are examples. In these cases the same legal complaints may be made as in the preceding group. The total for last year was 121, compared with 111 for the previous year.
- (c) Cases involving inadequacy of parental care, and implying no misconduct by the child, who may indeed be an infant in arms. In these cases, the legal complaint made is that the child is indigent, neglected, living in a detrimental environment, or is not under proper control. There were 352 cases of this kind in 1958-59, compared with 345 in 1957-58.

There is little fluctuation in the figures from year to year, and none calling for special comment.

APPEARANCES FOR OFFENCES OR MISCONDUCT

Classification According to Seriousness of Offence

85. For some years now I have tried to give more meaning to the delinquency figures by separating the trivial from the more serious offences. In doing so I have classified offences into the following categories:

- (i) Appearances for all offences, serious or minor.
- (ii) Appearances for theft; breaking and entering and theft; receiving.
- (iii) Appearances for "all more serious offences" which include conversion, fraud and offences against persons and morality as well as those enumerated in (ii) above.

86. While this classification is of value in distinguishing broadly between serious and trivial offences it has some defects which I believe to be unavoidable in this or any other statistical classification. It takes no account of the motives of the children concerned; it covers a wide range of seriousness from petty theft or damage to large scale theft or damage and it makes no distinction between children of different ages or between boys and girls. Nonetheless, as will be seen from table A, a classification of this kind does present the raw material from which an indication of the trend can be gained. This raw material can then be subjected to further analyses to show trends in relation to age and sex (table B), peak age groups (table D) and repeaters (table E).

TABLE A: Numbers of Children's Court Appearances 1956 to 1959 Showing Rates per 10,000 of Mean Population Aged Seven to 17 Years Inclusive

	Number			Rate Per Ten Thousand		
	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59
All offences	3,078	3,910	3,904	70	87	83
Theft, etc.	1,524	1,889	1,829	35	42	39
All more serious offences ..	1,972	2,425	2,404	45	54	51

Classification According to Age and Sex

87. Table B presents an analysis of the sex and age of children making Court appearances for misconduct and offences. It shows clearly how the delinquency rate increases greatly with age and also the relatively small proportion of girls in the total number of appearances. Although the total number of girls appearing in Court was relatively small, the rate of appearances for 14-, 15-, and 16-year-old girls increased considerably over last year. There is no marked increase for any particular type of offence or for any particular part of the country. It may be that the increase reflects a tendency to prosecute rather more of the older girls coming under notice rather than a change in the amount of delinquency among girls of this age. Again this year there have been increases in the rates for adolescent boys but they have levelled off somewhat for all except the 14-year-old group.

TABLE B: Rate of Children's Court Appearances for Offences or Misconduct per 10,000 of Population of Relevant Age

Age of Child	Boys			Girls		
	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59
7	4	2	2	..	1	..
8	12	7	4	1	2	..
9	20	25	19	2	2	1
10	40	44	31	2	6	4
11	63	79	68	5	6	7
12	92	140	105	12	12	19
13	172	204	203	22	30	32
14	238	260	279	38	45	65
15	298	380	393	46	48	83
16	463	626	641	50	51	65

88. For some years now I have referred to several factors which have a marked effect on the numbers of children being brought before the Courts for delinquent acts. The most important of these are: the efficiency of detecting agencies; the extent to which offences are reported to official agencies; and the policy of the Police in deciding which cases to prosecute. Any variation in these factors alters the recorded delinquency rate even though there may not have been any change in the actual incidence of delinquency. I mention this again because it seems to me that in recent years the increased publicity given to juvenile delinquency and the considerable strengthening of the Police force have together been in part responsible for the increased number of delinquent children detected and brought before the Court. I believe that factors of this kind are largely responsible for the seemingly inexplicable fluctuation in delinquency rates from time to time. It is difficult for me to believe that the moral fibre of our children has varied from period to period over our recent history as much as it would seem to have done if we give to our annual delinquency rates the significance which the figures seem to imply. With this thought in mind I publish once again a table showing the longest unbroken sequence of statistics available as an expression of the delinquency rate. This table includes all ages from 7-17 and all types of offences.

TABLE C: Rate of All Children's Court Appearances for Offences per 10,000 of Population Aged Seven to 17 Years Inclusive¹

1934	..	..	53	1943	..	..	81	1952	..	..	56
1935	..	..	58	1944	..	..	84	1953	..	..	54
1936	..	..	57	1945	..	..	68	1954	..	..	56
1937	..	..	68	1946	..	..	60	1955	..	..	62
1938	..	..	77	1947	..	..	52	1956	..	..	65
1939	..	..	72	1948	..	..	51	1957	..	..	74
1940	..	..	79	1949	..	..	47	1958	..	..	92
1941	..	..	79	1950	..	..	46	1959	..	..	88
1942	..	..	79	1951	..	..	47				

The Juvenile Crime Prevention Section

89. A good deal of publicity has been given to the introduction by the Police into a number of their districts of Juvenile Crime Prevention Sections. A pilot scheme has been operating in the Christchurch police district since late 1957 and, since March of this year, similar schemes have been introduced in other parts of the country. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Section is aimed at preventing the appearance in Court of children whose offence is an isolated transgression and unlikely to be repeated. In most of the cases not prosecuted Child Welfare Officers undertake some responsibility for the children and, where necessary, exercise some continuing oversight for varying periods. I regard this development as a progressive step. It prevents unnecessary Court appearances and enables us to widen the area of our preventive work. Clearly, however, this new development will affect our Court statistics because it will remove from them many children who in the past would have appeared in Court. Unfortunately continuity cannot be ensured merely by adding these cases to the Children's Court totals and it will therefore be necessary to find a new basis for our statistical returns.

Court Appearances by Maori Children

90. Although the definition of a Maori as one of half Maori blood or more is probably not applied without error to the compilation either of population statistics or of delinquency statistics any such error would not account for the disturbingly high delinquency rates for Maoris which have persisted for some years. Estimates prepared on the basis of census statistics indicate that 1,660 Maori boys attained the age of 16 years during 1958. According to our records, 319 boys of this age group who were classified by our officers as Maoris (i.e., 19 per cent of the total) had made at least one Court appearance for a serious offence at some stage during their lives. Such facts are a challenge to all who deal with Maori boys and girls to try to understand the special strains and temptations to which many of them are subjected, and to give them the greatest possible measure of effective personal help.

91. In some respects Maori delinquents and the incidence of delinquency by Maoris differ from the pattern for non-Maori children. Some points of difference are summarised below:

- Relatively few Maoris commit traffic offences.
- The peak age for Maoris both boys and girls is 15 years.
- For non-Maoris it is 16 years for boys, 15 for girls.
- Contrary to what might be thought, there is a good deal of Maori delinquency in rural and small town areas.

¹The figures for recent years are rather larger than the corresponding figures in table A. This apparent discrepancy is caused by the fact that the tables are prepared on somewhat different bases. In order to preserve long-term comparability, table C takes into account Court cases which were dismissed, withdrawn, or discharged, in accordance with a practice which, for all other tables, including table A, was discontinued in 1949.

Among Maori delinquents there is a much higher incidence of unsatisfactory living conditions evidenced by overcrowding and broken or disturbed homes than among non-Maoris.

Educational retardation is common among delinquents, both Maori and non-Maori but this characteristic does not distinguish delinquents from non-delinquents among Maoris as sharply as it does among non-Maori children.

Court Appearances by 14 to 16-year-old Boys

92. The analysis of types of offence committed by 14-, 15-, and 16-year-old boys, begun some years ago, is continued in table D. As in past years a large proportion of the appearances made by these age groups, especially for 15-year-olds (24 per cent) and 16-year-olds (44 per cent) was for technical offences.

TABLE D: Children's Court Appearances by Boys Aged Fourteen to 16 Years, 1956-57 to 1958-59, Showing Nature of Offence and Age

Category of Offence	Fourteen Years			Fifteen Years			Sixteen Years		
	1956-7	1957-8	1958-9	1956-7	1957-8	1958-9	1956-7	1957-8	1958-9
Theft	316	328	373	320	377	370	287	397	408
Mischief	32	55	53	55	74	71	81	118	91
Against persons	9	7	13	12	15	21	31	33	30
Sex, indecency	20	27	37	35	40	42	48	39	55
Against good order	3	3	3	16	23	20	27	46	55
Miscellaneous	2	1	1	6	6	6	9	38	22
Subtotal, more serious offences	382	421	480	444	535	530	483	671	661
Technical	33	29	34	125	154	169	364	490	517
Total	415	450	514	569	689	699	847	1,161	1,178

Repeated Court Appearances

93. The number of appearances made by children who had been before the Court previously was 1,458 (1,289) or just under 33 per cent of the total. If cases of misconduct only are counted the proportion of recidivists rises to 36 per cent. The high and increasing incidence of recidivism is a present a subject of research. The following points summarise briefly some of the findings to date and are based on an analysis of information available about recidivists who appeared in the Children's Court between 1955 and 1958:

About 60 per cent of recidivists have made only one previous Court appearance.

Over 30 per cent of the recidivists were charged with a traffic offence. However a large proportion of those appearing for a traffic offence had made an earlier appearance for a serious offence, usually theft.

Most recidivists first appeared in Court when they were over the age of 13.

Compared with first offenders, recidivists have a higher incidence of broken or disturbed homes, poor school records, and vocational instability.

Offences against property, particularly thefts and car conversions, are more common among recidivists than among first offenders.

Only about one-tenth of all recidivists are girls. However, the proportion of girls who repeat offences is about the same as for boys.

Something over 40 per cent of 16-year-old boys who make Court appearances for serious offences are recidivists.

The highest rate of recidivism for all offences including traffic offences is among 16-year-old boys.

94. Table E below sets out the rates for boys making at least a second Court appearance over recent years. All offences, other than traffic and similar offences, are counted here and each boy is counted only once in each year irrespective of the number of Court appearances he made during that period.

TABLE E: Rates per 10,000 of Each Age Group for Boys Making Their Second or a Subsequent Children's Court Appearance in the Years 1954-55 to 1958-59

Age	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59
9	4	..	2	2	2
10	4	4	5	5	3
11	8	10	7	9	10
12	16	21	14	21	21
13	36	34	39	43	49
14	44	43	58	75	76
15	74	67	80	103	103
16	84	90	111	141	162

The table shows clearly the rapid increase in the rates with age and the marked increase since 1955, in the rates for the 14- to 16-year group. This table cannot be compared with table B which is concerned with appearances and not with individual children.

Court Decisions

95. From year to year there is little change in the proportions of cases dealt with in the various ways available to the Court. The proportion of cases dealt with by admonition has fallen very slightly to 47 per cent (48 per cent) and for those placed on supervision it has fallen to 31 per cent (32 per cent) of the total. Children committed to the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare account for 14 per cent (12 per cent) of all cases while 9 per cent (8 per cent) were convicted, placed on adult probation, or sentenced to borstal training. These figures suggest a trend towards decisions which provide some lasting control over the child or at least a permanent record of his misconduct. In other words they suggest a sterner attitude on the part of the Court. In the last few years the Courts have also tended increasingly to adjourn cases for periods up to six months and sometimes longer. During that time the child has been virtually under the supervision of a Child Welfare Officer. At the end of the time, if no further control is considered necessary, the Court has admonished and discharged the child. Last year 84 children, 74 boys and 10 girls, were dealt with in this way.

STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE 1: Number of Children Under Control and Supervision of the Child Welfare Division as at 31 March

*State Wards—	1957	1958	1959
In foster homes	1,461	1,520	1,539
With relatives or friends	373	323	337
In employment (excluding those with relatives or friends) (including 8 absent without leave on 31 March 1957; 9, 1958; 18, 1959)	597	639	663
In Government receiving homes	169	166	163
In Government "family homes"	31	35	43
In Government hostels	5	9	10
In Government residential training centres	174	183	189
In registered private children's homes	35	30	32
In special schools for mentally backward or deaf children (see also under "Other Than State Wards")	99	88	82
In hospitals, convalescent homes, etc.	14	4	7
In residential colleges	21	20	12
In mental hospital	111	103	99
Attending university or teachers' college	2	2	4
Totals	3,092	3,122	3,180

Other than State Wards—

Young persons supervised in their own homes by Child Welfare Officers pursuant to orders of Court	1,314	1,599	1,641
Infants supervised in private foster homes licensed under the Infants Act 1908	1,678	727	809
Infants placed with a view to adoption and supervised by Child Welfare Officers pending the making of adoption orders (previously included under item above) (total as at 31 December 1958) .. .. .	..	1,218†	1,341
Pupils at Schools for Deaf, Sumner and Titirangi (excluding State wards)	306	309	272
Pupils at special schools for mentally backward children, Otago and Richmond (excluding State wards)	72	71	76
Children supervised in their own homes by Child Welfare Officers without Court orders ("preventive" cases)	1,826	2,484	3,289
Pupils of New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, for whom the Division makes payments	9	8	9
Totals	5,205	6,416	7,437
Grand totals	8,297	9,538	10,617

*Including children who had not been formally committed to the care of the Superintendent, but over whom the Division exercised legal control, i.e., children under control by agreement with parent or guardian, or under legal warrant, or on remand, or under supervision and resident in a Child Welfare institution. On 31 March 1959 there were 91 of these children.
†Corrected figure.

NOTE—At 31 March 1959 there were 40 British children (not included in the above table) under the care of the Superintendent.

TABLE 2: Number of Appearances Before the Children's Courts During Years Ended 31 March

	1957	1958	1959
Complaints under the Child Welfare Act and amendments—			
Indigent	90	96	123
Neglected	51	59	40
Living in a detrimental environment ..	130	87	96
Not under proper control	145(i)	189(i)	186(i)
Delinquent	6	14	14
Failing to comply with the terms of a supervision order	10	11	14
Totals	432	456	473
Offences against property—			
Theft	1,006	1,286	1,268
Breaking, entering, and theft	456	532	469
Conversion of motor vehicles	193	213	257
Other conversions	71	74	79
Arson and attempts	5	7	5
Other offences against property (e.g., receiving, attempted theft, trespassing) ..	79	91	113
Mischief, wilful damage, vandalism, and offences involving public safety	183	296	280
Totals	1,993	2,499	2,471
Offences involving fraud	30	39	27
Offences against persons—			
Sex offences—			
Indecent assault on a female	39	46	58
Unlawful carnal knowledge	20	39	49
Indecent assault on a male	13	16	9
"Peeping Tom"	6	4	..
In possession of contraceptives under 16 years .. .. .	..	4	..
Permitting sexual offence on self (girls only)	75(ii)	74(ii)	102(ii)
Other sex offences	17	16	13
Other than sex offences (e.g., assault, threatening behaviour)	54	66	72
Totals	224	265	303
Offences against decency	39	48	58
Offences against good order (e.g., drunkenness, etc.)	68	92	115
Offences against special Acts, regulations and bylaws—			
Traffic—			
More serious offences (e.g., reckless driving, failing to stop after accident)	75	110	69
Less serious offences—			
(a) Cycling	46	75	62
(b) Other (e.g., exceeding speed limit)	390	552	609
Railway and fire brigade	11	15	19
Licensing	71	62	59
Acclimatisation	8	7	7
Arms and explosives	94	108	71
Other special Acts and bylaws (e.g., gambling, billiard saloons)	12	9	7
Totals	707	938	903
Other offences (e.g., stowing away, escaping from custody, attempted suicide)	17	29	27
Grand totals	3,510	4,366	4,377

NOTES—Table 2, like most others published, counts appearances only, not individual children. Some children appeared more than once in each year. The number of such cases in the year under review was 540 (490).

Multiple offences, i.e., cases for which children are charged with more than one offence at a single appearance, e.g., car conversion, and breaking, entering, and theft, present considerable difficulty in tabulation. In accordance with previous practice such cases are counted under the offence which, in the particular circumstances of each case, appears to be the most serious. This selection is necessarily arbitrary but there is no alternative if the table is not to be inordinately lengthy and correspondingly more difficult to follow. In the year under review there were 702 (711) cases of multiple offences.

(i) Children appearing on complaints of delinquency and, to a lesser extent, those "not under proper control", have frequently been guilty of some offence with which they could have been charged. Whenever practicable each such appearance is not counted in the "complaints" section of the table but under the type of misconduct which resulted in the appearance. In the year under review 110 children (59 boys and 51 girls) appeared on complaints that they were "not under proper control" and 158 children (78 boys and 80 girls) appeared on complaints of delinquency but have been counted in the "offences" section of the table. A further 11 children (two boys and nine girls) who appeared on complaints of either failing to comply with the terms of a supervision order, being indigent, or living in a detrimental environment, are also counted in the "offences" section because they also could have been charged with an offence.

(ii) Court proceedings based on complaints under the Child Welfare Act and previously shown as "delinquent" or "not under proper control".

TABLE 3: Children's Court Appearances During Years Ended 31 March (Classified according to decision of Court)

	1957	1958	1959
Admonished and discharged	890	1,129	992
Admonished and ordered to pay costs .. .	24	63	73
Admonished and ordered to make restitution .. .	188	247	212
Admonished and fined .. .	269	411	507
Admonished and driving licence endorsed, suspended, or cancelled .. .	38	103	56
Admonished and returned to the care of the Superintendent (i.e., State wards appearing on charges) .. .	153	155	211
Totals .. .	1,562	2,108	2,051
Placed under the supervision of a Child Welfare Officer .. .	716	827	727
Placed under supervision, ordered to make restitution .. .	256	300	272
Placed under supervision, ordered to pay costs .. .	2	3	14
Placed under supervision, ordered to spend a period in an institution .. .	2	2	7
Placed under supervision, with other special conditions .. .	133	161	248
Period of supervision extended .. .	63	96	89
Totals .. .	1,172	1,389	1,357
Committed to the care of the Superintendent .. .	7	15	13
Convicted and discharged .. .	10	8	35
Convicted and ordered to pay costs .. .	75	73	100
Convicted and fined .. .	..	..	..
Convicted and driving licence endorsed, suspended, or cancelled .. .	22	36	33
Convicted and ordered to come up for sentence if called upon .. .	1	4	3
Convicted and returned to care of Superintendent .. .	..	..	1
Totals .. .	115	136	185
Placed on adult probation .. .	41	59	58
Sentenced to Borstal training .. .	2	3	9
Borstal sentence extended .. .	..	..	..
Totals .. .	43	62	67
Detained in Child Welfare or police custody pending deportation or repatriation .. .	..	8	3
Committed to mental hospital .. .	1	..	..
Remanded to Supreme Court for trial or sentence .. .	3	1	6
Adjudged <i>sine die</i> .. .	1	1	..
Imprisoned .. .	..	1	..
Totals .. .	6	11	9
Grand Totals .. .	3,510	4,366	4,377

TABLE 4: Children Placed Under the Supervision of Child Welfare Officers During Years Ended 31 March (Classified according to reason for appearance)

	Boys			Girls			Totals		
	1957	1958	1959	1957	1958	1959	1957	1958	1959
(a) Complaints under the Child Welfare Act 1925—									
Indigent .. .	11	18	18	8	12	21	19	30	39
Neglected .. .	13	17	9	17	14	15	30	31	24
Living in a detrimental environment .. .	23	13	13	27	19	21	50	32	34
Not under proper control .. .	27	32	53	47	57	51	74	89	104
Delinquent .. .	73	69	36	43	54	55	116	123	91
Failing to comply with terms of supervision order .. .	..	1	5	1	1	1	1	2	6
(b) Charged with an offence .. .	797	978	924	85	104	135	882	1,082	1,059
Totals .. .	944	1,128	1,058	228	261	299	1,172	1,389	1,357

NOTE—The total of 1,357 for 1959 represents 1,318 children, as 39 children (38 boys and 1 girl) who were placed on supervision during the year appeared before the Children's Court again during the same year and their period of supervision was extended. In addition 51 children (34 boys and 17 girls) placed under supervision during the year were subsequently committed to the care of the Superintendent during the year.

TABLE 5: Reasons for Committals and Admissions, Years Ended 31 March

	Boys			Girls			Totals		
	1957	1958	1959	1957	1958	1959	1957	1958	1959
<i>Committed to the Care of the Superintendent</i>									
<i>(a) Complaints under the Child Welfare Act—</i>									
Indigent	46	40	49	27	28	38	73	68	87
Neglected	11	15	5	10	13	11	21	28	16
Living in a detrimental environment	32	33	30	47	22	32	79	55	62
Not under proper control	66	81	74	77	85	101	143	166	175
Delinquent	26	31	22	22	20	32	48	51	54
Failing to comply with the terms of a supervision order	5	5	4	4	4	6	9	9	10
<i>(b) Charged with an offence</i>	108	112	127	27	15	16	135	127	143
Totals	294	317	311	214	187	236	508	504	547
<i>Other Than Committed</i>									
Control assumed by arrangement with parents or guardians (section 12, Child Welfare Act 1925)	7	6	17	3	1	3	10	7	20
Control assumed under legal warrant (section 13, Child Welfare Act 1925):									
(a) Subsequently returned to parents, guardians, etc.	55	78	69	37	64	74	92	142	145
(b) Still under control at 31 March 1959 pending Court decision	*	9	35	*	48	26	*	57	61
Temporarily admitted to Child Welfare institution in an emergency:									
(a) Subsequently returned to parents, guardians, etc.	28	26	50	21	34	51	49	60	101
(b) Still under control at 31 March 1959 pending decision	*	8	3	*	..	4	*	8	7
Remanded in Child Welfare institutions or foster homes:									
(a) Subsequently returned to parents, guardians, etc.	*	40	30	*	11	12	*	51	42
(b) Still under control at 31 March pending Court decision	*	13	12	*	9	2	*	22	14
Placed under supervision of a Child Welfare Officer and ordered to spend a period of residence in an institution	1	..	4	2	..	1	3	..	..
Admitted to special schools for deaf or backward children as resident or day pupils (section 127, Education Act 1914)	49	44	37	27	23	31	76	67	68
Totals	140	224	257	90	190	204	230	414	461
Grand totals	434	541	568	304	377	440	738	918	1,008

* Separate figures not shown in earlier years.

NOTE—Of the 547 children committed to the care of the Superintendent during the year ended 31 March 1959, 90, or 16.5 per cent, were known to be illegitimate.

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