

CHILDREN'S COURTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PREVENTIVE WORK

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