

When statutory authority was provided for the guardianship of immigrant children the opportunity was taken to incorporate certain miscellaneous minor amendments, mainly of a machinery nature, to the original Child Welfare Act. One of these changed the name of the Child Welfare Branch to that of Child Welfare Division. None of the amendments calls for special comment.

In last year's report I referred to the proposal to establish a School of Social Work at Victoria University College, which would provide Child Welfare Officers and prospective appointees to this Division with opportunities to undertake courses of study specifically designed to meet the needs of social-service workers in various fields. The proposal has been taken a stage further by an appointment from overseas to the professorial chair. It is anticipated that the course will begin at the start of the next academic year.

HONORARY CHILD WELFARE OFFICERS

At the 31st March, 1949, there were 230 honorary officers holding office in various parts of the Dominion under authority given them by the Minister. The Division is fortunate in being able to call on the services of these men and women, whose voluntary assistance with the supervision of children, with the selection of foster-homes, and with other miscellaneous duties, particularly in outlying districts, constitutes a valuable community work.

CHILD WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

In common with other Departments and organizations, the Division has experienced difficulty in maintaining the staffing of its institutions at full strength, but, nevertheless, as I reported last year, it has been possible to meet all demands on those institutions for the accommodation of children. The reports from all institutions have revealed satisfactory work and development.

Extracts from the reports of the Manager, Boys' Training Centre, Levin, and the Principal, Girls' Training Centre, Burwood, are as follows:—

(a) *Levin* :—

The building of a modern trade training section was completed early in the year. The actual construction of the building was very largely the work of the boys themselves, and this presented a great and unique opportunity for those lads who participated in the work. The fact that it was built by the boys gives to the unit a value far greater than could ever come as the result of erecting a building by outside contract.

With the coming to hand of machine tools, the scope of the carpentry and cabinetmaking sections has been increased and the boys associated with the section are gaining a valuable grounding and training which will undoubtedly stand them in good stead when they are returned to society and placed upon a competitive market.

The Centre, while designed for older boys, also caters for the needs of those boys of primary-school age whose records make it undesirable that they should mix with the younger boys at the School Section at Hoki Beach. These lads, together with a few of secondary-school standard, comprise the normal school group, and are given full-time schooling. For this we utilize the Department's Correspondence School facilities, and the work is supervised by a member of the staff.

The system of satisfying, as far as possible, each lad's preference for the type of work he would like to undertake while in residence here continues to work out very satisfactorily, and while providing for all those boys who wish to be given carpentry instruction, it leaves sufficient labour available for the operation of the farm. As the farm is a small mixed one, admirable opportunities exist for the training of boys in a wide range of farming activities, and on a rotational scheme each boy, reckoning on an average of six months' work on the farm, gains experience and fairly intensive training in most farming operations.

Worthy of mention as a major activity of the Centre is the community service performed by boys in their spare time. The outstanding effort during the past twelve months was the construction of a bowling-green for the Levin Returned Services Association. The Play Centre looks to us for many of their needs. We have renovated their building, tidied their grounds, made toys and furniture, and at the time of writing this report they are about to take delivery of a "jungle-gym." Other bodies who in the last twelve months have received extensive help in widely differing directions include the Amateur Athletic and Cycling Association, the A. and P. Association, the dairy factory, the district school, the Horticultural Society, and the Churches.