

PLACEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT

The 786 State wards in employment on 31st March, 1949 (excluding those living with their relatives or friends), were engaged in the following occupations :—

Boys				Girls			
Farm hands	..	..	268	Domestics	..	..	102
Factory hands	..	..	33	Factory hands	..	..	71
Shop-assistants	..	..	13	Shop-assistants	..	..	19
Labourers	..	..	15	Clerical workers	..	..	29
Other	..	..	109	Nurses	..	..	19
				Other	..	..	27

In addition, 70 boys and 11 girls were apprenticed to various trades.

Where possible, the services of the Department's Vocational Guidance Officers are used in an endeavour to ensure that State wards requiring to be placed in employment go to suitable and congenial positions.

Of the 352 children living with relatives or friends on 31st March, 157 were attending school and 149 were in employment, the balance being under school age or kept at home for various reasons.

COMMITTALS AND ADMISSIONS

The number of committals by Courts was 440, as against 434 for the previous year. Private admissions by arrangement with parents were 134, as against 115.

DISCHARGES FROM CONTROL

During the year, 638 children were discharged from control. The average age on discharge was sixteen years and eleven months. The Department relinquishes control of State wards at the earliest age consistent either with their ability to exercise independent management of their own affairs or with the provision by parents or other persons of adequate alternative measures for their care and protection.

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS

Confidential inquiries were made by Child Welfare Officers in all cases of illegitimate births notified to them by Registrars. In most instances it was found that the mother or other relatives had been able to make satisfactory arrangements for the care of the child and that no further action by this Division was required.

During the year ended 31st March, 1949, 1,655 illegitimate births were notified to Child Welfare Officers. Of these infants, 808 were residing with their mothers and 47 with other relatives, 32 were committed to the care of the State, 378 were in registered foster-homes or nursing-homes, and 302 were adopted. In a number of cases inquiries have not been completed or the child died.

The number of illegitimate births, as recorded by the Registrar-General, over the period 1st January to the 31st December, 1948, was 1,686, compared with 1,727 the previous year. The difference between our total, 1,655, and that supplied by the Registrar-General, 1,686, is no doubt due in part to the different periods represented and also perhaps to the time-lag between recording and notification.

INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION

The number of persons licensed under Part V of the Infants Act, 1908, at the 31st December, 1948, was 779, and the number of children placed in their homes was 832. The foster-homes were visited regularly by Child Welfare Officers to ensure that the health and general welfare of the infants were safeguarded.

ADOPTIONS

The number of adoptions completed in the year ending 31st December, 1948, was 1,254. Although this is 31 fewer than the number for the previous year, it is still very high, and it should not be concluded that there has been any decrease in the general demand for children for adoption.