

WELLINGTON.

SIR,—

Magistrates' Court, Wellington, 12th June, 1913.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your memorandum of the 15th May, 1913, No. 2059, requesting me to furnish a report upon the working of the Juvenile Court during the year ended the 31st December, 1912, and also a return showing the number of juvenile offenders brought before the Court during the years 1910, 1911, and 1912.

In dealing with juvenile offenders the procedure laid down in Part III of the Justices of the Peace Act, 1908, is followed. The Juvenile Court is held in the small Courtroom or in the Magistrates' private room, and is usually fixed for 9.30 a.m. or some other suitable hour on the date of hearing. The parents of the juvenile charged are always notified to attend, and generally one of them is present. If the parents do not attend in the first instance, the case is adjourned so that they may be again notified and have a further opportunity of being at the hearing.

Mr. T. P. Mills, manager of the Presbyterian Orphanage at Berhampore—an institution interested in the reform of juvenile offenders—makes it a practice to attend regularly at the Juvenile Court. His experience in dealing with juveniles is of great assistance to the Court, and is much appreciated.

During the year 1912 forty-six children were brought before the Court charged with having no means of subsistence or for living with undesirable persons. These children were placed in an industrial school. Some of the children dealt with during the year referred to were second offenders.

As may be seen from the returns, the charges are varied in character, but by far the greater proportion of them are for offences involving dishonesty. The chief cause which results in the commission of juvenile offences is lack of proper supervision and discipline on the part of the parents.

In all cases the surroundings, school attendance, general habits, and character of the young persons charged are inquired into, and the parents given an opportunity of exercising better supervision over their children. In this respect they can rely on the help and advice of Mr. Mills, who is generally requested to keep the offender under observation so that if his home supervision does not improve he may still be under the eye of one who takes an interest in his conduct. Mr. Mills's work is of considerable value, and could be made more so if he were attached to the Court in some official capacity instead of acting voluntarily or upon request.

Second offenders are usually treated more strictly than first offenders, and if their home conditions and surroundings are considered undesirable they are committed to an industrial school. In some cases Mr. Mills has found positions in the country for boys who have been charged on more than one occasion, and in the majority of instances they have given satisfaction to their employers.

In a number of cases where the parents have not punished the offender in any way a birching has been ordered as provided by statute and when deemed necessary, but this form of punishment is never ordered where the health of the boy would be affected. The birching is administered by a constable in the presence of a sergeant of police, and in the presence of the parents if they or one of them desire to be present.

On the whole, taking into consideration the small number of second offenders who appear before the Court, the work may be regarded as successful and conducive to the interests and benefit of those young persons brought before the Court as well as to the public.

The returns enclosed show the exact number of offenders charged during the different years, together with the nature of the offences and the manner in which the cases were dealt with.

I have, &c.,

W. G. RIDDELL,

Stipendiary Magistrate.

The Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington.

Offence.	Summoned or apprehended.		Admonished and discharged.		Ordered to come up for sentence.		Fined.		Whipped.		Committed to Industrial School.		Dismissed.		Withdrawn.		Order made.		Convicted and discharged.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
1910.																				
Theft	45	..	25	..	1	..	..	..	11	..	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..
Receiving stolen property	6	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
No means of subsistence	20	12	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	19	12	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Living with prostitute	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Living with drunkard	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wilful damage	10	1	2	..	..	..	2	..	2	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..
In possession of firearms]	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
False pretences	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Not under proper control	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Throwing stones	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Arson	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Indecent language	3	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
Riding bicycle without light	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Playing football in street	5	..	..	..	..	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Allowing horse to wander	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Driving vehicle on wrong side	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Furiously riding a horse	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Totals	105	17	32	..	3	..	12	..	17	..	31	16	2	..	2	1	4	..	2	..