

It will be seen that the children described in (a), (b), and (c) above are not necessarily bad children. They are more sinned against than sinning. They are often undersized, unhealthy, ill-mannered, and undisciplined, but that is not their fault—it is the natural result of indifference, neglect, and ignorance. Those described in (d) and (e) are in very many cases what most children would become under similar conditions.

CHILDREN UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT.

TABLE I.

(1.) Infants in homes licensed under the Infant Life Protection Act. (These are described under (a) above)	844
(2.) Children under the control of receiving-homes and similar institutions. (These nearly all come under (b) and (c), but some come under (d) above)	2,259
(3.) Delinquent children who come under the description (e) above (907 boys, 118 girls)	1,025
Total	4,128

TABLE II.

The 2,259 children mentioned in (2) above and the 1,025 mentioned in (3) are provided for as follows:—

	(2.)	(3.)
Resident in institutions	490	519
Boarded out	1,081	1
Licensed to service	336	234
With friends or guardians.. .. .	236	134
Otherwise provided for	116	137
	2,259	1,025

It will be noted that only about 27½ per cent. of those included in column (2) and about 50 per cent. of those in column (3) are resident in institutions. In pursuance of the system of more extensive boarding-out as described below, a large additional number of those shown above as resident in institutions have been boarded out since December last.

Of the 3,284 children mentioned in (2) and (3) above 2,814 are under the direct charge of the Department. The remaining 470 are in private institutions, which are, however, licensed and inspected by the Department.

That the private institutions do not very freely follow the State system of boarding out children is evidenced by the fact that only 53 out of their 470 children are boarded out, as compared with 1,029 boarded-out children out of 2,814 under the direct charge of the Department.

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER.

Though the various organizations controlled by the Department are providing for the various classes of neglected, uncontrollable, and delinquent children, it must be recognized that to receive and care for the annual harvest of unfortunate children is not sufficient to meet the problem. We should as far as possible endeavour to find out and to check as far as practicable the sources of the supply of such foster-children. It is well that the State is prepared to stand *in loco parentis* to this large family of waifs and strays, but it is a matter for public concern that year after year there should be a constant supply of such children claiming the State as its foster-parent.

The industrial-school system might be called a Red Cross contingent picking up and attending to the socially wounded and maimed; but we should find out why there are so many wounded, and consider whether we cannot protect a child before, instead of helping him after he goes through the Criminal Court. Society has not made the best use of its powers until it seeks to forestall and prevent those damages which at present it seeks only to repair. It is a short-sighted policy to devote our attention to the punishment or even the reform of the criminal rather than to prevent the boy or girl from becoming a criminal.

This view was set forth in the course of my speech on the Crimes Amendment Act of 1910. On that occasion I remarked: "Sir, I believe that to deal effectively with crime, poverty, and other evils you should, as far as possible, remove the conditions which give rise to or manufacture such evils—in other words, you should destroy the roots of the tree instead of merely cutting off its branches. . . . Is