

of the officer concerned. Frequent visiting is advocated in the interests of the children, and as a general rule this is carried out; but the Department arranges a further safeguard by obtaining confidential reports every quarter from the headmasters or class-teachers of the schools which the children attend. Wherever possible arrangements are also made for honorary local Lady Visitors to visit the foster-homes monthly, or oftener if necessary, and generally to keep a friendly eye on the children concerned.

For certain types of dependent children there is no question that the boarding-out system is superior to all other systems of dealing with them. The fact that under the boarding-out system children have the opportunity of growing up as ordinary members of the community under decent conditions is in itself sufficient to commend the system apart from any other consideration in its favour.

Associated with boarding out, it is essential that there should be cottage homes where a preliminary training in correct habits and discipline may be carried out. This is provided for in the receiving-homes for children and older girls, and in probation homes for boys. As these homes are of limited capacity, the period for which any one child is kept in residence is necessarily limited, but further provision is made at the Boys' Training-farm, Weraroa, and at the Caversham Industrial School for the accommodation for periods up to twelve months (or longer if necessary) of boys and girls respectively who after a trial at board fail to do well.

JUVENILE PROBATION SYSTEM.

The juvenile probation system has been extended considerably during the past year. Officers have been appointed for the Palmerston North, Hawke's Bay, West Coast, and Southland Districts, and already there is a very noticeable diminution in the number of boys and juveniles who have to be actually admitted to such a corrective institution as the Boys' Training-farm, Weraroa. The results obtained during the past four years have proved beyond doubt the efficacy of probation under proper supervision as a means of reforming the large number of boys and youths who, on account of the lack of proper home conditions, would, but for the intervention of the Department, drift into a career of crime and general lawlessness. Great difficulty is experienced, however, in obtaining the services of capable Probation Officers. To be successful as a Probation Officer a man must have exceptional qualifications: he must possess initiative, be sympathetic though firm, and must at all times be prepared to devote the whole of his time to his work. For the man who carries out his duty properly there can be no fixed hours—he must be prepared to respond at all times to any call for assistance or advice. Probably the most important part of a Probation Officer's work lies in home-visiting, and in many cases he is called upon to insist on reforms on the part of the parents and in the home conditions as a necessary aid in the reformation of the boy.

The numbers dealt with by the Juvenile Probation Officers in the main centres during last year are shown in the following table:—

Children dealt with by the Courts in 1920.

REASON FOR COMING BEFORE COURTS.

	Theft.	Destitute.	Uncontrollable.	Mischief.	Not under Proper Control.	Absconding.	Cruelty.	Obscene Language.	False Pretences.	Willful Damage.	Breach of By-law.	Possessing Firearms.	Common Assault.	Receiving Stolen Goods.
Whangarei ..	2	..	..	..	16	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Auckland ..	122	22	..	6	54	5	1	..	2	11	24	1	7	2
Hamilton ..	10	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	..	15	..	..	..	..
Wanganui ..	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wellington ..	75	11	2	9	3	..	..	1	1	5	15	..	..	1
Nelson ..	6	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..
Christchurch ..	84	20	..	24	21	..	..	..	..	..	15	2	3	2
Timaru ..	30	3	1	13	..	..	2	..	..	4	..	8	..	..
Dunedin ..	71	8	..	33	11	..	..	..	..	..	24	2	..	..
Invercargill ..	36	9	..	9	7	..	..	..	..	1	5	..	..	..
Totals ..	443	73	3	95	117	5	3	3	3	36	83	15	10	5

	Smoking.	Breach of Probation.	Committed to a Mental Hospital.	Gambling.	No Settled Place of Abode.	Epidemic phans.	Stone-throwing.	Disreputable Associations.	Indecency.	Attempting to Escape from Legal Custody.	Vagrancy.	Arson.	Indecent Assault.	Totals.
Whangarei ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	20
Auckland ..	1	4	1	4	..	..	12	2	1	..	..	..	..	282
Hamilton ..	..	..	..	..	..	4	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	36
Wanganui ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
Wellington ..	3	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	3	..	131
Nelson ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
Christchurch ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	3	..	178
Timaru ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	64
Dunedin ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	151
Invercargill ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	68
Totals ..	4	4	1	4	1	4	19	6	1	1	1	6	1	947