

Admission of Children during 1923 on account of the Drinking Habits of one or both Parents.

Drunken mother	..	..	..	..	..	7
Drunken father	..	..	..	..	..	25
Both parents drunkards	..	..	..	..	..	2
						34

Admission of Children during 1923 on account of Mental Deficiency of one or both Parents.

Mentally deficient mother	..	..	..	..	..	11
Mentally deficient father	..	..	..	..	..	3
Both parents defective mentally	..	..	..	..	..	4
						18

The following figures show the number of committals to industrial schools for the past twelve years: 1912, 405; 1913, 328; 1914, 405; average for four years before the war, 382. 1915, 453; 1916, 436; 1917, 358; 1918, 381; 1919, 864; 1920, 535; 1921, 528; 1922, 410; 1923, 313; average for nine years after the commencement of the war, 475 (excluding epidemic orphans, the average is 431).

It is significant that although the number of juveniles appearing before the Court last year is comparable with the numbers for the previous year, yet the number of children committed to the care of the State under the provisions of the Industrial Schools Act shows a reduction of 97 on the previous year's figures. In hard cash this represents a saving of at least £3,000 to the taxpayers, and from the social point of view is a clear indication of the value of the preventive or social adjustment work that is being carried on all over the Dominion by the Juvenile Probation Officers, District Agents under the infant-life-protection system, and Boarding-out Officers.

An analysis of the new admissions for last year, grouped according to the characters or state of the parents at the time of admission, is interesting, for the results seem to indicate that, generally speaking, the child who is admitted on account of destitution or orphanhood, or whose parents have deserted him, comes either from an undesirable home or from morally unwholesome surroundings; while, on the other hand, the child who commits an offence against the law and is regarded as a delinquent comes almost invariably from a good home. On more than one occasion the Department has been criticized for permitting orphans and destitute children to remain even as a temporary measure in the various probation or adjustment homes where juvenile delinquents are also detained, but in view of the facts disclosed in the following tables it is evident that in some instances at least there is need rather to protect the young offender from the pernicious influence of the orphan or destitute child who may have been rescued from drunken or immoral home conditions.

For purposes of comparison three tables have been prepared showing—(1) Children admitted on account of destitution; (2) children found to be not under proper control, or reported as uncontrollable by the parents; and (3) children charged with offences against the law. In each case the parents have been divided into the following groups: (1) Dead, deserter, or unknown; (2) good character; (3) bad or questionable character, including drunkards, feeble-minded, or physically unfit.

Particulars of Parentage: 1923 Admissions.

134 destitute children, representing 93 families. Character of parents described as,—

—				Dead, Deserter, or unknown.	Good.	Bad, questionable, Drunkards, feeble- minded, and physically unfit.
Father	..	..	..	28	12	18
Mother	..	..	..	8	27	23
Both parents	..	..	..	8	7	20

Particulars of Parentage: 1923 Admissions.

122 uncontrollable children, representing 85 families. Character of parents described as,—

—				Dead, Deserter, or unknown.	Good.	Bad, questionable, Drunkards, feeble- minded, and physically unfit.
Father	..	..	..	16	14	15
Mother	..	..	..	19	12	14
Both parents	..	..	..	6	17	17