

in the main thoroughfares between the hours of 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. in one of the four main cities indicated the urgent need for some form of supervision. In this particular centre the city by-laws provide for such boys to be licensed, but out of the twenty-three no less than fourteen were unlicensed. Of the total number, six were found selling newspapers in hotels, and fourteen were on the streets after 6 o'clock at night. Of these, eight were selling up to 7 o'clock, and six up to 10 o'clock. Inquiry at the various public schools attended by these boys elicited the following information regarding the standards in which the boys were placed: Number of boys in—Standard I, 3; Standard II, 4; Standard III, 6; Standard IV, 5; Standard V, 2; Standard VI, 3.

In dealing with juvenile street trading, it is considered necessary in the interests of these boys, to ensure that they are physically fit for such employment, that they are not required to commence such work too early in the morning, or allowed to hang about the streets until a late hour at night. No boy should be permitted to enter any hotel-bar for the purpose of selling anything whatsoever. Provision should be made to ensure that the weight of newspapers or milk-cans, for instance, that a boy is required to carry should not be too great a tax on his strength. The unrestricted liberty of the streets, coupled with the fact that the majority of these boys handle fairly large sums of money, is in not a few instances one of the factors that is responsible for juvenile delinquency and crime. Last year, out of 180 boys under fourteen years of age appearing before the Children's Courts charged with offences, and placed under the supervision of Child Welfare Officers, twenty-eight were known to be street traders at the time the offences were committed.

Regulations dealing with street trading and the employment of children generally have been drafted, but before submitting them for the final approval of the Government it is proposed that the authorities mainly concerned should be given an opportunity of expressing their views on the subject, with the object of obtaining their co-operation in giving effect to such of the proposals as are finally approved.

TRUANCY.

Perhaps the most fruitful source of juvenile delinquency is to be found in truancy, and, as a preventive measure, it is necessary to stress the need for dealing with the children concerned in the early stages. Under the present system cases of persistent truancy do not, as a rule, come under the notice of the Child Welfare Branch until some definite offence has been committed, and often it is then too late to effect reform by leaving the child in his own home even under supervision. The general experience of Child Welfare Officers indicates that they should be in closer touch with this phase of educational work, so that cases could be handled in their incipient stages.

COSTLEY TRAINING INSTITUTION TRUST.

In another part of this report the particulars showing the revenue and expenditure in connection with the Costley Training Institution Trust are published. Under the will of the late Edward Costley a sum of money was set aside for the purpose of assisting State children during their periods of apprenticeship, or for purposes enabling such children to receive secondary education. At a later period the purposes of the trust were varied to include any deserving child (not a State ward) who is recommended for assistance by the Department's local welfare officer. As will be seen from the particulars under the heading "Expenditure," the trustees are spending practically the whole of the income from the trust in assisting deserving cases. Many a boy or girl has reason for thankfulness that there is such a fund from which assistance is available, and that the trustees are sympathetic and prepared to grant assistance wherever possible.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

The total number of all ages actually under the guardianship of the Superintendent at the 31st March last was 4,289. Of these 3,753 were either placed out or employed in the community or in institutions not under the control of the Branch, such as hospitals, convalescent homes, private children's homes, refuges, hostels, &c. Of the remainder 126 were temporarily in receiving-homes awaiting placement, 140 in training institutions (Girls' Home, Burwood, 40; and Boys' Training-farm, Weraroa, 100), and 270 in institutions for backward children (Otekaieke, 185 boys; and Richmond, 85 girls).

The actual number in residential institutions receiving primary instruction, modified to suit the capacity of the particular classes of children, was 174, made up as follows: Boys' Training-farm, Weraroa, 21; institutions for backward children—Otekaieke, 103; Richmond, 50.

FUNCTIONS OF RECEIVING-HOMES.

Included in the numbers under guardianship are 126 children temporarily in residence in receiving-homes and boys' homes at the 31st March. These homes are regarded as clearing-houses where children are sheltered for short periods for observation and medical or dental treatment if necessary prior to being placed in family homes in the community or in situations. These homes are also utilized—

- (1) As a "place of safety" for abandoned or vagrant children, or children whose immediate removal from their parents was necessary pending the consideration of their cases by the Children's Court.
- (2) For housing children and young persons under State guardianship who are (a) for various reasons changing from one home or situation to another, (b) sent in from country districts for medical or dental treatment or convalescent care, (c) passing through from other centres or districts.
- (3) For girls and young women in situations who spend their weekly half-holiday and occasional week-end days with the matron of the home.