

TABLE 5.—CHILDREN APPEARING BEFORE THE COURTS DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1939, AND PLACED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF CHILD WELFARE OFFICERS. (SECTION 13 (4).)

	Boys.	Girls.	Totals.
Charged with an offence	441	25	466
Delinquent	131	9	140
Not under proper control	80	18	98
In detrimental environment	5	8	13
Indigent	2	1	3
Neglected	15	7	22
Informal supervision	1	1	2
Totals	675	69	744

NOTE.—Ten of the above were again before the Courts during the period and were placed under a further term of supervision, 40 were again before the Courts during this period and were committed to the care of the Superintendent, 27 were already under supervision, and 15 were ordered to spend a period in an institution. Furthermore, 52 had previously been under supervision.

BOARDING-OUT OR PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN PRIVATE HOMES.

The number of children boarded out at the end of the year was 2,059. The quality of the homes is, on the whole, quite good, and the Department is at present taking steps to check up on the standards adopted in each of the various districts with a view to remedying any defects or improving conditions wherever possible. Any complaint regarding a home is investigated immediately. Honorary Child Welfare Officers and local persons interested in child-welfare frequently assist especially in ensuring that the child takes part in the ordinary social life of the community.

PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS AND ALLOCATION OF THEIR EARNINGS.

Generally speaking, State wards, if normal children, are placed in employment on the same conditions as other young people so far as wages, &c., are concerned. The Hon. the Minister has special powers to facilitate the employment of those young people who are mentally, physically, or socially unable to compete on equal terms with their fellow-workers of the same age. The placing of certain handicapped children in the right environment is regarded as being of the greatest importance. All license agreements or contracts, which are drawn up for periods ranging from three to twelve months are subject to constant review in the Head Office as well as in the District Offices.

Particulars showing the occupations of young people in employment at the 31st March last are shown under the heading "Young Persons in Employment" later in this report. When a child first goes to service, he (or she) is allowed a portion of his wages for pocket-money: the balance is banked by the Department and is drawn out as required for clothing, dentistry, &c. Later he (or she) is given an increasing portion, with the object of training him to appreciate the value of money, to spend it wisely, and to purchase his own clothing under supervision. As a prelude to final discharge he is placed for a period of six months or longer on the status of service agreement. This means that he receives all his wages and can choose his own situations, except that his supervising officer must approve of his place of employment.

The money banked by the Department (section 37 of the Child Welfare Act, 1925) may be paid over at any time, and the Department, as trustee, endeavours to guide these young people in investing or utilizing their money to the best advantage. This is essential in those cases where the young people concerned may be mentally retarded and require in their own interests friendly supervision for a longer period than is necessary with the ordinary normal youth.

Applications for assistance with board, clothing, medical attention, dentistry, &c., are promptly attended to. The balance of money banked is generally paid over to the young person concerned after he attains the age of twenty-one years.

POST-PRIMARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

Boys and girls under the guardianship of the State have the same opportunity as other children of receiving primary or higher education. As a general rule children remain in their foster-homes and attend the nearest schools. Pupils who show special aptitude are helped by the Department to the University. The number of children receiving post-primary or higher education at the end of the year was 208. In this connection it may be noted that for some fifteen years there has functioned in Auckland a hostel for boys receiving post-primary education which has been carried on with assistance from the Y.M.C.A. and the Costley Trustees. The Department is deeply indebted to the officials of these two bodies in Auckland, who, recognizing the need of certain boys to be helped with post-primary education, came forward with definite proposals, backed financially, to further the interests of young people who were not in the position to progress without outside assistance. Most of the boys at the hostel attended the Mount Albert Grammar School. We pay tribute to the personal interest of the staff of this institution under Mr. F. W. Gamble, the Headmaster. A special reference to the good work done by the Costley Trustees is mentioned later on in this report.