

## MAORI CHILDREN.

During the year a considerable number of Maori children appeared before the Courts charged with offences, and the taking of further steps to cope with this problem is at present under review.

## PREVENTIVE WORK.

I wish to repeat that I look upon the preventive side of our work as of first importance. It is proposed to take steps in the near future to increase our efforts in this connection. This means additional trained staff. It is intended to make still closer contact with all other organizations and services concerned with the welfare of children. We wish to make contact with the parents at an earlier stage than at present. We aim at organizing our services so that, wherever possible, action may be taken regarding a child before the necessity arises for him or her to be brought before a Court for having committed some offence. It is proposed to hold a conference of Child Welfare Officers in the near future, and this subject, together with that of improved methods of placement of children, will be among the topics for discussion.

## BRITISH CHILDREN.

Under the scheme approved by the Governments of the United Kingdom and New Zealand, a total of 202 British children were, owing to war conditions, sent to this Dominion last year. A central body known as the British Children's Reception Committee was set up in Wellington by the Government, and preliminary arrangements were undertaken by the Internal Affairs and Education Departments. For convenience New Zealand was divided into twenty-eight zones. Applications were invited from persons willing to take children. There was a most generous response, many thousands of applications being received. Each zone had a responsible central authority with sub-centres throughout its area. Committees, including the Child Welfare Officers of the Education Department, were set up to consider applications. Later the allocation of the children to homes was dealt with by executive officers of the zone Committee in co-operation with the district Child Welfare Officers.

The various religious organizations generously offered to help and also to provide free temporary accommodation for the children in their institutions prior to their being allocated to their new homes. These offers were gratefully accepted by the Government, and this arrangement proved to be a valuable part of the general scheme.

Emergency regulations were passed by the New Zealand Government under which the guardianship of the children while in the Dominion was vested in the Superintendent of the Child Welfare Branch of the Education Department, who was thus placed *in loco parentis* and assumed control as soon as the children arrived in New Zealand. The first party of 89 children came from Scottish homes—31 nominated to reside with relatives or friends, and 58 "unspecified" or, in other words, homes had to be provided for them in New Zealand. The second party of English children (113) comprised 67 "nominated" and 56 "unspecified." In both instances the parties landed in Wellington and were placed in various private homes throughout the Dominion. At this time it was not known how many children would be likely to arrive, and later on advice was received from Great Britain that the scheme had to be dropped for the time being.

The children at the 31st March, 1941, were placed in the following districts: Wellington, 56; Auckland, 47; Canterbury, 29; Otago, 15; Manawatu, 13; Wairarapa, 12; Waikato, 10; Taranaki, 5; Gisborne, 4; Whangarei, 3; Nelson, 3; Timaru, 2; West Coast, 2; Wanganui, 1.

Since their arrival in New Zealand the children have settled down very well in their homes and have adapted themselves quickly to their new conditions. The health of the children has been very good on the whole and most of them have put on weight above the average. The Health Department co-operates in all matters affecting the health of the children. I desire to express grateful acknowledgment of the gratuitous services rendered where required to certain of the children by members of the British Medical Association and of the New Zealand Dental Association. The Child Welfare Officers visit the foster-homes regularly, and their reports indicate that the children are happy in their new homes. A certain number of adjustments were necessary, and transfers to other homes were arranged. The executive officers of the zone Committees have been most helpful in assisting to select new foster-homes in such cases. In a few cases the children subsequent to arrival showed the effects of nervous strain, but under sympathetic treatment in suitable home conditions their adjustment did not present any unusual difficulties.

The teachers of both primary and post-primary schools are most helpful with the children; their reports indicate almost without exception a good standard of education and quick adaptation to their school surroundings and new environment. At the 31st March 70 of the children were attending post-primary schools—a few who left school had taken up approved positions. Thanks to the understanding co-operation of the foster-parent, the scheme has worked very smoothly indeed. The children themselves are, in general, fine healthy types, and their conduct has been excellent.

Shortly after the arrival of the children, Mr. Cyril Bavin, O.B.E., was appointed as the representative in New Zealand of the Children's Overseas Reception Board, London. I desire to express my keen appreciation of the valuable services that, with his practical knowledge of the problems involved, he was enabled to render in all matters of major importance affecting our young visitors.

I have, etc.,  
J. R. McCLUNE, Superintendent.  
The Director of Education, Wellington.