

(7) In 1945 a sum of £1,000 was given to the teachers' associations for the conducting of refresher courses. This sum was raised in 1945-46 to £2,000. Very valuable results have followed from this expenditure.

(8) The *Education Gazette* has been entirely changed in character and is now consistently used to make teachers aware of educational policy and to assist them with the techniques of their craft.

(9) It has been the Government's consistent policy to consult the teachers' official organizations before taking any major step in education, and to invite them to take a part, wherever possible, in the actual planning.

Child Welfare

Unsettled national and domestic conditions have created special problems for child-welfare authorities throughout the world during the war, but, in spite of this, and of serious staff shortages, the Child Welfare Branch has been able to make some progress over the decade.

(1) During the early part of the war there was a slight increase in the total figures for juvenile delinquency, with a rather greater increase for the more serious offences. These increases were by no means as great as those in other comparable countries, but any increase at all was a cause for concern. The total juvenile-delinquency figures reached a peak of 2,493 in 1943, and then fell by 19 per cent. to 2,012 in 1944. I am glad to be able to report a further fall of 11 per cent. to 1,786 in 1945. This figure is below those for the years immediately preceding the war—2,447 in 1938 and 2,248 in 1939. The percentage decrease in the number of children appearing for the more serious offences is even a little greater than that for total offences. It is impossible to say just how far the special steps taken by the Department are responsible for this decrease in delinquency, but the total result is encouraging. It will not, however, lead to any relaxing of the efforts to reduce the figures still further. The total number of children under the control and supervision (including preventive supervision) of the Branch declined during the year from 8,307 to 8,048.

(2) Three child-welfare institutions, closed during the depression, have been reopened. A junior school section has been started at the Burwood Girls' Home, and a hostel for girls going out to work from the home is nearing completion. A new institution for dealing with difficult Maori girls was opened at Featherston in 1944. A hostel for working-boys needing special attention was established in Auckland. The Boys' Training Centre at Levin and the Boys' Home in Dunedin have been rebuilt on modern lines. A receiving-home will be opened in Palmerston North in 1946.

(3) More positive methods of training and discipline have been introduced into the Branch's institutions, involving an increase in their educational activities and in specialized staffs. The most sweeping changes were made at the Boys' Training Centre at Levin, and these have proved very successful. The dietaries in all institutions have been greatly improved.

(4) Increases were made in 1944 and again in 1945 to the rates of pay to foster-parents for boarded-out children. Even so, the task of finding satisfactory foster-homes has of late become very difficult. State wards have been given greater opportunities than ever before for extended education and for entrance to the skilled trades.

(5) There has been a growing emphasis on the preventive side of child-welfare work. Regional conferences have been held to co-ordinate the work of the Branch more closely than ever before with that of the schools, Churches, and other private organizations.

(6) The Branch was responsible for the well-being and supervision of 203 British children who were evacuated to New Zealand in 1940. The last of those who are leaving New Zealand returned to Great Britain during the year.

(7) Departmental psychologists have been appointed in Christchurch and Wellington to assist child-welfare and related services with specially difficult cases.