

### COMMITTALS AND ADMISSIONS

The number of committals by Courts was 434, as against 449 for the previous year. Private admissions by arrangement with parents was 115, as against 140.

### DISCHARGES FROM CONTROL

During the year 657 children were discharged from control. The average age on discharge was sixteen years and eight months. The Department relinquishes control of State wards at the earliest age consistent either with their ability to exercise independent management of their own affairs or with the provision by parents or other persons of adequate alternative measures for their care and protection.

### ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS

Confidential inquiries were made by Child Welfare Officers in all cases of illegitimate births notified to them by Registrars. In most instances it was found that the mother or other relatives had been able to make satisfactory arrangements for the care of the child and that no further action by this Branch was required.

During the year ended 31st March, 1948, 1,466 illegitimate births were notified to Child Welfare Officers. Of these infants, 737 were residing with their mothers and 32 with other relatives, 35 were committed to the care of the State, 316 were in registered foster-homes or nursing homes, and 253 were adopted. In a number of cases inquiries have not been completed or the child died.

The number of illegitimate births, as recorded by the Registrar-General, over the period 1st January to the 31st December, 1947, was 1,727, compared with 1,824 the previous year. The difference between our total, 1,466, and that supplied by the Registrar-General, 1,727, is no doubt due in part to the different periods represented and also perhaps to the time lag between recording and notification.

### INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION

The number of persons licensed under Part V of the Infants Act, 1908, at the 31st December, 1947, was 710 and the number of children placed in their homes was 772. The foster-homes were visited regularly by Child Welfare Officers to ensure that the health and general welfare of the infants were safeguarded.

### ADOPTIONS

The number of adoptions completed in the year ending 31st December, 1947, was 1,285. Although this is 98 lower than the number for the previous year, it is higher than that for any other year, and it should not be concluded that there has been any decrease in the general demand for children for adoption.

The figures for the previous ten years are as follows: 406, 516, 518, 604, 605, 685, 854, 1,065, 1,151, and 1,383.

Most of the applications for adoption are received from (a) couples who have no children of their own, (b) parents who wish to have a companion for their only child, and (c) mothers of illegitimate children who wish to adopt their own children upon subsequent marriage.

Children may be legally adopted up to the age of twenty-one years, but the great majority of those adopted were in the group from infants up to five years of age. Although there is provision in the Act for premiums to pass at adoption, this rarely takes place. There was only one such case last year. Applications to adopt infant girls usually predominate, but the orders actually made reflect the number and sex of the children available. Last year 631 boys and 654 girls were adopted. Of the 1,285 children adopted, 991 (498 boys and 493 girls) were illegitimate.