

In cases where children have been removed from degraded homes or vicious parents they will require a period of training before they can be placed in a decent home, and they must get this training prior to placement: this in justice to the child-saving agency, in justice to the foster-parents, and in justice to the child. And yet, again, in many cases it is very advisable that children removed from their parents by the order of a Magistrate or Judge should not be placed too quickly in foster-homes, but after their removal the parents should be given another chance to make good and improve their home conditions. In many instances, in what seems the most hopeless kind of home, the parents are likely to come to their senses on the removal of their children, and strive to overcome their former habits and transform their abodes into decent, orderly, happy homes.

2. To carry out the probation system successfully it will be necessary, as soon as the financial provision can be made, to establish probation homes in each of the centres. At the present time young offenders, when arrested or on remand, are detained temporarily at police-stations. This, of course, is an unsuitable arrangement, and for the sake of the children should be discontinued. Again, there are many cases that are hardly suitable for immediate probation that might easily be adequately dealt with by detention on the order of the Magistrate for a short period in a probation home. The probation home could be used to advantage also as a means of punishing minor breaches of probation or for the detention of a boy while he is under observation prior to a decision being made as to his future treatment. In addition to this, boys passing through different centres from one industrial school to another, or proceeding to situations, or returning to friends, will, when necessary, be met by the Probation Officer and accommodated at the home. The appointment of Probation Officers will relieve all Managers of industrial schools of the duty of visiting boys placed out from their own institutions. In the past it has been the rule that every boy should be visited regularly by the Manager, who is his legal guardian, but with the increasing numbers it was impossible for Managers to devote adequate time to such visiting and to manage their institutions properly at the same time. The system of visiting now proposed will prevent much overlapping, will be more effective, and incidentally will be the means of effecting a considerable saving. By far the most effective way of dealing with habitual crime is to prevent juvenile offenders from acquiring or settling into criminal habits. By following this policy I am convinced that we should preserve from an evil life many boys and girls capable of becoming worthy and useful citizens; further, it is certain that the country would be saved a great deal of the present cost of Courts, prisons, and industrial schools.

3. *Required Legislation.*—The present social conditions and the unusual amount of liberty given to many children probably account to some extent for the large number of uncontrollable children that are brought before the Juvenile Courts throughout New Zealand. The number of children who either cannot be controlled by their parents or who may be regarded as not under proper control has increased remarkably during the last two or three years. For instance, during last year over one hundred and fifty of the children committed to industrial schools were charged with not being under proper control, and over one hundred were committed as the result of petty offences. Under the probation scheme it will probably be sufficient in at least 90 per cent. of these cases to supervise children in their own homes.

During last year over a hundred children were committed to industrial schools on account of destitution. Considering the prosperity of the country this must be regarded as a serious matter, and certainly an industrial school is not the proper place for the detention of a destitute child. Under the present system the majority of these children will be boarded out in country homes at the expense of the Government; under the new system it will probably be possible in a great many cases to place such children on probation with friends. Apart from the saving that will be effected in administration, it is decidedly better from a social point of view that these children should be brought up with suitable relatives or friends.

Another remarkable fact in regard to the present inmates of boys' schools is that at least 80 per cent. of the delinquent boys were engaged in street trading before their admission to the schools. This fact may be regarded as direct evidence in favour of the proper regulation of street trading among children, and proposals for legislation in this direction and regulations thereunder are now being prepared.