

Particulars of Parentage : 1923 Admissions.

57 children accused or guilty of offences, representing 56 families. Character of parents described as,—

	Dead, Deserter, or unknown.	Good.	Bad, questionable, Drunkards, feeble-minded, and physically unfit.
Father	5	8	11
Mother	9	15	..
Both parents	3	21	8

PROBATION WORK : BIG BROTHER MOVEMENT.

Over two years ago an organization known as the Big Brother Movement was inaugurated in Auckland by the Y.M.C.A. for the purpose of arranging for the supervision of juvenile offenders by young men selected for this purpose. Each case is investigated in the first place by the Juvenile Probation Officer, who reports the facts fully for the guidance of the Big Brother, who supervises the boy and reports monthly through the secretary of the Y.M.C.A. to the Juvenile Probation Officer. The results have been most gratifying. So far there have been few failures, as the following report from the Juvenile Probation Officer in Auckland indicates :—

“The Big Brother Movement was inaugurated by the Y.M.C.A. in conjunction with the Auckland Office of the Department about the beginning of 1922. Young men of reputable character are chosen by the Y.M.C.A. to act as Big Brothers. Each Big Brother visits regularly the home of the boy allotted to him, and thus sees the boy's home conditions. He seeks the aid and co-operation of the parents, takes a keen interest in the boy's doings during his spare time, and generally tries to give the boy a healthier interest in life by linking him up with some sports team and encouraging him, when his education requires it, to attend night classes.

“The movement was at first tried out with four boys and four Big Brothers. All through 1922 the movement was gradually expanded until by the beginning of 1923 all the non-Catholic boys placed on probation by the Court were placed under the Big Brother Movement. During 1923 the following figures will perhaps explain the extent of the work done :—

Number of children before the Court	260
Number placed on probation	62
Number placed on probation who proved not amenable to Big Brother treatment and had to be committed	4
Number of calls made by Big Brother to boy, or boy to Big Brother	690

“Sixty-two boys were supervised, and of this number only four were so difficult to control that it was found necessary to commit them to an institution.

“The figures for this year (1924) to 1st June are as follows :—

Number of boys before the Court	105
Number placed on probation	27
Number placed on probation who have proved not amenable to Big Brother treatment	1
Number of calls made by Big Brother to boy, or boy to Big Brother	832

“Since the inception of the Big Brother Movement the individual services of seventy-five Big Brothers have been utilized. The number of boys from the Court dealt with by the Big Brother Movement between 1st January, 1923, and 1st June, 1924, is eighty-nine. Preventive cases dealt with bring this number up to 102. The number of failures in the same period—that is, boys who were being supervised by the Big Brothers and were committed to a State institution—number 5.”

Last year the Big Brother Movement was taken up by the Roman Catholic authorities in Auckland, and now a carefully arranged system under the Rev. Father Bradley is functioning successfully.

It is also gratifying to be able to record that the Big Brother Movement has been extended to the other chief centres of population—Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin—and to the smaller centres, such as Wanganui and Palmerston North. This movement may, I think, be regarded as the most important contribution on progressive lines that has been made of recent times by private effort to the community welfare work of the Dominion, and marks the beginning of a system providing for sympathetic and practical co-operation between the Department's welfare officers and members of social organizations, a beginning that it is hoped will develop and extend in the direction of providing in the incipient stages for the friendly supervision, guidance, and assistance by private effort of the whole of the small army of young people who through the indifference of the parents, improper home conditions, or lack of proper environment are likely to develop along antisocial lines or become liabilities instead of assets to the State.

INFANT MORTALITY AND SUPERVISION OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN.

The return of deaths among illegitimate children under one year published in this report is a clear indication that further steps should be taken to preserve the lives of illegitimate infants. Last year the number of illegitimate births in the Dominion was 1,260, while the number of deaths during the year was ninety-one, equal to 72.2 per 1,000. Compared with the death-rate among infants