

Twelve per cent. only of the children had New-Zealand-born parents, but most were children of English and Scottish coal-miners. This group compares unfavourably with the farming groups as regards weight for height and age. It also shows the greater tendency to mild rickety deformities and to goitre. In regard to other clinical evidence of subnormal nutrition there is little to choose between the groups.

Financial status of the parents was—adequate, 75 per cent. ; doubtful, 12 per cent. ; poor, 10 per cent. General conditions were good with regard to ventilation and cleanliness. Home atmosphere was cheerful as a rule. Clothing was satisfactory, 90 per cent. of the children wearing boots. No work was done by the school-children out of school-hours, and there was no loss of sleep. Few of the mothers worked outside their own homes. The hours of meals were regular. Fresh milk was not so readily obtainable all the year round, and condensed milk was occasionally used. In the diet sweets and tea were consumed to a greater extent than in the farming groups.

GROUP B.—CHILDREN OF BUSH TIMBER-MILL WORKERS.

A town on the railway-line in the central part of the North Island was chosen as suitable for the investigation of these conditions. It is about 1,000 ft. above sea-level, but lies in a valley surrounded by hills, which shut out much sunlight. The situation is, therefore, depressing. Fogs are common, and there are frequent late frosts. Visits were paid to the homes of fifty children. The houses were rented from the millowner at a moderate rent.

Financial status : Adequate, 70 per cent. ; doubtful, 24 per cent. ; poor, 6 per cent.

This group compares unfavourably in several respects with the others—viz., personal and household cleanliness, amount of tinned foodstuffs and tea consumed, scarcity of vegetables and milk in diet, dampness of houses. New-Zealand-born parents are in the majority. The weight for height and age standard is lower than in the farming groups, and mild rickety deformities more common. Less than 5 per cent. of children showing under-weight belonged to families in poor circumstances. Apart from under-weight, however, there were in the greater proportion no other signs of clinical subnormal nutrition. Meal-hours and the amount of sleep were good, and very little work was performed out of school-hours. Few of the mothers worked outside of their own homes. Twenty-six per cent. of the homes were described as damp.

GROUP C.—CHILDREN ON THRIVING FARMING COMMUNITIES.

Schools in thriving farming communities were selected. The occupation of the parents was mainly dairying. The homes of 217 children were visited, no special selection of type of home being made.

Financial status described as—adequate, 66 per cent. ; doubtful, 24 per cent. ; and poor, 10 per cent. There was a large proportion of New-Zealand-born parents. Thirty per cent. of the mothers work on the farm, and there is therefore a high degree of domestic inefficiency. Eighteen per cent. of the houses were described as dirty and 6 per cent. as damp. Meal-hours were late, 25 per cent. of the children having their hot dinner not before 7 p.m. Slight rachitic deformities were less common, and this group more than held its own with the two previous ones in regard to nutrition. Excess work after school-hours would appear to have more effect on school progress than in signs of impaired nutrition. The fact that the mothers of 30 per cent. work out-of-doors, mainly in milking-sheds, may also be a factor in retardation, as it certainly is in regard to personal and house cleanliness and efficiency. In this group, with 21 per cent. of retardates, 25 per cent. had less than ten hours' sleep ; 19 per cent. had more than three hours' work on the farm. As small and big children both were included in this reckoning, it is evident that the older children in many cases do more than three hours' work.

GROUP D.—CHILDREN IN REMOTE FARMING-AREAS.

Children attending five schools in more or less isolated districts were included in this survey. Sixty-eight homes were visited. Housing was good on the whole, though some of the poorest houses were in this group.

Financial status is described as—adequate, 46 per cent. ; doubtful, 34 per cent. ; poor, 20 per cent. A large percentage of the mothers work out-of-doors. Ten per cent. of children in this group were found to be below average weight for height and age. Clothing was inadequate in some instances. Meal-hours are late. Seventeen per cent. of the houses have bathrooms. The note that was evident in many, though not all, homes, was depression. Though doubtless other factors enter to account for it, considerable stress must be laid on isolation.

GROUP E.—CHILDREN OF SHARE MILKERS.

During the last few years there has been in this district a considerable decrease in the number of share milkers on farms, the farmer finding it more economical to pay labour or do without. As a result, of twenty-two country schools only thirteen share milking families were found. These were represented by thirty-eight children.

Financial status was—adequate, 46 per cent. ; doubtful, 36 per cent. ; and poor, 18 per cent. Thirty per cent. of the houses were described as dirty and 15 per cent. as damp, the percentage showing domestic inefficiency being high, as was that of those showing lack of cheerfulness. Meals were late.