

013200  
Presented by JIS  
4/6/69

MINISTRY PAPER NO. 27

Child Care and Protection Service

The Child Care and Protection Division of the Ministry of Development and Welfare has a statutory responsibility for children who, according to the Juveniles Law, are either in need of care and protection or beyond parental control or delinquent. Children's Officers are assigned to work with cases referred to them under these categories. Due to the existing case load, many other types of cases affecting the welfare of children are referred to the Children's Officers for their attention. The majority of these cases are referred by the parents or guardians themselves but an appreciable number were referred by members of the public and other welfare agencies - voluntary and statutory, local and overseas.

Migration, for example, has added to the work-load of the Child Care and Protection Division as Children's Officers now have to be concerned not only with increasing number of children needing care and protection because these parents have migrated, but also with requests for assistance, procuring passports and entry permits to the United Kingdom, or United States of America for children whose parents, having migrated, now wish to have them.

The work of the Child Care and Protection Division may be considered under three broad headings:-

1 - PREVENTION

It is a fact that from today's children will come the planners and administrators of tomorrow. It is realised that the underlying causes of the problems of children who need care and protection or who become delinquent must be faced. It is also realised that an integrated approach of other social and educational bodies is necessary.

With a population growing at the rate of approximately 2.6 per thousand between 1963 - 1966 and with 56% of the total population under the age of 21 years, the importance of co-ordinated planning on the part of social and economic agencies is evident.

At least one Children's Officer is assigned to each Parish. The numerous cases referred to them require extensive investigations. Where possible, the Children's Officers make referrals to allied agencies, such as Poor Relief, Public Health and others but the number of existing agencies from which needed help may be forthcoming is limited.

In many cases where the Children's Officers have been able to provide opportunities for the social advancement of the child or adult with whom they are working, they have been able to prevent

further social disorganisation.

The need for preventive work is becoming more and more evident and all possible steps must be taken in this direction so as to reduce the number of children being brought into care.

## 2 - TREATMENT

At the present time there are approximately 2,614 children in the care of the Government. Of this number 652 were on Approved School Orders, 1,711 on Fit Person Orders and 158 on Remand (i.e. awaiting a decision of the Juvenile Court). In addition there are 93 children in their own homes being supervised by Children's Officers. The total number of children in care represents an increase of 162 over the previous year.

### (a) Places of Safety

There are 5 Government Places of Safety and 5 other Places of Safety run by private individuals and subsidised by Government. Children are kept in Places of Safety when awaiting a decision of the Juvenile Court or placement by this Ministry.

During the past year the Places of Safety have become so overcrowded that it was found necessary to approve the setting up of another Place of Safety for boys which, it is hoped, will soon be in operation.

### (b) Approved Schools

There are 6 Approved Schools, four for boys and two for girls. During the year, one Approved School ceased to function as an Approved School and is now operating as a Children's Home. The curriculum for these schools includes formal classroom instruction, religious education, agriculture, woodwork, motor mechanics, home economics and craft training. The full cost of operating Approved Schools is met from Government funds.

In the light of the need of today's youth, consideration is being given to the possibility of setting up a Complex of Approved Schools for boys, with separate units housing the various age groups, classrooms, administrative security block, etc. It is believed that such a complex, operating with suitable staff and a programme geared to meet the needs of youth, will prove more beneficial to the boys who are given Approved Schools Orders, and that it may, perhaps, be economical in operational cost.

It is proposed to provide at this complex better facilities for training in various trades such as building construction, masonry, welding, radio and television repairs, etc. It is hoped that such training will enable boys to find employment on leaving the institution.

It is also proposed to introduce various types of activities designed to assist the social rehabilitation and re-adjustment of the juvenile offenders committed to the care of Government.

(c) Children's Homes

There are 23 Children's Homes. A new Children's Home was opened during the year. Of the children on Fit Person Orders, 728 have been placed in Children's Homes. One of these Homes is operated by the Ministry and one by the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation. The other 21 are operated by voluntary organisations. All of these Homes operate on a licence from this Ministry and are regularly inspected by Children's Officers to ensure that the children receive proper care and training. The Ministry pays the operators of the Children's Homes for the maintenance of the children whom it places.

(d) Foster Home Placement

There are 587 children in foster homes. The children in these homes are supervised by Children's Officers.

It has been found that, for some children, treatment in the institutional setting of a Children's Home is better than foster home treatment in a family setting, but it is recognised that most children need the feeling of security that a good foster home offers.

3 - AFTER CARE

The Ministry is responsible for the care and guidance of every child referred by the Juvenile Court. The child is eligible for supervision until he attains the age of 18 years. Children's Officers act as After Care agents to children who have been discharged or released on licence from the Approved Schools. They assist them in finding employment and give them the necessary encouragement and help when employment is not readily available.

STAFF TRAINING

The Child Care and Protection Division continues to provide In-service Training for the institutional and field-work staff. In this connection, help is received from time to time from local and visiting persons qualified in the field of Child Care.

There are at present 8 officers on scholarships attending Universities in the United Kingdom and the University of the West Indies.

A Professor of Social Work from the University of Toronto was assigned to the University of the West Indies for the academic year 1966-1967. He has been giving valuable help voluntarily to the Child Care and Protection Division by means of regular case conferences with Children's Officers.

Another Consultant from the Youth Studies Centre, University of Southern California, conducted a very successful three-week course in Group Counselling from February to March, 1967. This course re-emphasized the usefulness of Group Counselling as a method of social work and it is expected that the Child Care and Protection Division will shortly make more use of this method. The exigencies of the Service made limitations necessary as to the number of participants and the duration of the course.

#### BUILDINGS

During the year improvements have been carried out on the buildings of Homestead Place of Safety.

#### STAFF

Two additional Children's Officers as well as two additional instructors were provided during the year.

Ministry of Development & Welfare,  
Kingston.

M.P. No. W90/88/01

16th May, 1967.