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PRESERVATION

JUVENILE CRIME IN NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

1973



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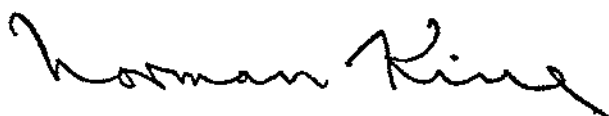
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FOREWORD

The facts set out in this publication make rather disturbing reading. They indicate that young offenders are not responding to the traditional treatment of oversight and institutional care and that these methods require careful review. It is my hope that the publication of this booklet will stimulate the discussion and debate which may lead to new and more effective means of dealing with a problem which affects the lives of thousands of young people every year and which costs the country so much in human resources and money.

I am hopeful that steps being planned at present, including an extensive revision of child welfare legislation and the establishment of a New Zealand social work training council, will prove to be constructive steps in tackling the problems relating to juvenile offending. These cannot, however, provide anything like a full answer to what are highly complex problems. I want to do everything possible to stem the tide of delinquency and I would be grateful for any ideas arising from discussion on this booklet being made known to me. These problems concern all of us. We must not lose sight of the fact that all the statistics in this publication refer to people and affect not only individuals but also families and the whole of our community.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Norman King". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Norman" and the last name "King" clearly distinguishable.

Minister of Social Welfare.

INTRODUCTION

There are few communities today which have not expressed concern over the extent and trend of juvenile crime*, and New Zealand is no exception. However, not all comment on the subject has been well informed, possibly because many of those expressing opinions have lacked some of the information necessary to reach balanced conclusions. It is the purpose of this paper, therefore, to present as clear and accurate an account as possible of some of the more important aspects of juvenile crime in New Zealand.

Each society creates its own catalogue of crimes by extracting from the wide range of deviant human behaviour those acts requiring legal censure. The significance thus given to "crime" compared with that accorded other forms of anti-social behaviour gives rise to an assumption that crime has special causes which if isolated and studied will lead to cures. But delinquency may have no causes or cures that are not, in some measure, equally applicable to what those of religious persuasion call sin, which it is fair to say has managed successfully to defy both explanation and cure.

Any reservations one might have about this assumption should be partially dispelled by considering the actions of ordinary citizens during police strikes, or nearer home, the actions of motorists during disputes involving meter maids and traffic officers. Other examples are not hard to find. Tax and customs duty evasion, petty thefts from work of pens, paper, and other office equipment, non-payment of fares, failure to return overpayment of change, use of tax-free petrol for private purposes, exorbitant profit making and dishonest packaging must cost the country hundreds of thousands of dollars every year. Some of these offences are clearly more serious than a good deal of juvenile crime, but they attract less community concern, usually milder forms of penalties, rarely imprisonment, and in some cases not even a Court appearance.

Another pointer to the broad spread of crime is seen in the results of self-report studies† of juvenile offending which show that a significant section of the juvenile population commit offences which are never brought to charge or even to official notice.

*Juvenile crime is here discussed only in relation to young people dealt with by the Children's Court because those who offend when 17 years of age and over are, in the main, beyond the responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare.

†In such studies respondents are asked about offending behaviour, including offences for which they have not been apprehended.

Thus in the absence of any features which clearly distinguish one type of offending from another, it is probably meaningless to concern ourselves overmuch with questions relating to general causes of crime. If we expect answers to questions about crime causation we may have to rethink the questions we ask. Instead of asking what causes crime, perhaps we should ask why it is that only a small minority of the population commit no offences and of those who commit offences why some commit the less acceptable form of offences.

Such speculative considerations aside, this paper sets out something of what we know of juvenile crime, the factors often associated with it and possible courses of action to deal with it.

DEFINITION

Before commenting on the measurement of juvenile crime, it is necessary to define it. Although juveniles are capable of committing the full range of crimes, only those for which they can appear in the Children's Court are counted for statistical purposes. Murder, manslaughter, and minor traffic offences are not dealt with in the Children's Court. The young person who is 17 but not yet 18 years of age can be dealt with in the Children's Court if the Magistrate so decides, but there are very few dealt with in this way.

Thus a juvenile crime may be defined as a breach of the law resulting in the prosecution in the Children's Court of a young person between the ages of 10 and 16 inclusive.

Given such a straightforward definition, it would seem to be a simple procedure to add up the Children's Court offenders each year in order to arrive at yearly crime figures from which trends could be determined. Unfortunately, as will be shown in the section on measurement, the procedure is not by any means as simple as this.

To measure the extent and trend of crime, it is necessary to know more than the number of children appearing in the Children's Court from year to year, although this information certainly represents our starting point.

NATURE OF OFFENCES

When children commit offences it is often necessary to bring them to the Children's Court on a legal complaint or on a police charge.

Social workers of the Department of Social Welfare and police officers are empowered under the Child Welfare Act 1925* to bring children under 17 years of age before the Court on a legal complaint of being delinquent, not under proper control, indigent, neglected, or living in an environment detrimental to their physical or moral well-being. Complaints are addressed to parents who are required to appear before the Court with the child. Complaints fall into two broad categories—those which primarily involve misbehaviour or offending by the child, and those which involve parental acts of omission or commission that are detrimental to the welfare of the child. We are interested here only in those complaints involving misbehaviour or offending. In such cases the complaint would be made that the child was delinquent or not under proper control. While a delinquent child will usually have committed an offence, a child who is not under proper control may be offending, running away, sexually promiscuous, truanting, or generally uncontrollable.

Most commonly, children and young persons who commit offences are not the subject of legal complaints but are charged with specific offences by the police. A detailed list of these offences and of complaints dealt with in the Children's Court are shown for recent years in the appendix. Offences can be grouped into the following broad categories. The percentages shown are those for 1971, but they are broadly typical of the pattern from year to year.

	Percent
Offences against property	71
Offences against the person	5
Sex and indecency offences	4
Offences against good order	6
Other offences†	2
Offences against special Acts or bylaws	12

*This Act is being revised and a Bill will be introduced this year (1973), but all references in this booklet to the Act relate to the provisions of the present legislation.

†E.g., escaping from custody and drug offences.

MEASUREMENT

When measuring crime we want to know the amount of it at any given time and the movement of it up or down over any given period of time.

However, in order to give any meaning to either of these measures we also need to consider them in relation to the juvenile population of Court age.

For instance, we know that in 1971 there were 10,750 appearances for offences in our Children's Courts compared with 9,094 in 1970. But these figures tell us only that the number of appearances has increased; they do not tell us whether we should be more concerned about offending in 1971 than in 1970.

An example will make the point clear. If 1,000 children from a population of 200,000 (a rate or proportion of 1 in 200 or 0.5 percent) appeared in Court for offences in 1 year, and 1,100 out of a population of 250,000 (a rate of 1 in 227 or 0.4 percent) appeared in the following year, then the latter figures would suggest an improvement in young people's behaviour, in spite of the greater number actually appearing in Court.

Thus to begin to determine the extent and trend of juvenile crime we need to establish the rate of offending, i.e., the proportion of offenders in the Children's Court age group.

However, even when we know the rate of offending it is not possible to give accurate measures of either extent or trend because there are many offences which are never detected and many not reported; also there are many offenders who are not detected and many who are not prosecuted. Each of these points merits elaboration.

Offences not Detected

A number of offences are never detected at all. They are known only to the offenders. Some drug, sex, and liquor offences, as well as some forms of relatively minor theft, would fall into this category. As we have no way of knowing how many of these offences occur each year, the level of delinquency is under-recorded to this extent.

Offences not Reported

Many offences which are committed are not reported to the Police. Children may steal from stores, from neighbours, or from other pupils at school and many of these offences are dealt with

on the spot without reference to the Police. A survey of one school some years ago showed that quite a number of pupils caught shoplifting had been dealt with in this way and no doubt the practice is still fairly common. This approach is often a sensible one, but it very obviously increases the difficulty of making accurate statements about the level of crime in any one year.

But offences may be reported and detected while the culprit remains undetected.

Offenders not Detected

Each year between 40 percent and 50 percent of all reported crimes remain unsolved, but there is no way of determining how many of these unsolved crimes are committed by children. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the number of children involved would be large enough to make a noticeable difference to the delinquency rate each year.

Offenders not Prosecuted

As a result of the operation of the Youth Aid Section (formerly called the Juvenile Crime Prevention Section) of the Police, about 50 percent of all juvenile offenders who are apprehended are not prosecuted but are dealt with out of Court either by a warning from the Police or by a period of oversight by Social Welfare following consultations between staff of the two services. However, this percentage is only approximate in so far as there are still likely to be offenders dealt with informally by individual police officers without recourse to Youth Aid. To the extent that this is so the numbers officially recorded will be understated.

EXTENT AND TREND OF OFFENDING

From the foregoing it is clear that we can never be sure of the absolute number of offenders in any year or of the trend of offending from one year to the next. We do know, however, that the actual number of offenders will always exceed the recorded number by a considerable margin.

Trends

Although trends in crime cannot be depicted accurately over short periods of time, it is nonetheless reasonable to assume that we can gain some insight into trends, by studying the figures over a long period. The reasoning behind this assumption is, that if the increase or decrease is large enough and enduring enough over the period studied, the unmeasurable variables just referred to can, to some extent, be ignored.

Figure 1 illustrates this point and suggests that over the last two decades, officially recorded juvenile delinquency, although fluctuating from year to year, has increased steadily over the period and is now nearly four times the 1950 rate. The steepest increase has occurred in recent years and it is interesting to note that this period has also seen the growth and consolidation of the Youth Aid Section of the Police. Some comment about a possible relationship between these two facts will be made at the end of this section.

Rates

If we now analyse the overall rate to take account of age, sex, and race we find that juvenile offending is mostly a boys' problem which increases rapidly with age and that offending rates for Maoris are markedly higher than they are for non-Maoris*.

Because of the major differences in the patterns of offending for the various age, sex, and race groups, table 1 presents measures of offending for each of these groups separately.

The rates in the table show a further refinement in that they are "individual children" rates—i.e., they refer to the numbers of individual children appearing in Court in a year—thus excluding second and subsequent appearances by a child in the same year. The rates relate to offences and to misbehaviour which has been dealt with by a formal complaint.

*This topic is discussed in the section dealing with research.

FIGURE 1: RATES OF CHILDREN'S COURT APPEARANCES FOR ALL OFFENCES AND FOR MISBEHAVIOUR PER 10,000 OF MEAN POPULATION AGED 10 TO 16 YEARS INCLUSIVE, FOR THE YEARS 1949-50 TO 1971

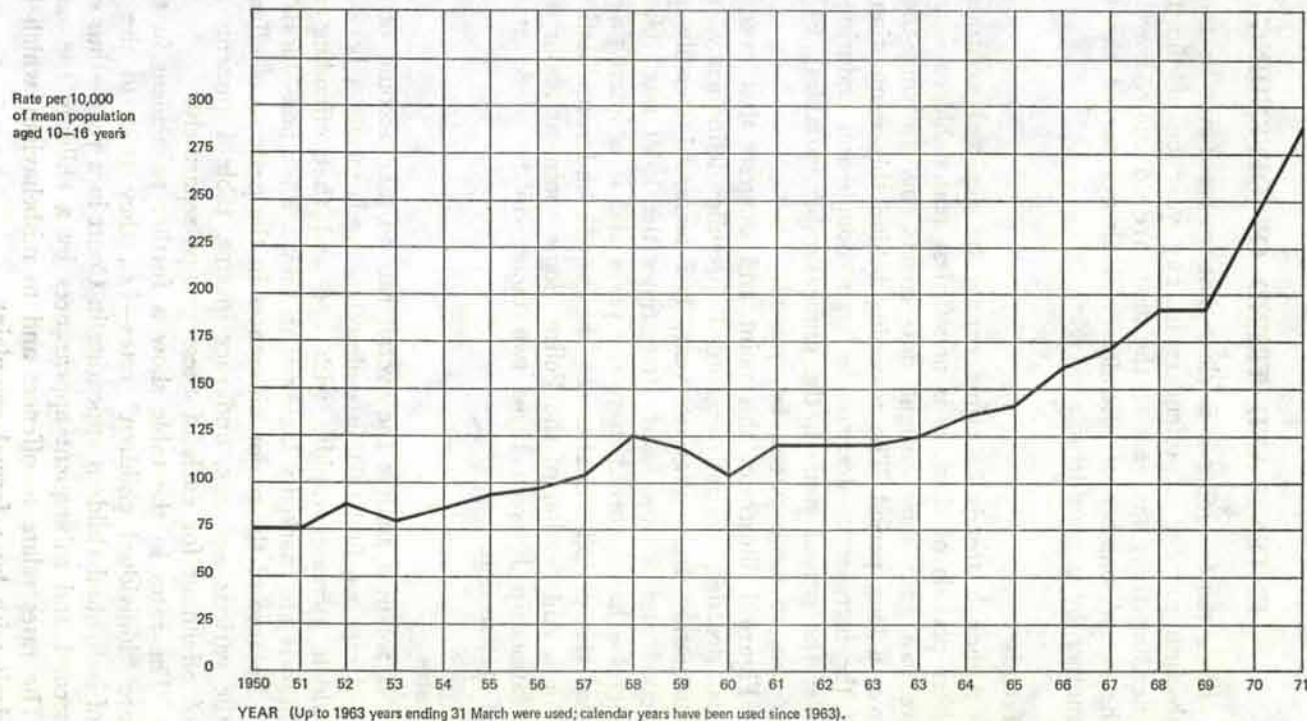


TABLE 1.—RATES OF CHILDREN'S COURT APPEARANCES FOR INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN FOR OFFENCES AND MISBEHAVIOUR PER 10,000 OF MEAN POPULATION 1971

Age	Maori Boys	Non-Maori Boys	Total Boys	Maori Girls	Non-Maori Girls	Total Girls
10 years	171	24	41	41	2	7
11 years	366	47	83	74	7	15
12 years	725	110	178	246	16	42
13 years	1,267	142	264	454	48	94
14 years	1,749	285	443	826	99	180
15 years	1,977	406	570	878	131	211
16 years	2,371	632	806	742	124	187

The table is interpreted in the following way: 8 percent of all 16-year-old boys appeared in Court in 1971; 24 percent of 16-year-old Maori boys appeared in Court; 6 percent of 16-year-old non-Maori boys appeared in Court, and so on. As mentioned earlier, offending rates for boys are much higher than for girls, and rates for Maoris are much higher than rates for non-Maoris. In 1971 the overall rate for Maori boys (ages 10 to 16 years inclusive) was 5.1 times the rate for non-Maori boys, and the overall rate for Maori girls was 7.4 times the rate for non-Maori girls. (Incidentally, the gap between Maori and non-Maori offending rates has been widening in recent years: in 1965 the ratios of Maori rates to non-Maori rates corresponding to those given above were 4.2 for boys and 5.7 for girls*.)

Cohorts†

One further refinement in our attempt to come to grips with the extent of juvenile delinquency can be achieved by moving away from the concept of annual appearance rates towards the concept of studying the patterns of offending of cohorts of children as they move through the juvenile age groups. This can be done by calculating first offender rates for each of a series of years and cumulating each successive year's rates for each successive age group. (For example, the cohort rates discussed below were developed by adding the first offender rates of 10-year-olds in 1965 to first offender rates of 11-year-olds in 1966, and so on.) Such an approach gives a much more realistic picture of the extent of

*Since 1965, individual children appearance rates for children aged 10 to 16 years inclusive have increased by 104 percent for Maori boys compared with 67 percent for non-Maori boys. For Maori girls the rates increased by 128 percent, compared with 74 percent for non-Maori girls.

†Cohort in this context means the total number of children born in a particular year.

juvenile offending in our society. It enables us to say what proportion of the Court age group had appeared in Court at least once by their seventeenth birthday.

The results of one such cohort analysis are given below. The figures relate to a cohort of children who were born in 1954-55. These children, who were 10 years old in 1965, had passed through the Children's Court age group by the end of 1971.

By cumulating first offender rates from 1965 to 1971, it is possible to make the following statement about children who were born in 1954-55.

By their seventeenth birthday the following proportions of the various sub-groups of the cohort had appeared in the Children's Court at least once on an appearance involving offending or misbehaviour:

	Percent
Maori boys	40.1
Non-Maori boys	10.3
Total boys	13.3
Maori girls	16.7
Non-Maori girls	2.8
Total girls	4.3

An estimate of offending patterns in the future can be obtained if we take the 1971 rates as our starting point and assume that they remain static over the next 7 years. In these circumstances the following proportions of 10-year-olds today will have appeared in Court at least once before their seventeenth birthday for offending or misbehaviour:

	Percent
Maori boys	52.4
Non-Maori boys	11.8
Total boys	16.2
Maori girls	23.9
Non-Maori girls	3.6
Total girls	5.8

Disturbing as these figures are they almost certainly represent an understatement of actual patterns of offending, as they take no account of the thousands of young offenders each year who

do not appear in Court but who instead are dealt with by the Youth Aid Section of the Police. Furthermore, as indications of trends over the next few years they are conservative estimates because it seems most unlikely that offending rates will remain static at 1971 levels. Projections based on trends in offending rates in recent years indicate that the proportions of young people appearing in Court will increase steadily over the next few years.

At this point it could be expected that an explanation might be given for the increase in juvenile crime and for the racial differences that the figures disclose. Unfortunately, we lack the necessary research data from which to formulate sound conclusions either about the general increase or about its racial differences, and in the absence of such information it seems unprofitable to engage in much speculation. With this reservation in mind, the following observations are included for what they may be worth.

Affluence

Crime seems to increase with an increase in affluence. However paradoxical this relationship may at first appear, it becomes somewhat more acceptable when closely examined.

Factors associated with affluence are vast increases in the number and diversity of goods, lavish advertising of these goods in the mass media and open attractive display in the stores. Furthermore, much of the pressure to possess these goods is directed at young people because they have become a very profitable section of the buying public. Over the past 20 years the numbers in the 10-16-year-old group have doubled from about 200,000 to 400,000.

Thus we have more property to steal and damage and many more children to become involved in these offences, and children who may not offend on their own can be all too easily influenced by others who do offend. The end result is a snowball effect and this is a reasonable description of the trend of juvenile offending over the past 20 years.

Other factors related to affluence have also conspired to increase the level of crime. With more money, many young people can buy cars and motor cycles. In this way they increase their mobility and their capacity to congregate in groups at the many "teen" meeting places which have sprung up to cater for them, and here again individuals in groups can become caught up in activities which they may not have contemplated had they been on their own or with one or two friends.

Thus temptations are greater today than in the past and probably a good deal harder to resist.

In this context it is relevant to refer to an investigation carried out in 1969 by the then Child Welfare Division. The purpose of the study was to determine the types of articles stolen by boys and girls of different ages appearing in the Children's Court in 1967-68.

It was found that approximately 55 percent of all Children's Court appearances were for thefts, conversions, etc., and that the items most favoured were as follows:*

Age	Boys	Girls
12 years and under	Money (28%) Bicycles (13%) Confectionery (8%)	Money (20%) Clothing (16%) Jewellery (11%)
13 and 14 years	Money (21%) Bicycles (12%) Cars (10%) Confectionery (7%)	Clothing (29%) Money (13%) Cosmetics (11%) Jewellery (9%)
15 years to 17 years inclusive	Cars (19%) Money (17%) Clothing (6%) Jewellery (5%)	Clothing (34%) Money (19%) Cosmetics (8%) Jewellery (7%)

The foregoing breakdown presents few surprises. Boys steal money, bicycles, and cars, and girls steal clothing, money, cosmetics, and jewellery; and too many of these articles are too easy to steal. Simple precautions by their owners could do a great deal to reduce the level of juvenile crime.

The Youth Aid Scheme

Another possible reason for the increase in Court appearances could arise from the operation of the Youth Aid Section of the Police. Here again is an apparent paradox that a scheme introduced to keep children out of Court might, in fact, result in more of them appearing there.

One of the purposes behind the establishment of a special section to deal with young people was to encourage public co-operation and this it did very successfully. The result almost certainly was that more offences and offenders were reported to the Police than in the past; and, no doubt, that more time could be spent on these cases by a specialist group of officers, at least in larger centres, than might have been possible previously by officers who were not engaged full time on work with young people. Also all

*The percentages do not, of course, total 100 percent because only the most popular items have been listed.

children dealt with, whether later prosecuted or not, had their names taken whereas prior to the introduction of the scheme many children who were minor first offenders were no doubt given a warning only. If they came to the notice of another constable he may not have known of the earlier offence. Under Youth Aid procedure, however, it is much less likely that such a situation could arise.

Thus with more children being reported to the Police, and with improved recording procedures for identifying a second offence, it seems likely that the scheme has had two results. Many more young offenders have been detected, and of this number more than in the past have been filtered into the Children's Courts because of their records of previous offending.

Maori Offending

The final reason which will be advanced here for the increase in juvenile crime in recent years has been the marked increase in the number of Maori boys and girls appearing in Court.

Numerous explanations have been advanced to account for the racial difference in crime rates. Rapid urbanisation, cultural differences (for instance with respect to attitudes to property), socio-economic factors and the lack of uniformity in racial classification, are some of the more important of these opinions. No doubt they are all involved to some extent, and although urbanisation and cultural differences are not readily susceptible to conclusive research, it should be possible to design a project to test the significance of the social and economic factors. As indicated in the footnote to page 13, reference is made in the section on research to these factors, and also to the problem of uniformity in applying the racial definition.

Because it is not possible to be more precise about the causes for the upsurge in juvenile crime, the next section will be limited to a more general approach to causes.

"CAUSES" OR ASSOCIATED FACTORS

This section should be read against the cautionary comments in the introduction.

Popular Opinions

The causes of juvenile crime is a subject about which the experienced worker is still uncertain and the layman more often than not dogmatically confident. This is probably understandable because the complexities of human behaviour allow every man to be, in a sense, his own expert. For these people crime has simple causes and cures. Parents are not strict enough, punishment "made a man of me", church attendance has fallen away, working mothers should stay at home, the play way should be replaced, children have too much money and, like as not, broken homes are a few of the many confident assertions made about the causes of juvenile crime. Statements of this type have the superficial appeal of providing simple solutions to difficult problems. Unfortunately for these views, human behaviour is rarely motivated in a particular direction by a single cause. Rather is it the result of many causes or influences both hereditary and environmental and it is their complex interaction which determines whether one child will be delinquent and another not. As this applies even to children in the same family, it is clear that the topic is a complex one.

Let us consider the views that non-attendance at church and broken homes are important factors in the causation of crime.

Many children who go to church commit offences whereas many who do not go to church do not commit offences. Thus church attendance alone does not guarantee an unblemished record nor is it a necessary ingredient for such a record.

On the other hand, it seems that children who go to church regularly are not as likely to get into trouble as those who do not attend. But church attendance in a sense is an overt acknowledgment of a set of values governing standards of behaviour which are shared in large measure by many non-religious people. Thus it seems much more likely that children are well behaved because of the general attitudes of the parents than because of attendance or non-attendance at church.

For the past 50 years broken homes have been regarded by many people as a cause of delinquency. This has been due to the close relationship, often observed in statistical studies, between crime and homes broken by death, separation, and divorce. In New

Zealand about 25 percent of young offenders come from homes broken by separation or divorce. Here again, however, a factor closely associated with crime is not necessarily a cause of it. Just as church attendance for many families is a symptom of good relationships and standards, so a broken home is very often a symptom of bad relationships and standards. In other words it is not church attendance or broken homes in themselves which matter so much as the background which gives rise to them. Many children might do much better in a broken home than in one which, though tenuously held together, is the scene of constant friction.

The same argument could be used against the other "causes" such as working mothers, lack of discipline and so on.

Research Findings

What have the more recurrent findings of research to say about the causes of serious juvenile crime, or, perhaps more correctly, the factors most significantly associated with it?

Juvenile offenders tend to come from socially depressed or slum areas; from racial groups subject to socio-economic deprivation and discrimination; from homes in which parental affection is lacking; from homes where parental discipline is inconsistent; from homes in which one or both parents have criminal records; from large families; from families of lower socio-economic status; from families low in cohesiveness (togetherness). This listing tends to suggest that one of the largest factors contributing to juvenile crime is general inadequacy and instability of the child's home. However, while these family factors appear to make a significant contribution to the development of a persistent juvenile offender, there must also be other factors at work because children coming from good backgrounds also become offenders and many children from inadequate homes do not offend.

Heredity and Environment

Recent theorising suggests that in addition to the environmental factors noted above, some children are endowed with inherited temperamental characteristics which increase the risk of their becoming offenders when also subject to the influence of unsettled homes. In such a setting it is easy to imagine how these children, because of their hereditary characteristics, help to create an environment which increases the risk of their becoming offenders.

Let us examine this concept more closely.

Many parents with two or more children would agree that one child is often much easier to bring up than another. A baby who

is placid, who fits into the routine of the home, who is responsive to attention, receives from its parents and others the sort of response which reinforces the infant's "good" behaviour. On the other hand a baby who is fretful; who sleeps fitfully, or who cries a good deal and who is not readily pacified, worries a mother often to the point of impatience. This interaction between parent and baby can build up to the point where an otherwise good mother finds it difficult at times to deal calmly and wisely with the child. If long periods of nursing are necessary she naturally wonders how long this can continue and whether she is doing the right thing in starting what may become a habit, yet she is even more upset if she leaves the baby to cry. Weaning and teething can present similar problems. In spite of these difficulties, however, the child and parents in a good home usually come to terms because the parents wanted the child and worked hard to solve these early difficulties in the relationship.

But what of the infant who behaves in this way in a poor home where he is at best tolerated? Clearly his parents would have little patience with him and he would be expected to conform to their requirements. He would be shown little warmth or affection, would be criticised but rarely praised, would be left to cry for long periods and no doubt would be smacked often. Some children would adjust to this treatment but they would be unlikely to become well-balanced, confident adults. Those who failed to adjust would engender increased hostility and reaction which would reinforce their "bad" behaviour. They could well become our disturbed and delinquent children, and in turn our inadequate parents.

These children in a sense unwittingly help to create their own environment and it is a matter of chance whether they have good or inadequate parents.

Those who would punish inadequate parents should ask themselves how much better they would have been given the treatment many of these parents experienced early in life. Indeed it is a humbling exercise to ask ourselves when we last tried to remove some of our own more obvious inadequacies, and how successful we would be were we to engage in the exercise.

The "Typical" Delinquent

Some years ago the Child Welfare Division produced from its records and experience the following picture of the more or less typical delinquent:

"He is a boy aged 14 to 16 years, charged with theft. He comes from a large family, where ill health is likely to be present to a greater degree than normal and where family relationships are

unsatisfactory in some respects. His home is in a town rather than in the country (and he may well have been living away from home). He is likely to be of low average intelligence, making rather slow progress at school, and to have attended school irregularly. It is not likely that the act of delinquency that brings him to Court has been the first sign that he has been unsettled. In other words, the danger might have been recognised earlier than it was, as he may well have been aggressive, destructive, very jealous, a bully, a truant, a bed wetter, and subject to sleep disorders, speech defects, anxieties, or fears. (Numbers of children, of course, who never fall into delinquency, show one or more of these symptoms, but the potential delinquent is more than ordinarily prone to them.) He has one chance in three of having been before the Court previously."

The above picture is still fairly accurate today.

TREATMENT, RESULTS, AND COST

Treatment

If a child appears in Court for an offence other than a technical or trivial one, he is the subject of a Social Welfare report to the Magistrate. This report covers any previous incidents or Court appearances, the child's personality and physical development, his home background, his school or work record, and any other matters which the social worker considers relevant. If the charge is proved, the Magistrate takes into account the social worker's report and the nature of the offence in deciding upon the most suitable means of dealing with the child.

If the report indicates that the home background and child's previous behaviour are satisfactory and that the offence was not very serious, the Magistrate may decide to admonish and discharge him. In somewhat different circumstances he may adjourn the case for a period before making a final decision or he may fine the young person.

If the report shows that the home and child need some oversight, the Magistrate may place him under the supervision of a social worker, or he may adjourn the case to determine whether some stronger action than supervision is necessary. Again, fines and restitution might be ordered and in some cases the Magistrate may decide that the young person should spend part of his supervision period in a Social Welfare institution or, depending on his age, may place him on probation.

Some Magistrates, when making a supervision order, also impose conditions governing the type of work, place of abode, and companions of the young person. If a young person does not comply with these conditions or if the social worker is not satisfied with his conduct or the conditions under which he is living, he may be brought before the Court again.

During the period of supervision the social worker has interviews with child and parents, discusses progress with the school in appropriate cases, helps to arrange work if required to do so, arranges for participation in club and other activities, and suggests the need for medical, psychological, or psychiatric help where necessary.

The aim of the social worker is to use all of the resources available to him in order to help the child.

The Magistrate can also send a young person 15 years of age or over to periodic detention or to borstal, and a 16-year-old or over to a detention centre for 3 months.

When a longer period of removal from home seems necessary, either because of bad home conditions or serious offending of the child or both, the Magistrate is likely to commit the child to the care of the Director-General of Social Welfare. This means that the Director-General may exercise "to the exclusion of all other persons"* the powers and rights of a legal guardian until such time as the child is discharged from his care.

When a young person is committed to care because of his behaviour, he is usually placed in an institution. If his behaviour and background justify it, he will go straight to a long-term training centre, otherwise he will be placed in a short-term institution for observation to determine, over a few weeks or months, the best type of long-term placement for him. If he settles down after a period in an institution for observation, he will be placed in a foster home from which he will attend school or go to work in the community. If he has not settled, he may have to be transferred by the Director-General to a training centre or by the Court to borstal. Alternatively, some are sent to Social Welfare hostels from which they go to work each day before experiencing greater independence in the community, while others return home on trial before their discharge from State care.

Some young offenders, if they are also backward, will be placed in special schools. If their delinquency has been due in large part to their backwardness, these schools help them to adjust; otherwise they may have to be transferred to training centres.

Results

And what of the results of our methods of dealing with these young offenders?

From the information given in the section on the extent and trend of juvenile crime, there is little indication that our efforts are very effective. Both the level and rate of crime are increasing. And from the information given below, it is clear that we are not making much progress in dealing with those who have already become involved in crime.

Once a child has appeared in the Children's Court for an offence, he has more than a 40 percent chance of reappearing there, a

*Section 16 of the Child Welfare Act 1925.

failure rate which has not changed much in recent years and which is more or less common to most countries producing comparable statistics for juvenile crime.

Even more discouraging are the results of a major experiment conducted in America some years ago to determine the effect of social workers' oversight of potential juvenile offenders. The study divided a group of predelinquent boys into two. One half had the help of a social worker, the other half had no such oversight and help. Treatment under the social workers included family guidance, medical and school help, and co-ordination of community assistance in the interests of the boys over a period of 5 years. At the end of the period it was found that just as many of those receiving help had been in Court as those who had received no help. There was some evidence to suggest that early treatment and intensive contact may have kept some potential delinquents out of trouble. In the face of these research findings and of our own experience, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the traditional method of individual counselling or supervision of young offenders is making little, if any, impact on them.

It may be thought from the repeater figures given above that we have a success rate of about 60 percent, but the American study suggests that those in the control group who kept out of trouble in that study did so without any help from the social worker or other agencies. In other words, if those children placed by our Courts under the supervision of social workers were not to be supervised at all, it seems possible that the failure rate, or put another way, the repeater rate, would remain much the same.

While we may not find such a conclusion very palatable, it should not surprise us much. By the time young people have found their way into Court charged with an offence, they are at least 10 years old and most of them are older. At that age they have become relatively set in their ways. Their personality, temperament, and behaviour patterns are well established. In the circumstances, it would be rather surprising if the efforts of a social worker, burdened with many cases and other duties, were able to effect any great change in the child in the short time he could spend with him over the supervision period. The time spent on each child under supervision would average out at little more than 10 minutes each week.

The failure rate for those offenders committed to the State's care is rather worse than that for those on supervision. This is to be expected because offenders removed from home by Court Order are, as a rule, more difficult and come from worse homes than those not so removed. By the same token they are more difficult

to rehabilitate. By and large it seems that something over half of the young offenders committed to State care fail to settle and so appear in Court again, and for those sent to our training centres the failure rate is even higher.

Of 142 boys who were discharged in 1961 and 1962 from Kohitere, the training centre for the most troublesome 14 to 16-year-old boys, the re-offending rate was as follows:

37 percent had re-offended within 6 months.

61 percent had re-offended within 1 year.

74 percent had re-offended within 2 years.

85 percent had re-offended within 3 years.

90 percent had re-offended within 4 years.

91 percent had re-offended within 5 years.

Thus over a 5-year period, 129 boys (91 percent) had reappeared in Court. These 129 boys accounted for 512 separate Court appearances (an average of 4.0 per re-offender) on a total of 1,138 separate charges (an average of 8.8 per re-offender). Most of these charges were for serious offences—only 3 percent of the charges related to minor traffic or drinking offences.

A further indication of the seriousness of the offending is that over the 5-year period a total of 68 percent of the sample had been sentenced to a further period of custodial treatment—prison, borstal, detention centre, or periodic detention.

So much for the results of efforts to help offenders who appear in Court. What of those offenders dealt with out of Court?

Social workers deal in this way with many offenders referred to them each year by parents, schools, visiting teachers, shopkeepers, and others. And since 1958, when the Juvenile Crime Prevention Section (now the Youth Aid Section) of the Police was established, Child Welfare (now Social Welfare) and Police have worked together at district and national levels in an attempt to deal more effectively with thousands of those children whose behaviour and background have indicated that Court action did not seem warranted. Sometimes a warning has been enough, at other times oversight by a social worker has been undertaken for a period provided child and parents seemed likely to co-operate.

Here again, results have not been very encouraging. An offender dealt with outside of the Court's jurisdiction has about the same chance of appearing in Court for another offence as has the offender who is dealt with by the Court for his first offence. This may be because those who have not appeared in Court are about equally set in their ways as those who have so appeared, with the

result that our methods of dealing with them are little more effective. Whatever the reason, informal treatment of offenders at least has the merit of saving the time and cost of a Court appearance.

Cost

At this point it would be appropriate to say something about the cost of juvenile crime. This exercise is, to some extent, unsatisfactory because no accurate statement of the overall cost can be made; there are too many factors involved which defy measurement. However, if account is taken of the cost of buildings and their maintenance, of staff to run them, of social workers, police, Courts, and all support staff and of the cost of damages to or theft of property the charge to the community is certainly of the order of several million dollars per annum.

Although it is possible to give only a broad statement of the overall cost of juvenile crime, a rather more precise account of the cost of several areas of treatment is possible.

In 1970 the cost of keeping a boy at Kohitere training centre was approximately \$4,000 per annum. In the year prior to entry into Kohitere the average cost of the boys' actual offences, Court appearances (including the time of police, social workers, and Court officials), and placements was very roughly estimated at about \$1,000.

Was the \$4,000 justified?

This question is not a simple one to answer because we cannot measure the positive effects of all of the influences at work on a young person living in an institution for a year. However, if the measure adopted is the not unreasonable one of the amount of offending after discharge from the institution, then the conclusion is disheartening because, as shown in the section on results, the majority re-offend within a year after their return to the community and nearly all of them do so within 5 years of their return. Furthermore, there is little comfort to be gained from the thought that the community is at least protected while the boys are in the institution, because of the follow-up sample referred to in the results section about 20 percent of the boys were sent to borstal direct from Kohitere for offences committed while in the institution or absconding from it. In any case, protection which costs four times the cost of the crimes insured against is a very dubious form of cover.

Although Kohitere training is the most costly form of treatment provided by the department for wards, none of the other methods

used is cheap. Foster care costs at least \$600 per year, family home placements about \$1,000, and boys' and girls' home placement about \$2,500.

When we remember that most adult offenders have first been juvenile offenders, it is clear that the costs so far referred to represent only part of the total account the community will be required to pay for crime.

Because existing efforts to "cure" juvenile crime have not been very encouraging, we shall examine in the next section what might be done to improve our effectiveness in trying to prevent it.

PREVENTION

It would seem wise first to ensure that we are making full use of our present methods and resources before considering what more, if anything, need be done. From what follows, it might reasonably be concluded that the full potential of available facilities is not, in fact, being realised.

Current Resources

A greater readiness on the part of parents to make use of present services and to do so sooner than they do now would be helpful. Of particular relevance are the services provided by preschool staff, teachers, visiting teachers, school guidance counsellors, psychologists, and public health nurses, as well as social workers. And as a corollary to this, staff responsible for the care or education of young children contribute to their welfare when they are alert to early signs of difficulty in the children or the home. They can then, if necessary, refer such cases to appropriate agencies for early preventive help. Plunket nurses, public health nurses, preschool and infant school staff perform a useful service in this way at present, but if it were possible to intensify this aspect of their work, it should pay preventive dividends.

Play centres and kindergartens help many mothers to a better understanding of their children as well as helping the children's social development by giving them a chance to mix and play with others of their own age. Preschool children may find home a less interesting place than it should be if only because mothers are busy and cannot always spare enough time during the day to give their children the attention they need. It seems very likely that most parents and children would benefit from a child's participation in these preschool centres and so make some contribution to better adjustment and, in time, to a drop in delinquency.

In addition to the usual procedures operating in schools for the identification of children with special needs, some principals conduct surveys to determine the number of children who need some special attention for one reason or another. In doing so, they have had the assistance of specialist educational, health, and welfare services. These surveys have identified the children who need help because of health difficulties, backwardness, retardation in school progress, and poor adjustment. When known, they can be

given the type of help they seem to need either by the school itself or by one or more of the agencies taking part. The co-operation of parents is enlisted where possible.

Immediate attention to the first sign of truancy could help to reduce delinquency as many young offenders have a record of truancy and a long history of distaste for schooling.

Work experience schemes have proved very successful for backward children and may well help truants and those children who have little interest in academic work. These are the children who so often want exemption from school or who drop out as soon as they are 15 years of age and then find themselves ill equipped for work and, as a result, move from one job to another. These schemes are designed to give children experience of different types of work while they are still at school and would seem to be ideally suited to the needs of those young people who, if not given some such help, can too readily become delinquent. It would seem better to adjust the school system in this or some other appropriate ways to accommodate the needs of the non-academic child than to consider an overall reduction in school leaving age because of the problems caused by some of these children. They seem to need more rather than less educational help to find useful employment.

Some principals when confronted with a troublesome child who has defied the school's efforts to help him, call together a case committee to discuss the matter and to decide what should be done. These committees may comprise a visiting teacher or school counsellor, a public health nurse, a social worker, and the child's teacher. Others who may be called in, depending on the circumstances, are the local psychologist, and the Maori Welfare Officer. This procedure enables different workers to pool their knowledge and discuss the child on the spot. And if the action decided upon does not prove satisfactory, the principal quickly calls the workers together again and some different approach is made. The child's problem is not left to get worse. A wider use of this method in appropriate cases could prove useful.

More special classes and special schools for maladjusted children might do much in time to reduce the level of delinquency. At present there are 15 adjustment classes and 2 small schools in New Zealand for these children, and such evidence as is available indicates that they serve a very useful purpose. We have many special classes and two large schools for backward children, and it seems reasonable to make similar provisions for disturbed and poorly adjusted children who, because of their emotional and social difficulties, are unable to settle down in an ordinary school even with specialist help. It is estimated that this group of children with

serious problems of adjustment comprises about 2 percent of the school population under 15 years of age or approximately 10,000 children.

Because schools are in the front line of attack in combating delinquency, it could well be that the appointment of more specialist teachers, visiting teachers, school counsellors, and psychologists could make a greater preventive impact on crime than could the appointment of an equal number of additional social workers. These specialists have a smaller case load than do social workers; they are in much closer association with the children and the school; they have a much smaller range of functions and they can be more readily called on by the headmaster. As a result, they know the children better and can spend longer with them. In this way more children would get appropriate help sooner and, as a consequence, may not need the attention of social workers whose efforts could be directed at those children who failed to respond to the efforts of the school and its specialists. It is in this area of second line defence that additional social workers would be needed and where their skills could most profitably be employed.

Broadly speaking, in any preventive programme our aim must be to deal with offenders earlier than we are now doing and, to this end, it would clearly be an advantage to offer help when the first indications of pre-delinquent behaviour appear. Many offenders before becoming delinquent have behaved differently from normal children. Some of this behaviour, such as destructiveness, aggressiveness, bed wetting after 3 or 4 years of age, sleep disorders, speech defects, truanting, and so on, has already been mentioned. Other examples are frequent temper outbursts, habitual lying, petty thieving from home, marked restlessness, hostility to adults, moodiness, and wandering.

The approach suggested is used effectively in many schools. It is rather like that followed by the Department of Health in preventing disease and ill health in children. Parents and teachers are made aware of the symptoms and public health nurses and school medical officers are on hand to give early help when the nature or intensity of the symptoms require it. In the same way, parents, preschool services, and teachers are key people in any programme to reduce delinquency by early attention to the conditions giving rise to the symptoms. When parents and teachers alone, or working together to help a particular child, find the task beyond them, specialist help can be called in. This approach is in line with a view expressed in the Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand (1962):

"When . . . children enter the school a direct duty falls on it to do its utmost to discover those who may have early signs of insecurity

or, even of incipient delinquency . . . so that the school can order its procedures . . . to strengthen the sense of security of those who need such help."

When parents, teachers, and specialists found that the problems and behaviour of children could not be solved while they remained at home and in the ordinary classroom, other measures would be necessary. For some children the combined pressures of home and school prove too much. Their emotional condition makes learning under ordinary schooling too difficult and sometimes impossible and their presence in the classroom must often upset discipline and control and make teaching difficult. If these children had ready access to special classes for small numbers of emotionally disturbed children under specially trained teachers, some of the pressure would be removed and they would be able to learn at their own pace. It would then be reasonable to expect many parents to find that they could cope better with their children and that fewer of them might have to be removed from home.

However, some children would still not settle down while at home, even under a relaxed school programme and more special boarding schools like the one at Mt. Wellington, Auckland, and the McKenzie School, in Christchurch, would do much to help these children and their parents. No one likes to see children removed from home, but sometimes this is an essential step if the child is to be given a chance to adjust. And it is better that removal be agreed to by the parents as a positive step on their part to deal with a worsening situation than have removal forced on them later by the Court because their child is out of hand. Constant friction between child and parents provides an almost impossible climate for constructive work with either party. Removal of a child can often give both parents and child a chance to recuperate from each other, and during this period both can be given help in preparation for the child's return.

Before concluding these comments on the present methods of dealing with delinquency, and at the risk of stressing the obvious, it is worth repeating the point made earlier in this paper that if owners were to take the simple precautions available to them to protect their property there would be a noticeable reduction in juvenile crime. Many juveniles will not risk an attempt to enter a locked car or a locked home.

New Approaches

So much for the preventive approach of making full use of our present methods and resources.

Are there any new approaches worth considering?

In the absence of more constructive and effective alternatives, it may be useful to consider a wider use of monetary and like penalties in place of the more expensive and not very successful supervisory and institutional care to which communities have traditionally turned. The use of monetary sanctions would, of course, apply mainly to young offenders who were working but if supplemented by forfeiture of possessions could have wider application.

If fines and restitution could not be paid from earnings or from the forfeiture of possessions such as bicycles, motor cycles, and cars, orders on wages could be made against those in work.

It is recognised that the loss of a prized possession such as a car might cause some young people to commit more offences as they would have little else to lose. However, no technique will be other than a partial palliative and for some the method could have merit. For the community it would have at least the merit of being cheaper.

It is not suggested that possessions be taken as a penalty for the offence, but as payment or part payment in default of a fine or restitution. Possessions such as cars and motor cycles can vary considerably in value, and if they were to be confiscated as a penalty for the offence, the penalty could vary by hundreds of dollars for the same offence. However, if taken in default of payment of a fine and restitution, they could be sold and the balance, if any, returned to the offender. If the offender's vehicle was worth less than the amount of the penalty and if he had no other possessions, he could be ordered to perform some community service in the week-ends by attendance, if necessary, at a periodic detention centre. Perhaps greater use could be made of periodic detention centres for young people of Children's Court age, especially where the fine or restitution was small in amount. Weekend work for a useful cause would make at least a small but positive contribution to the community.

The principle behind these suggestions is that the offender should make recompense for his offence either by a monetary penalty, by work, or by both if necessary.

Again, having in mind that it is preferable to keep youthful offenders in the community, it might be possible to require such offenders who are placed under supervision to take part in leisure-time activities of a recreational, educational, or cultural nature. Such programmes could perhaps be arranged in conjunction with community youth organisations so that the delinquents would be mixing in these activities with non-offenders. Alternatively, compulsory attendance at a programme of social education might be required of them.

No doubt there will be developed from time to time new ways of dealing with young offenders in the community, but it is clear that in our present state of knowledge there will be limits to the use of these resources for some young people. For these there seems to be no alternative to custodial care. But given the limited success of present forms of institutional treatment we must undertake a vigorous reappraisal of our existing programmes to make sure that we are dealing as effectively as possible with those for whom institutional care is essential.

Voluntary Agencies

Although the Department of Social Welfare should be expected to give a lead in dealing with juvenile crime, it should not be expected to cope with the problem alone. The Child Welfare Division always enjoyed the voluntary help of many honorary child welfare officers and the Department of Social Welfare continues to receive their valuable assistance as honorary social workers. In future it may be useful to appoint many more of these people, to provide training for them, and to extend the scope of their functions.

A variation of the traditional honorary social worker approach has been used in one area. There the director has a small team of local women who meet him regularly for training sessions and for discussion of cases they have undertaken to work with. The consent of the families concerned is obtained before voluntary help is given. The results so far seem promising, but it is much too early to determine whether changes in attitude will last once support is removed and whether any such changes will be reflected in the behaviour of children.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in the growth of non-governmental welfare organisations and this is an encouraging sign. Some local bodies have appointed social workers and many new groups have been established to meet local needs.

The functions of local body social workers include liaison with other groups, setting up community projects, a limited amount of case work and citizens' advice bureau work.

Many of the new groups aim to deal with specific social problems such as housing, drug-taking, tension and strain on young people, thus demonstrating a social awareness of the need to do something practical to help the less fortunate.

A partnership between governmental and non-governmental agencies could prove helpful, first to survey the welfare needs of those not yet covered by our present services and facilities, and then to devise suitable means of meeting those needs.

RESEARCH

Role of Research

In the absence of well designed research projects, efforts at delinquency control and prevention will be at best acts of faith.

The foregoing discussion implies that two questions are of prime importance in considering juvenile delinquency. The first is "What factors cause or predispose children to become persistent delinquents", and the second is, "Given that a child has become an offender how is the community to treat him". In the previous sections we have suggested somewhat speculative answers to these problems, but it is apparent that if satisfactory answers are to be obtained we will have to carry out detailed research.

We will examine two different approaches to research into juvenile delinquency—the first, the cohort study, is aimed at detecting the factors which cause or predispose children to become delinquent, and the second, random assignment experimentation, is designed to determine the extent to which various forms of treatment are effective.

Cohort Studies

Many criminologists have argued that early childhood experience is fundamentally related to later delinquent behaviour. However, most work on this problem has taken the form of comparing the characteristics of young people who have already become delinquent with control samples of young people who are not delinquent. Such an approach is inherently unsatisfactory because it is often not possible to determine whether any distinctive characteristics of the offenders arose before or after they became delinquent; some of these characteristics might not be precursors of delinquency, but rather traits which developed as a consequence of a delinquent life style. Furthermore, it is difficult to obtain satisfactory information about early experiences and about adjustment in childhood by means of "backward-looking" studies of delinquents; in general, the only sources of information about this period of the offender's life are the hazy and quite possibly distorted recollections of himself and his parents. One approach to overcoming these problems is to use a cohort or longitudinal design. Such a study is underway in New Zealand at present.

The essence of the method is to select a sample of people of the same age—called an "age cohort"—and to follow them up for an appropriate period of time. Thus information about the

characteristics of the sample members at any particular age or stage of development can be collected when they are at that age or stage of development. In our study, the sample is 25,000 boys born in 1957. In 1967—when they had a mean age of 10 years—data on social adjustment, school performance, teacher evaluations, and such like, were collected. The cohort is being followed up to determine which members come to official attention for delinquency, and also to determine which come to the attention of the Psychological Service of the Department of Education because of problems of adjustment. When the follow-up is completed in 1974, analysis will be made to determine the extent to which the type of information which was collected at age 10 can be useful in predicting subsequent development difficulties. A much more elaborate cohort study, in which data was collected about the sample from birth, has been running for many years now in Great Britain. In the past we have not had the resources in New Zealand to conduct research of this magnitude, but we should be working towards undertaking such projects in the near future.

Random Assignment

Random assignment experimentation is a technique by which the efficacy of various treatment procedures can be impartially examined. The basics of this method are as follows: a sample of subjects is selected and members of this sample are randomly assigned to various treatments presumed to reduce delinquency. The efficacy of each treatment is then assessed by comparing the various groups on a number of measures, such as the frequency of re-offending. The critical feature of the procedure is the random assignment of subjects to treatments, which ensures that any marked differences between the efficacy of treatments are unlikely to be the result of factors other than the treatment.

A specific example might help in providing an understanding of this approach. Suppose we wished to know whether the types of offenders at present being placed by the Courts under the supervision of a social worker receive any benefit, or whether some mild form of deterrent would be equally effective (or, at least, no more ineffective). The following procedure could be adopted: each of a sample of offenders who normally would receive supervision would be randomly assigned to receive either supervision or a fine. This could be done, for example, simply by tossing a coin for each case; heads might indicate supervision, and tails a fine.

The two groups would then be followed up in terms of measures which seemed appropriate; these might include subsequent offending

behaviour, and perhaps, also, measures of emotional and social adjustment, adjustment at school or at work, and such like. When each of the individuals involved had been followed up for a fixed period of time, results for the two groups would be compared. If, for example, the supervision group displayed less subsequent offending than the fined group, it would be concluded that, for the type of offender included in the experiment, supervision was more effective than fines in preventing further offending; and vice versa if the results came out in the opposite direction.

The two treatments might also be compared on a "cost-benefit" basis. For example, if the difference between the two groups (in terms of re-offending) was small or non-existent, but it was known that one of the methods was much more expensive than the other, it might be concluded that the cheaper one was preferable because the other represented greater expenditure without any commensurately greater return.

Random assignment procedures have been subject to some criticism on the grounds that it is unethical to place young people into treatments to which they may not be suited. These objections do not, however, stand rigorous scrutiny for they imply that the best treatment for a particular offender is known; but if this were the case there would be little point in trying to assess the efficacy of treatments. The aim of well-designed experimentation is to tell us what types of young offenders respond best to various types of treatment. Without this knowledge our methods of treatment are liable to be ineffective and possibly quite unfair to large groups of offenders. Nonetheless, it is also true to say that random assignment should not be carried out where there is any appreciable risk of harm to any of the offenders concerned. For example, it is unlikely that anyone would propose a random assignment experiment to test the efficacy of birching as opposed to a fine.

At present most of the delinquency research of this type has been carried out in the United States, notably by the California Youth Authority who have reported some promising results. However, it is hoped that it will be possible for research in this area to be carried out in New Zealand.

While research into delinquency has not yet provided us with a comprehensive statement of the causes or cures of delinquent behaviour, it would be quite incorrect to conclude that time and effort spent in research is or has been wasted. Research in the past has been able to dispel many misconceptions about the nature and basis of criminal behaviour and has revealed to us that in many cases alleged treatments for delinquency are no better than doing nothing. While information of this type is probably less useful than

more positive findings, it does provide us with a basis for modifying and changing our approach to what is an extremely perplexing problem. Also, one would hope that through further well designed and executed research projects we will be able to reach a better understanding of the nature of delinquency and that as a consequence our methods of treatment will improve.

To conclude this section, two studies relating to Maori crime will now be mentioned.

Maori Offending

It was thought possible that the high Maori offending rate might result in part from the inconsistent classification of young people with respect to race. In the Census, any person who claims to have half or more Maori ancestry is classified as a Maori. Offenders on the other hand, are often not asked explicitly to specify their ancestry, and many are classified simply according to the impressions of police officers and social workers. If there was any general tendency to classify as Maoris offenders who had some Maori ancestry, but who had been recorded as less than half in the Census, the Maori offending rate would be artificially inflated, and the non-Maori rate artificially deflated, producing a spurious difference between the two rates. Recently a study was undertaken to determine whether this occurs, and if so, the extent to which it might account for the difference between the rates. The study showed that there was some inconsistency of classification but not enough to affect materially the differential in crime rates.

Before leaving the question of classification, it is worth looking a little harder at the Census and Court definitions of a Maori as one who is half or more Maori. Inherent in such a definition is the assumption that the high crime rate is due to the Maori rather than the pakeha component. There is no hard evidence to support such an assumption, and it could be argued that those of mixed race may be in fact producing more offenders than either full Maoris or full pakehas. Clearly this is another area which would benefit from research. If it were found that an increase in "Maoriness" paralleled an increase in the rate of crime, it would be reasonable to conclude that we indeed had a Maori crime problem. While the available evidence suggests that this is so, it is based on social workers' evaluation of the degree of "Maoriness", and without more precise research we cannot be completely confident about this conclusion.

The second study derives from the observations that recorded crime is most prevalent amongst lower socio-economic groups in the community, and that these groups contain disproportionate

numbers of Maoris. In other words, proportionately more Maoris than non-Maoris have low incomes, inadequate housing, unskilled jobs, and lower levels of education, and it is important to know the extent to which the high Maori offending rate is simply a consequence of these differences.

If most of the difference between Maori and non-Maori rates was found to be attributable to this source, it would suggest that Maoris should not be regarded as constituting a special problem in relation to criminal offending, but rather that preventive programmes to reduce offending should be directed equally towards all those in the most offence-prone groups, irrespective of race. Consideration has been given to a study to examine the extent to which the difference between Maori and non-Maori rates can be attributed to socio-economic differences between the two populations, and it is hoped that work will begin soon, although it would be some time before the study is completed and the results become available.

CONCLUSION

We are not holding delinquency in check, let alone curing it, by our present methods. We must therefore think hard about new ways of tackling the problem. Our methods to date lead to several conclusions, which in turn may serve as pointers to the directions in which we should go.

It is questionable whether the work of individual social workers will reduce or contain crime if directed at individual delinquents. There are two reasons why this is so. Delinquency and associated patterns of behaviour are not readily changed by the limited amount of time a social worker can give to his cases. And even if social workers could bring about significant changes in behaviour given a small enough case load, we would need far more trained people than are likely to be available in the foreseeable future.

Also, we have seen that institutional training for delinquents is expensive but not very effective.

The above considerations suggest the need for early attention to predelinquent behaviour by making maximum use of the community services dealing with young children to identify and help those who need it. But to do this successfully it would seem necessary to supplement the individual help given to young children with a group approach for those unlikely to respond to individual methods. Our special classes and special schools seem to be at least part of the answer. An extension of these services could possibly make a major contribution to juvenile crime prevention. If such an extension were to be associated with a well designed research project based on random assignment of those admitted thus providing the means to compare the behaviour of those children admitted with those not admitted, we would be in a position to assess the value of these schools as a means of preventing delinquency.

Whether such methods would prove equally valuable for both Maori and non-Maori children is an open question, but it is patently clear that special attention will have to be given to finding appropriate means of helping Maori children, otherwise offending could become the norm for them rather than the exception. Furthermore, efforts to help them if successful would go a long way towards reducing the overall rate of juvenile crime.

POSTSCRIPT

At the time this booklet was written the latest figures available on juvenile crime in New Zealand related to the calendar year 1971. The figures for recent years up to and including 1971 revealed alarming increases in both the numbers and rates of young people coming to attention for juvenile offending or misbehaviour. It was suggested that there were no reasons to expect any dramatic changes in the upward trend.

The 1972 statistics became available while this publication was with the printer. They reveal that the number of children coming to official attention did not greatly exceed the number in 1971; the increase in numbers was 2 percent. Detailed statistics for 1972 can be found in the 1973 annual report of the Department of Social Welfare.

It is premature to attribute any significance to this apparent change in the trend. As the graph on page 14 indicates, such fluctuations in the rates from year to year are by no means uncommon. Only time will tell whether this apparent checking of the rapid increases of recent years will be a lasting phenomenon or merely a fluctuation in an otherwise steadily upward trend.

APPENDIX

NUMBER OF APPEARANCES BEFORE THE CHILDREN'S COURTS DURING YEARS
ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1969, 1970, AND 1971.

(Classified according to complaints and charges)*

Complaints under the Child Welfare Act and amendments—				1969	1970	1971
Indigent .. .. .	..	..	..	272	256	307
Neglected .. .. .	..	..	..	61	130	99
Living in a detrimental environment ..	..	..	..	228	198	232
Not under proper control .. .. .	..	..	..	718	930	1,312
Delinquent .. .. .	..	..	..	51	48	87
Failing to comply with the terms of a supervision order .. .. .	..	..	..	13	9	7
Application to substitute probation order for supervision order .. .. .	..	..	..	3	..	..
Totals .. .. .	..	..	..	1,346	1,571	2,044
Offences against property—						
Theft .. .. .	..	..	..	1,873	2,485	2,818
Burglary .. .. .	..	..	..	1,400	1,629	1,946
Conversion of motor vehicle .. .. .	..	..	..	595	887	849
Other conversion .. .. .	..	..	..	266	278	260
Arson and attempts .. .. .	..	..	..	13	17	14
Other offences against property (e.g. receiving, attempted theft, trespassing) ..	..	..	..	412	643	933
Mischief, wilful damage, vandalism, and other offences involving public safety ..	..	..	..	334	485	788
Totals .. .. .	..	..	..	4,893	6,424	7,608
Offences involving fraud .. .. .	..	..	..	60	54	74
Offences against persons—						
Sex offences—						
Indecent assault on a female .. .. .	..	..	..	48	64	60
Unlawful sexual intercourse .. .. .	..	..	..	52	47	61
Indecent assault on a male .. .. .	..	..	..	6	5	8
"Peeping Tom" .. .. .	..	..	..	10	13	8
Permitting sexual offence on self (girls only)† .. .. .	..	..	..	63	57	..
Other sex offences .. .. .	..	..	..	26	33	25
Other than sex offences (e.g., assault, threatening behaviour) .. .. .	..	..	..	296	74	495
Totals .. .. .	..	..	..	501	593	657
Offences against decency .. .. .	..	..	..	160	203	227
Offences against good order (e.g., drunkenness, etc.) .. .. .	..	..	..	410	516	634
Offences against special Acts, regulations, and bylaws—						
Traffic‡ .. .. .	..	..	..	177	215	303
Railway and fire brigade .. .. .	..	..	..	12	12	17
Licensing .. .. .	..	..	..	569	735	851
Acclimatisation .. .. .	..	..	..	12	6	10
Arms and explosives .. .. .	..	..	..	87	97	108
Other special Acts and bylaws (e.g., gambling, billiard saloons) .. .. .	..	..	..	14	10	9
Totals .. .. .	..	..	..	871	1,075	1,298
Other offences—						
Drug offences .. .. .	..	..	..	5	6	24
Other offences (e.g., escaping from custody) ..	..	..	..	129	223	228
Totals .. .. .	..	..	..	134	229	252
Grand totals .. .. .	..	..	..	8,375	10,665	12,794

*Children appearing on complaints as well as charges are counted in the offences section of the Table.

†Court proceedings based on complaints under the Child Welfare Act. The numbers have been falling in recent years owing to a revision of recording procedures whereby girls who previously would have been classified in this category are now classified among the complaints.

‡The only traffic offences heard in the Children's Court are those that in the adult court are punishable by imprisonment.

NOTE—The Table counts appearances only, not individual children. Multiple offences, i.e., cases in which the children are charged with more than one offence at a single appearance, e.g., car conversion and burglary, present difficulty in tabulation. Such cases are counted under the offence which, in the particular circumstances, appears to be the most serious. This selection is necessarily arbitrary, but there is no alternative if the table is not to be inordinately long and difficult to follow.

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