

3.—Percentage Changes in the Numbers of Boys and Girls Brought Before the Courts from the Preceding Year and from the Year 1936, 1937-46

Year	Percentage Change from Preceding Year			Percentage Change from 1936		
	Boys' Cases	Girls' Cases	All Cases	Boys' Cases	Girls' Cases	All Cases
1937.....	+10.2	+11.4	+10.3	+10.2	+11.4	+10.3
1938.....	-9.0	+6.8	-7.7	+0.3	+19.1	+1.8
1939.....	+5.3	+16.6	+6.4	+5.6	+38.8	+8.3
1940.....	+4.0	+13.8	+5.0	+9.9	+58.1	+13.8
1941.....	+22.1	+18.4	+21.7	+34.1	+87.1	+38.4
1942.....	+14.6	+6.7	+13.7	+53.7	+99.7	+57.4
1943.....	-12.9	+1.1	-11.4	+33.9	+102.0	+39.4
1944.....	-4.8	-10.5	-5.5	+27.5	+80.8	+31.8
1945.....	-16.3	-9.6	-15.6	+6.7	+63.4	+11.3
1946.....	-11.4	-5.8	-10.8	-5.5	+54.0	-0.7

Trends in Juvenile Delinquency.—The first three years of the Second World War were marked by serious and rapid increases in juvenile delinquency. This was to some extent the outcome of the 'broken home' situation brought about by the enlistment of the male parent, the resultant removal of the father's restraining influence and the increase in the responsibilities placed upon the mother during his absence. The figures for 1942 reached an all-time high with 11,758 major and minor convictions. Since then there has been a gradual decline to 7,856 in 1946, but this figure is still higher than for any year during the period 1931 to 1939. Though the recent decline is hopeful, the picture is not quite so encouraging when all offenders up to the age of 18 years are taken into account. (See Table 8, p. 292.)

Many factors are contributing to the apparent decline in cases of delinquency. Communities are realizing that the solution to this problem is to be found in an extension of opportunities that will provide wholesome occupation for after-school hours, early detection and treatment of delinquents, better psychiatric service for schools and mental hygiene clinics, trained personnel for probation and juvenile court work, extension of parent counselling and parent education classes, and better housing. Family life has been strengthened by the return of fathers and older brothers from overseas service and the cessation of factory work for mothers. There is no longer the opportunity for highly paid employment which lured young people from school during the War. There is a more sympathetic interest in the activities of youth on the part of the police as is evident in the assignment of special constables to juvenile cases and the 'police and youth' program inaugurated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and adopted in many centres by municipal and provincial police. The payment of Family Allowances for children under 16 years of age and the continuance of a high rate of employment assisted materially in maintaining the downward trend.

In recent years changes have been made in provincial legislation for the better protection of youth. For example, in 1942 Alberta prohibited the employment of persons under 18 years of age in or about billiard rooms and bowling alleys. Although an amendment in March, 1945, permitted the employment of pin-boys under 18 while the War lasted, they had to have written consent from parents or guardians. In 1943 British Columbia passed the Curfew (Unorganized Territory) Act and Quebec the Compulsory School Attendance Act. In 1944 New Brunswick passed the Juvenile Court Act and Saskatchewan the Act to amend the Child Welfare Act whereby children who were wards came under the authority of the Department of Social Welfare rather than the Department of Labour and Public Welfare. In