

Disposition of Cases.—In 1953 not quite one-half of the children's cases (48·3 p.c.) were heard within four days of the charge and slightly over two-thirds (68·5 p.c.) within nine days. However 9·9 p.c. of them had to wait at least two weeks and 6·7 p.c. waited a month or more before the first hearing. These waiting periods may be explained in various ways.

Some county courts sit only twice or even once a month. Hearings may be deferred because of sickness in the family, school examinations, stormy weather or long distances. The chief cause for delay however is the time it takes to investigate the facts properly. The probation officer, and frequently there is only one to a court, has to find out what occurred at the time of the delinquency; he must get in contact with the parents and the school, learn something of the home situation, perhaps arrange medical or psychiatric examinations and explore community resources. The disadvantage of a long waiting period is outweighed by the assistance the court receives in deciding the form of treatment best suited to the child's needs and the type of care that will be the most economical for the community. For these intervening days or weeks most children are left in their own homes while a minority are placed in detention homes and, in the long run, whether the effect of the waiting period is good or bad is determined by the care given the youngster during that time.

Juvenile court judges heard 91·4 p.c. and magistrates 8·2 p.c. of the juvenile cases before the courts. The balance were heard by justices of the peace. The proportion of those declared delinquent (93·6 p.c.) in the magistrate's courts was greater than in the juvenile courts (80·4 p.c.). In the former court 6·1 p.c. of the cases were dismissed while in the juvenile courts only 2·4 p.c. were dismissed but 17·2 p.c. were adjourned *sine die*.

Some courts consider children whose hearings are adjourned *sine die* as delinquent while others do not but, for the sake of uniformity in this report, the latter point of view is maintained by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. In assessing the total problem of juvenile delinquency however cases adjourned *sine die* have to be taken into account for, when the proportion of cases dealt with in this way increases, the proportion of those declared delinquent declines.

30.—Juveniles before the Courts, Dismissed and Delinquent 1949-53

NOTE.—See headnote to Table 23, p. 331.

Item	1949		1950		1951		1952		1953	
	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.	No.	p.c.
Before the courts.....	7,038	100·0	7,304	100·0	7,521	100·0	7,213	100·0	7,829	100·0
Dismissed.....	166	2·4	197	2·7	195	2·6	178	2·5	216	2·8
Adjourned <i>sine die</i>	674	9·6	689	9·4	682	9·1	967	13·4	1,236	15·8
Delinquent.....	6,198	88·0	6,418	87·9	6,644	88·3	6,068	84·1	6,377	81·4

Sentences for delinquent boys usually differ somewhat from those for girls. In 1953 the proportion of boys put on probation was 43·6 p.c. and of girls 47·3 p.c. Fines or restitution were meted out to 19·5 p.c. of the boys but to only 5·4 p.c. of the girls. This is because damage to property, for which restitution seems a reasonable adjustment, is committed relatively more often by boys than by girls. A much larger proportion of girls (36·9 p.c.) than boys (15·0 p.c.) were sent to training schools. Final disposition of case was postponed for 7·0 p.c. of the girls and 17·8 p.c. of the boys were given suspended sentences.