

Of every five juveniles who appeared in court, four were urban residents; 92.3 p.c. were living in their own homes at the time they got into difficulties; 4.7 p.c. of them were in foster homes, either with a relative or some other person; and institutions were the homes of 1.7 p.c. of them.

Sources of Complaint.—The police were the complainants in the majority of juvenile cases, 85.6 p.c. of the boys having been charged by them. Probation officers and parents were responsible for 3.0 p.c. and 2.8 p.c., respectively, of those charged. School authorities referred 2.1 p.c. of the boys to the courts and social agencies another 1.0 p.c.

The proportion (55.9 p.c.) of girls charged by the police was considerably less than the proportion of boys so charged. Parents made more use of the courts for girls than for boys (17.4 p.c.). School authorities laid complaints in 6.3 p.c., probation officers in 9.3 p.c. and social agencies in 5.1 p.c. of the girls' cases.

Repeaters.—In 1955 approximately one in every four children brought before the courts failed to heed the first warning and made at least a second appearance. In that year 77.2 p.c. of the delinquent children appeared before the courts for the first time, 15.1 p.c. were second offenders, 4.6 p.c. third, and 3.1 p.c. were dealt with by the courts four or more times.

30.—First Offenders and Repeaters of Major Offences 1946-55

| Year | Total Delinquents | First Offenders | Repeaters | | | | | Percentage of Total Delinquents |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------|--------|---------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| | | | Second | Third | Fourth | Fifth or More | Total | |
| | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | No. | |
| 1946..... | 4,949 | 3,430 | 799 | 344 | 155 | 221 | 1,519 | 30.7 |
| 1947..... | 4,683 | 3,376 | 673 | 329 | 138 | 167 | 1,307 | 27.9 |
| 1948..... | 4,591 | 3,340 | 674 | 266 | 147 | 164 | 1,251 | 27.3 |
| 1949 ¹ | 6,198 | 5,195 | 603 | 208 | 109 | 83 | 1,003 | 16.2 |
| 1950..... | 6,418 | 5,039 | 892 | 314 | 140 | 33 | 1,379 | 21.5 |
| 1951 ² | 6,644 | 5,141 | 909 | 324 | 132 | 138 | 1,503 | 22.6 |
| 1952..... | 6,068 | 4,412 | 963 | 367 | 155 | 171 | 1,656 | 27.3 |
| 1953..... | 6,377 | 5,170 | 752 | 230 | 124 | 101 | 1,207 | 18.9 |
| 1954..... | 6,332 | 4,993 | 895 | 252 | 99 | 93 | 1,339 | 21.1 |
| 1955..... | 7,025 | 5,423 | 1,060 | 326 | 119 | 97 | 1,602 | 22.8 |

¹ Minor offences included since 1949.

² Newfoundland included since 1951.

Disposition of Cases.—In 1955 not quite one-half of the children's cases (43.7 p.c.) were heard within four days of the charge and slightly over two-thirds (67.0 p.c.) within nine days. However 9.2 p.c. of them had to wait at least two weeks and 9.8 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.