

Child care : sixth report from the Select Committee on Estimates together with minutes of evidence taken before Sub-Committee E and appendices, session 1952-1953.

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SIXTH REPORT
FROM THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATES

TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN BEFORE SUB-COMMITTEE D ON
4TH MARCH AND SUBSEQUENT DAYS
AND APPENDICES

Session 1951—52

CHILD CARE

Ordered by The House of Commons to be Printed
9th July 1952

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SIXTH REPORT
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SELECT COMMITTEE ON
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TAKEN BEFORE SUB-COMMITTEE D ON
4TH MARCH AND SUBSEQUENT DAYS
AND APPENDICES

Session 1951—52

CHILD CARE

Ordered by The House of Commons to be Printed

9th July 1952

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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Thursday, 15th November, 1951

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to examine such of the Estimates presented to this House as may seem fit to the Committee, and to suggest the form in which the Estimates shall be presented for examination, and to report what, if any, economies consistent with the policy implied in those Estimates may be effected therein:—

Ordered, That the Committee do consist of Thirty-six Members.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of:—Mr. Albu, Major Anstruther-Gray, Miss Burton, Lieutenant-Commander Baldock, Viscountess Davidson, Mr. John Edwards, Mr. Walter Fletcher, Mr. John Freeman, Sir Ralph Glyn, Sir Fergus Graham, Air Commodore Harvey, Mr. H. Hynd, Mr. A. J. Irvine, Mr. James Johnson, Major Niall Macpherson, Mr. Malcolm MacPherson, Major Markham, Mr. Angus Maude, Mr. Mitchison, Mr. Mott-Radcliffe, Mr. Mulley, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Ian Orr-Ewing, Sir Leslie Plummer, Mr. J. Enoch Powell, Mr. Thomas Reid, Mr. Ross, Mr. Norman Smith, Mr. G. P. Stevens, Mr. Summers, Mr. Wade, Mr. George Ward, Miss Ward, Mr. West, Mr. Ian Winterbottom and Mr. Yates.

Ordered, That Seven be the Quorum of the Committee.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records ; to sit notwithstanding any Adjournment of the House ; to adjourn from place to place ; and to report from time to time.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to appoint Sub-Committees and to refer to such Sub-Committees any of the matters referred to the Committee.

Ordered, That Three be the Quorum of every such Sub-Committee.

Ordered, That every such Sub-Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records ; to sit notwithstanding any Adjournment of the House ; and to adjourn from place to place.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to report from time to time Minutes of Evidence taken before Sub-Committees.—(*Mr. Drewe.*)

Monday, 19th November, 1951

Ordered, That Mr. John Edwards be discharged from the Select Committee on Estimates ; and that Mr. Hobson be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Drewe.*)

Thursday, 22nd November, 1951

Ordered, That Lieutenant-Commander Baldock and Mr. Thomas Reid be discharged from the Select Committee on Estimates ; and that Mr. Profumo and Mr. Michael Stewart be added to the Committee.—(*Brigadier Mackeson.*)

Monday, 4th February, 1952

Ordered, That Mr. John Freeman be discharged from the Select Committee on Estimates ; and that Mr. Dryden Brook be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Drewe.*)

Tuesday, 19th February, 1952

Ordered, That Mr. West be discharged from the Select Committee on Estimates ; and that Mr. MacColl be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Butcher.*)

Thursday, 13th March, 1952

Ordered, That Mr. George Ward be discharged from the Select Committee on Estimates ; and that Mr. Donner be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Redmayne.*)

Thursday, 8th May, 1952

Ordered, That Mr. Angus Maude be discharged from the Select Committee on Estimates ; and that Lord John Hope be added to the Committee.—(Mr. Butcher.)

Thursday, 29th May, 1952

Ordered, That Mr. Walter Fletcher and Air Commodore Harvey be discharged from the Select Committee on Estimates ; and that Mr. Nigel Nicolson and Brigadier Peto be added to the Committee.—(Mr. Drewe.)

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The cost of preparing for publication the shorthand Minutes of Evidence taken before Sub-Committee D on 4th March and subsequent dates was £126 14s. 10d.

The cost of printing and publishing this Report is estimated by H.M. Stationery Office at £630 0s. 0d.

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The cost of preparing for publication the standard Minutes of Evidence taken before Sub-Committee D on 21st March and subsequent dates was £10.15.0. The cost of printing and publishing this Report is estimated by the Stationery Office at £230.0.0.

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SIXTH REPORT

The Select Committee appointed to examine such of the Estimates presented to this House as may seem fit to the Committee, and to suggest the form in which the Estimates shall be presented for examination, and to report what, if any, economies consistent with the policy implied in those Estimates may be effected therein, have made further progress in the matters to them referred, and have agreed to the following Sixth Report:—

CHILD CARE

1. Your Committee have examined the Estimates for the Home Office in so far as they relate to child care (other than in approved schools) in England and Wales, and the Estimate for the Scottish Home Department in so far as it relates to services in connection with children and young persons. They have taken evidence from the Home Office, the Scottish Home Department, the Treasury, the Association of Municipal Corporations, the County Councils Association, the London County Council, Glasgow Corporation, the Church of England Children's Society, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, the Crusade of Rescue and the National Children's Home and Orphanage. They have also received memoranda from all those bodies, and from the Association of County Councils in Scotland, the Convention of Royal Burghs and the Scottish Counties of Cities Association. Your Committee have visited two children's homes administered by the London County Council, and one administered by the Southwark Catholic Rescue Society.

INTRODUCTION

2. The services which have formed the subject of Your Committee's investigations have, during the last decade, drawn an increasing proportion of public attention, and have, as a result, been reorganised and greatly expanded. The increased general interest in the conditions of children under the care of public bodies and voluntary organisations was stimulated by the experiences of the evacuation at the beginning of the last war. In the second half of 1944, considerable publicity was given to the subject both by letters in the Press and through questions in Parliament. In March and April, 1945, respectively, the Government set up the Care of Children Committee (the "Curtis Committee") for England and Wales and the Committee on Homeless Children (the "Clyde Committee") for Scotland. The terms of reference of each committee were to inquire into existing methods of providing for children who from loss of parents or from any cause whatever are deprived of a normal home life with their own parents or relatives; and to consider what further measures should be taken to ensure that these children are brought up under conditions best calculated to compensate them for the lack of parental care. The main reports* of these two committees were presented to Parliament in the late summer of 1946; they again drew public attention to the subject of child care, and indeed administered something of a shock to the public conscience. Their main recommendations were accepted by the Government in March, 1947, and were largely put into effect by the Children

* Cmd. 6922 and Cmd. 6911

Act, 1948, which came into operation on 5th July, 1948. The present administrative framework set up to deal with child care is largely based upon that Act.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE

Annexes 1
(15) and 2 (1)

3. Until 1947, departmental responsibility for child care was divided, both in England and Wales and in Scotland. In England and Wales, while the Home Office were concerned with the care of children in approved schools, in remand homes and in some of the voluntary homes, the Ministry of Health were responsible for the welfare of children in the care of local authorities, children in certain voluntary homes and children supervised by local authorities under the child life protection provisions of the Public Health Act, 1936. In Scotland, the Department of Health, the Scottish Education Department and the Scottish Home Department were all concerned with the care of homeless children. In 1947 responsibility was concentrated in the Home Office in England and Wales,* and in the Scottish Home Department in Scotland.† In the Home Office a new and enlarged Children's Branch (now known as the Children's Department) was created, with an expanded inspectorate organised on a regional basis.

4. By the Act of 1948, the responsibilities of local authorities (that is, of the councils of county boroughs in England and Wales and large burghs in Scotland, and of county councils throughout Great Britain) were extended and defined. The main statutory duties of a local authority in relation to child care are now twofold:—

Annexes 1
(19) and 2 (2)

(i) Under section 1 of the Act the local authority have a duty to receive into their care, if they consider this to be necessary in the interests of his welfare, any child in their area under the age of seventeen who has no parent or guardian, who is abandoned or lost, or whose parents are unable, for any reason, to provide for his proper upbringing. When a child is in care, the local authority have a continuing duty to restore him to the care of his parents or guardian or of a suitable relative or friend as soon as this is consistent with his welfare; otherwise, the local authority remain responsible for the child, so long as his welfare appears to require it, until he is eighteen years of age. They have power in certain cases to give financial assistance towards his maintenance, education or training up to the age of twenty-one years and sometimes beyond this age.

(ii) Under section 5 of the Act the local authority also have a duty, when ordered by a court, to act as a fit person for the care of a child found, under the provisions of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, to be in need of care or protection, or guilty of an offence which is punishable in an adult by imprisonment. The fit person order, which gives the local authority the rights, powers and liabilities of a parent, remains in force until the child reaches the age of eighteen, unless it is revoked by the court (or discharged by the Secretary of State).

In practice, these two groups of children are provided for in the same way.

* By the Transfer of Functions (Relief of Children) Order, 1947 (S.R. & O., 1947, No. 1644).

† By a direction given by the Secretary of State under the Re-organisation of Offices (Scotland) Act, 1939.

5. The general duty of a local authority towards children in their care is stated in section 12 of the Act, which requires the authority to exercise their powers to further the best interests of the children and to afford them opportunity for the proper development of their character and abilities, and, in so doing, to make such use of the facilities and services available to children in the care of their own parents as appears to the local authority to be reasonable. The conception is that the local authority should bring up the children as a good parent would, and as far as practicable in the same kind of way. The Act also requires each local authority to appoint a children's committee to which these functions stand referred (unless the Secretary of State concerned dispenses with that requirement) and a children's officer who acts as chief officer of the committee and whose sole concern is with their work.

6. Before the Act came into force, although expenditure on children committed by a court to the care of a local authority as a fit person ranked for 50 per cent. direct grant, expenditure on children maintained by local authorities under the Poor Law did not so qualify, but was covered by the block grant. Since then, however, direct Exchequer grant has been payable on all child care expenditure of local authorities. The standard rate of grant is 50 per cent., reduced as necessary to secure that the local authorities bear half the expenditure incurred by the Secretary of State on training in child care under section 45 of the Children Act, and in making grants to voluntary organisations under section 46 (1). The effect of these two reductions is in fact trivial, and for practical purposes it can be taken that the Exchequer contributes 50 per cent. of the national expenditure on children in the care of local authorities.

Annexes 1
(17) and 2 (1)

EXPANSION OF THE CHILD CARE SERVICES SINCE 1948

7. In 1946, at the time of the inquiries of the Curtis and Clyde Committees the numbers of children in care, of categories similar to those covered by the Act, were about 48,000 in England and Wales, and 9,337 in Scotland. Since the Act came into force, the number of children in the care of local authorities under section 1 or section 5 has steadily increased, as shown in the following table:—

TABLE 1

	<i>England and Wales</i>				<i>Scotland</i>	
1949 (actual)	55,255	...	...	...	...	9,068
1950 ..	58,987	...	...	...	...	9,537
1951 ..	62,691	...	...	...	...	10,011
1952-53 (estimated)	66,373	...	...	...	...	10,248

To give a complete picture of the present development of child care, it may be added that on 30th November, 1951, the numbers of children for whose maintenance voluntary organisations had made themselves responsible were 23,257 in England and Wales and 3,045 in Scotland. These figures do not include the 6,638 children in England and Wales and the 1,745 children in Scotland placed in the care of voluntary organisations by local authorities (*see* paragraph 38), and already included in the figures of children in the care of local authorities in 1951.

8. The cost of the services provided has also increased steadily, though to some extent, of course, this has been due to rising prices. No accurate comparison can be made with the corresponding expenditure before the Act came into force, because of the different procedure under which grant was paid before that time (described in paragraph 6). The steady increase in the total expenditure paid from the year 1949-50 onwards is illustrated by the following table:—

TABLE 2
EXPENDITURE ON CHILD CARE UNDER THE CHILDREN ACT, 1948

The figures given below show the sums paid or to be paid out of the Exchequer in respect of the services named for each full financial year since the Act came into force. They do not include expenditure on child care administration within the Home Office and the Scottish Home Department themselves. In the case of the heading Local Authorities: Care and Welfare of Children, the combined expenditure of local authorities and the State is approximately double the figures here given (which are those of the grants paid). Half the expenditure under the other two headings is recovered from local authorities by means of deductions from the grants paid under the first heading.

ENGLAND AND WALES									
	<i>Local Authorities: Care and Welfare of Children</i>			<i>Voluntary Homes (Grants to certain homes for improvements in premises or equipment)</i>			<i>Training in Child Care</i>		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1949-50 (actual) ...	4,185,194	6	8	7,743	0	0	66,629	18	7
1950-51 " ...	5,325,635	0	0	20,255	0	0	77,986	18	7
1951-52 " ...	5,535,659	0	0	11,430	0	0	70,715	8	0
1952-53 (estimated) ...	6,700,000	0	0	30,000	0	0	80,000	0	0

SCOTLAND									
	£			£			£		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1949-50 (actual) ...	379,695	16	11	2,310	0	0	—		
1950-51 " ...	473,020	6	5	4,610	0	0	228	2	1
1951-52 " ...	577,439	0	0	2,363	0	0	302	0	0
1952-53 (estimated) ...	612,400	0	0	3,500	0	0	3,100	0	0

The receipts from parental contributions, which are paid over by the collecting local authorities to the Secretary of State and half of which is returned to the local authorities responsible for the maintenance of the children concerned, were as follows:—

						<i>England and Wales</i>	<i>Scotland</i>
						£	£
1949-50 (actual) ...	...	...	...	...	...	197,150	24,104
1950-51 " ...	...	...	...	...	...	297,175	26,223
1951-52 " ...	...	...	...	...	...	384,285	32,213
1952-53 (estimated) ...	...	...	...	...	...	425,000	29,000

A note on the main ways in which expenditure has increased in England and Wales in this period is given in Annex 1, Appendix W.

CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

9. As will be seen from Table 2, by far the greatest part of the annual expenditure on child care by the central and local authorities is devoted directly to the welfare of the children who come into the care of local authorities under the statutory provisions referred to in paragraph 4. Of the 62,691 children in such care in England and Wales at the end of 1951, local authorities had taken into care 45,585 in pursuance of section 1 of the Act, because they thought it necessary

so to do in the interests of the children. The remaining 17,106 had been committed by courts to the care of local authorities as "fit persons". In Scotland the 10,011 children in care on 30th November, 1951, were made up of 8,086 in care under section 1 and 1,925 for whom a "fit person" order had been made. The children taken into care under section 1 include not only children taken into care for comparatively long periods, because of the death of their parents, the break-up of their homes or other such reasons, but also children for whom only temporary provision needs to be made, because, for example, their mothers are ill or are having another child. It is worthy of note that in England and Wales in the year ended 30th November, 1951, nearly 37,000 children were received into care and nearly 33,000 went out of care. Although many of these children were no doubt either entering upon, or concluding in the normal manner, a long uninterrupted period in care, these figures also indicate that there is a constant movement of children into and out of care, which is bound to add considerably to the administrative problems of local authorities.

Annex 1 (21)
Qs. 298, 862

10. The different ways in which children in the care of local authorities are provided for, and the numbers of children provided for in each way, can be seen in Table 3.* In England and Wales the largest group of children is still that of those housed in local authority homes; in 1952-53, it is estimated that these will number 29,243 out of 66,373 children in care. The number of children boarded out has been growing steadily, but that group still comes second only, with 27,379 children. The only other group of any size is that of the 7,872 children placed by local authorities in the homes of voluntary organisations. In Scotland, on the other hand, children boarded out form much the largest group, estimated to number 6,092 out of 10,248 children in care in 1952-53. The next largest group is that of the 1,745 children placed in the homes of voluntary organisations. Children in local authority homes are estimated to number only 1,655.

Annexes 1
(31) and
2 (20)

11. The Home Office maintain contact with the child care work of local authorities mainly through their Children's Department Inspectorate. This, apart from the Chief Inspector and two deputies and certain specialist (including medical) inspectors, is organised in six regions, which have their headquarters respectively in London (two regions), Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Cardiff. Each region is in charge of a superintending inspector, who has a group of about 10 inspectors under him. In all, the inspectorate consists at present of 79 persons (42 men and 37 women), of whom 23 are at the Home Office and 56 in the regions.

Annex 1 (16)

Qs. 307-8

12. The Scottish Home Department maintain a Child Care Inspectorate which in 1951-52 consisted of one chief inspector, three grade II inspectors (two of whom are women), and one welfare visitor (a woman). Treasury agreement has been given in principle to a reorganised complement of one chief inspector, one grade I inspector and five grade II inspectors. It has been found that with such a small staff the distinction between the duties of inspectors and welfare visitors is unworkable. The inspectorate works from Edinburgh. There is no rigid territorial division of duties, but in practice individual officers concentrate on particular areas.

Annex 2
(Appendix
IV)

* See pages xii and xiii.

TABLE 3
EXPENDITURE ON CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES
(i) ENGLAND AND WALES
Local Authority Child Care Estimates

The table below gives an analysis of the figures in the local authority revised estimates for 1950-51 and 1951-52, and of the preliminary estimates for 1952-53.

Maintenance	Revised Estimates for 1950-1951			Revised Estimates for 1951-1952			Preliminary Estimates for 1952-1953		
	Expenditure £	No. of Children	Cost per child per week £ s. d.	Expenditure £	No. of Children	Cost per child per week £ s. d.	Expenditure £	No. of Children	Cost per child per week £ s. d.
Boarded out children ...	1,437,588	22,181	1 5 0	1,766,713	24,513	1 7 9	2,052,120	27,379	1 8 10
Local authority homes ...	6,553,243	27,359	4 12 1	7,074,669	27,587	4 18 8	7,990,144	29,243	5 5 1
Local authority hostels ...	64,157	321	3 16 10	90,477	425	4 1 10	144,501	741	3 15 0
Voluntary (children's) homes ...	859,925	7,312	2 5 3	959,412	7,615	2 8 5	1,006,428	7,872	2 9 2
Other accommodation... * ...	199,125	1,302	2 18 10	173,746	1,190	2 16 2	175,570	1,138	2 19 4
<i>General</i>									
Administration—									
Direct (a) ...	1,084,235	—	—	1,330,721	—	—	1,426,613	—	8 3
Apportioned (a) ...	457,569	—	—	684,892	—	—	705,475	—	4 1
Contributions to voluntary organisations... ..	18,168	—	—	21,202	—	—	24,045	—	—
Miscellaneous ...	41,398	—	—	18,622	—	—	51,795	—	—
TOTAL... ..	10,715,408	58,475(b)	3 10 6	12,120,454	61,330(b)	3 16 0	13,576,691	66,373	3 18 8

(a) For an analysis of this expenditure, see Annex 1, Appendix I.

(b) For actual totals in November of 1950 and 1951 see Table 1.

TABLE 3
(ii) SCOTLAND
Analysis of expenditure by local authorities in 1950-51 and of revised estimates submitted by local authorities for 1951-52 and estimates for 1952-53

Item	1950-51			1951-52			1952-53		
	Actual Expenditure	No. of children	Cost per child per week	Revised Estimate	No. of children	Cost per child per week	Estimate	No. of children (b)	Cost per child per week (b)
Boarded out children	£ 342,038	5,581	£ s. d. 1 3 6	£ 388,117	5,955	£ s. d. 1 5 1	£ 416,000	5,955 (6,092)	£ s. d. 1 6 10 (£1.6.3)
Children in voluntary homes ...	119,625	1,794	1 5 8	136,634	1,745	1 10 1	145,000	1,745	1 12 0
Local authority homes	359,865	1,482	4 13 4	418,563	1,555	5 3 6	473,000	1,555 (1,655)	5 16 11 (£5.9.11)
Other accommodation... ..	30,391	680	17 2	34,032	756	17 4	40,015	756	1 0 4
Contributions towards expenses of maintenance, education and training of persons over 18 years of age	1,327	—	—	2,130	—	—	2,820	—	—
Contributions to voluntary organisations... ..	3,196	—	—	2,706	—	—	3,141	—	—
Pay of Children's Officer and staff	60,915	—	—	74,725	—	—	80,000	—	—
Administration expenses (a) ...	60,889	—	—	69,259	—	—	71,774	—	—
Other expenditure	1,500	—	—	1,418	—	—	2,634	—	—
TOTAL	979,746	9,537	1 19 6	1,127,584	10,011	2 3 4	1,234,384	10,011 (10,248)	2 7 5 (£2.6.4)

Administration Expenses

(a) These expenses include (i) apportionment of salaries and wages of staffs and of office expenses of central local authority departments, e.g. County and Town Clerk's Departments, Treasurer's and Chamberlain's Departments, etc., (ii) travelling and subsistence expenses, (iii) stationery, printing, postages, etc.

(b) These figures are based on the number of children in care on 30th November, 1951. Between 1950 and 1951 there was a 5 per cent. increase in the number of such children. Assuming an increase of 2½ per cent. for 1953 (distributed between children boarded out and children in local authority homes), the estimated weekly cost per child for 1952/53 would be the figures shown in brackets.

BOARDING OUT

13. In the Report of the Curtis Committee reference was made in paragraph 460 to "the view expressed in nearly all quarters that it (i.e. boarding out) is on the whole the best method short of adoption of providing the child with a substitute for his own home", and, in paragraph 461, to the evidence "that in the free conditions of ordinary family life with its opportunities for varied human contacts and experiences, the child's nature develops and his confidence in life and ease in society are established in a way that can hardly be achieved in a larger establishment living as it must a more strictly regulated existence". In their recommendation 21 the Curtis Committee stated their conclusion that "Boarding out is to be preferred to institutional care for children who are suitable for boarding out wherever entirely satisfactory homes can be found; and a vigorous effort should be made by local authorities to extend the system". The Clyde Committee reached similar conclusions, and recommended "that a good foster-parent system should be encouraged as the best solution of the problem, as it is most suited to give the child the necessary individual attention, and scope for the development of independence and initiative". Thus the views of these committees were definite and specific about the merits of boarding out as against any other method of child care and about the priority to be assigned to it. These views were accepted by Parliament and embodied in unequivocal terms in section 13 (1) of the Act of 1948, which is as follows:—

"(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, a local authority shall discharge their duty to provide accommodation and maintenance for a child in their care—

- (a) by boarding him out on such terms as to payment by the authority and otherwise as the authority may, subject to the provisions of this Act and regulations thereunder, determine; or
- (b) where it is not practicable or desirable for the time being to make arrangements for boarding out, by maintaining the child in a home provided under this Part of this Act or by placing him in a voluntary home the managers of which are willing to receive him."

14. It is clear, then, that local authorities are under a specific obligation to use boarding out as the normal method of providing for the children in their care, and an implied obligation to give it an overriding priority and to make it the main objective of all their work in this connection. The Home Office and the Scottish Home Department are bound to secure the implementation of this policy in the same spirit and with the same intention. There are of course considerations, not contrary but qualifying, which must be borne in mind, and which make it essential always to weigh up each case individually. Neither boarding out nor anything else connected with child care is either susceptible of wholesale treatment or to be regarded merely as an affair of theories and percentages. With these reservations, however, Your Committee see no reason to question the merits of this accepted policy, or to doubt the validity of the arguments originally adduced in its favour; indeed all that they have learnt in the course of their investigations reinforces what was said by the Curtis and Clyde Committees.

15. The Curtis* and Clyde† Committees also considered the question of the rates of payment to foster-parents. At that time there was no fixed scale of payment in either England and Wales or Scotland. Both committees recommended standardisation of the rates of payment. The Curtis Committee considered representations that the payment to a foster-parent should include an element of remuneration. Their conclusions, however, were against this suggestion. Those of the Clyde Committee were similar. The latter committee expressed the view that "No one who is doing this work merely for the financial benefit involved will make a good foster-parent. . . . The ideal is to fix a scale of payment which will be sufficient to pay its way without constituting an inducement to do the work for the sake of the profit involved". In 1950, the two Secretaries of State made broadly similar arrangements controlling the total expenditure of each local authority for boarding out.‡ A local authority is left free to determine the amount spent on any child boarded out, provided that the authority's expenditure in a financial year does not exceed 40s. weekly per child boarded out. This amount includes expenditure on clothing, pocket money, holidays and other necessary items, but does not take account of salaries and other administrative costs incurred by the authority. This arrangement allows local authorities to exercise discretion in their payments for individual boarded-out children, and when necessary to make exceptional payments to meet exceptional needs.

Annexes
1 (32) and
2 (8)

16. As shown in Table 3, the estimated cost per child boarded out per week for 1952-53 is £1 8s. 10d. in England and Wales and £1 6s. 3d. in Scotland. These figures compare with an estimated average weekly cost of £5 5s. 1d. in England and Wales and £5 9s. 11d. in Scotland for every child in a local authority home (again without taking the central administrative costs of the local authority into account). They reveal the striking and most unusual fact that what is generally agreed to be the best method of providing for children in the care of local authorities is also the cheapest. They also point the way towards possible major economies which, far from endangering the fulfilment of the policy laid down by Parliament, would actually promote it.

17. The following table shows the progress made in boarding out in England and Wales since the Act of 1948 came into force:—

Annex 1 (24)

TABLE 4
England and Wales

	<i>Number of Children boarded out</i>				<i>Percentage of Children in Care</i>
1949 (actual)	19,271	...	..	...	35
1950 ..	21,710	...	...	...	37
1951 ..	24,319	...	...	...	39
1952-53 (estimated)	27,379	...	...	..	41

There is no great difference (according to the figures as on 30th November, 1951) between the average percentage for all counties and that for all county boroughs. Within each of those groups, however, there is wide variation between individual authorities, the figures for

Annex 1
(Appendix
III)

* See Report, paragraphs 469 and 470, and recommendation 26.

† See Report, paragraphs 53 and 54, and recommendation 5.

‡ In Home Office Circular No. 15/1950, of 1st February, 1950, and in Circular No. 7366, of 14th March, 1950, issued by the Scottish Home Department.

the counties varying from 18 per cent. to 77 per cent., and those for the county boroughs from 18 per cent. to 75 per cent. Clearly, it would not be fair to draw any conclusions from a comparison between any given two or more authorities without knowledge of local conditions. It is, however, of interest to note the wide variations between authorities with comparable numbers of children in care, as the following table shows:—

TABLE 5

<i>Counties</i>			<i>County Boroughs</i>		
	<i>Children in Care</i>	<i>Percentage boarded out</i>		<i>Children in Care</i>	<i>Percentage boarded out</i>
Cheshire ...	838	59	Nottingham	614	67
Staffordshire ...	877	49	Sheffield ...	661	47
Hampshire ...	840	33	Bradford ...	573	23

18. The position in Scotland over the same period is shown in the following table:—

TABLE 6

	<i>Number of Children boarded out</i>					<i>Percentage of Children in Care</i>
1949 (actual)	5,519	...	...	...	...	61
1950 "	5,581	...	...	...	...	59
1951 "	5,955	...	...	...	...	59
1952-53 (estimated)	6,092	...	...	...	...	59

There is as wide variation between local authorities in Scotland as in England. In most Scottish areas, however, the total number of children in care is comparatively small. A notable exception is Glasgow which has 2,958 children in care, of whom, it may be noted, 2,061 (70 per cent.) are boarded out.

19. Thus, while in Scotland there have, since the Act came into force, been about 60 per cent. of children in care boarded out, in England and Wales the percentage has gradually risen over the same period from the very much lower figure of 35, but is still only 41. Moreover, local authorities in England and Wales appear to meet with a widely differing degree of success in their efforts to board out children. It is clear that if the proportion of children boarded out in England and Wales could be brought up to something approaching that of Scotland, considerable economies would result. The estimates for 1952-53 (given in Table 3) show that for every child taken out of a local authority home and put in the care of foster-parents, there results an average saving of £3 16s. 3d. per week. If, for example, 10,000 of the children at present in local authority homes in England and Wales could be boarded out (raising the proportion from 41 per cent. to 56 per cent.) the Exchequer and the local authorities would each save nearly £1,000,000 per annum.

20. Your Committee have, therefore, considered it worth while to inquire in some detail into the factors which affect the progress of boarding out in England and Wales. The three main factors involved appear to be the extent to which children in care are suitable for boarding out, the number of foster-homes available, and the action

taken by the authorities, central and local, to promote boarding out. The extent to which each of these factors affects the position will naturally differ from area to area. In considering the first, however, account must be taken of differing standards of judgment on the part of local authorities, while variations in the third must depend largely on the degree of importance that each local authority attach to the extension of boarding out, and consequently on the zeal with which they apply themselves to this aspect of their task. It is in relation to the second factor—the number of homes available—that material differences, not easily to be overcome, are most likely to be found.

21. Your Committee received, from local authorities and from the Home Office, a considerable body of evidence both oral and written, as to the proportion of children in care that may properly be classified as unsuitable for boarding out, and as to the reasons to be assigned for such unsuitability. Widely differing opinions were expressed on the first point. On the one hand, a representative of the County Councils Association gave it as her opinion that the proportion of unsuitable children might be as high as 50 per cent., while on the other there is the actual experience of Bournemouth, which, starting with only 21.6 per cent. in February, 1949, had succeeded by the end of March, 1952, that is to say in just over three years, in raising the proportion of its children boarded out (satisfactorily, it is to be presumed) to 82.1 per cent. The Home Office themselves expressed the opinion that in the long run it would be possible to board out between half and three-quarters of the children in care in England and Wales; they later modified this estimate to between half and two-thirds.

Q. 1092

Annex 11 (2)

Q. 822

Q. 888

22. The causes which render children unsuitable for boarding out were summarised by the Home Office in a note submitted to Your Committee. The local authorities submitted more detailed evidence, which in general corroborates that of the Home Office. It is clear that there will always be a proportion of the children in care who, because of physical or mental disability, need so much attention by trained persons that they will never be suitable for boarding out. There will also be children who, because of the neglect or ill-treatment which they have experienced, will need a period of recuperation in a reception home, children's home or residential nursery, before they are ready to be boarded out. There are, however, probably some classes of children (for example coloured children, referred to by the Liverpool Corporation) whom local authorities may tend to class as unsuitable for boarding out, not so much because the children would not benefit by it as because it is very difficult to find foster-parents for them. It may also be remarked, in relation to children considered only temporarily unsuitable, that every effort ought to be made in all local authority homes to render such children suitable for boarding out as quickly as possible. In this connection, it was mentioned in evidence that there is always the tendency, natural enough but not in the best interests of the children, for house-parents in homes to be instinctively reluctant to part with their children; the Home Office recognise this and state that efforts are being made to overcome it, and it is to be hoped that they will be successful.

Annex 1
(Appendix
IV)
Annexes
10 and 11

Annex 11

Qs. 849-53

23. These and analogous points were brought out by the Home Office in their note and Your Committee are bound to accept the fact that such classes of children exist and that some of them may never

Annex 1
(Appendix
IV)

become suitable for boarding out. But they part company with the Home Office in paragraph 2 (b) (v) of the note, in which the Department refer to "children who have lived for a long time in a children's home (sometimes termed 'institutionalised' children) and who would find too difficult the uprooting from a large community and adjustment to ordinary family life." There is something shocking in the use of the word "institutionalised" since it implies that children who have spent a considerable time in a children's home, far from being rendered fit for life in the outside world, are in actual fact brought up in circumstances that will make their introduction to normal social life more difficult. If the use of the term "institutionalised" is justified it only emphasises the merits of boarding out as opposed to life in community homes.

24. While, however, admitting the reality of the difficulties referred to in paragraph 22, Your Committee are not prepared to believe that they are so great as to justify local authorities as a whole in thinking that they have as yet done all they can to conform either to the spirit of the Curtis Report or to the letter of the Act. This view appears to be supported by the opinion expressed on behalf of the County Councils Association, "that in some counties at any rate the numbers of children boarded out could be increased without in any way departing from the principle that the welfare of the individual child must have precedence over all other considerations." The possibilities of "short-term" boarding out, for children who come into care for periods of three months down to as little as a week because of illness or some other temporary difficulty in their families, should be remembered. In the opinion of the Home Office, boarding out is the best way of providing for such children, although not all local authorities appear to share this view, and indeed there must be many cases where the need to keep brothers and sisters together, or the danger of bringing about a conflict of affection as between foster-parents and the actual parents, makes this course undesirable. Taking every type of case into consideration, Your Committee are of the opinion that there are still a considerable proportion of children in care in England and Wales and not boarded out who are or could be made suitable for boarding out.

25. The main obstacle in the way of increased boarding out in England and Wales is the shortage of suitable foster homes. This difficulty is felt even in Scotland, but it is much more serious in England and Wales. The origin of this difference between the positions on either side of the Border appears to lie in differing traditions of child care. It was more than once emphasised to Your Committee that in Scotland boarding out is the traditional method of providing for children in care. Glasgow, for example, has records of boarding out going back 170 years, and 70 per cent. of its children in care are boarded out at present. As a result of this tradition, Scottish local authorities have in the course of time accumulated lists of suitable foster-parents, who themselves spread the tradition and recommend other potential foster-parents. England and Wales, on the other hand, had, before the Act came into force, little established tradition of boarding out. London, for example, did not start intensive boarding-out operations until 1949, at the end of which year it had 18.2 per cent. of its children boarded out, and by the end of 1951 it had still only raised the proportion to 24.4 per cent. In

Annex 10

Qs. 389-90
Annexes
10 and 11
Q. 865-6Q. 1104
Annexes
6 and 7Annex 2 (7)
Qs. 400, 606

Q. 597

Qs. 858, 605

Q. 545
Annex 3
(Table 1)

County Durham, again, it was the policy of the Council up till 1948 Annex 10 not to board out children who were in the care of the Public Assistance Committee, with the result that there was virtually no existing boarding out organisation on which to build. The effect of this absence of any tradition of boarding out—indeed, of the existence of a tradition of other methods of care—may vary in intensity from area to area, but is probably felt to some extent throughout the whole of England and Wales. It meant that when local authorities first set out to implement the Act of 1948, they had no reserve of known suitable foster-homes on which to draw and little knowledge of the technique involved, and they were faced with the task of arousing public interest in a field that was comparatively unfamiliar.

26. The difficulty of fulfilling this task has been, and still is, accentuated by various social factors, particularly the housing problem. On this subject detailed evidence, which Your Committee have not attempted to summarise, was given by the local authority associations, and will be found in Annexes 10 and 11. Here again the effect of these social factors is bound to vary, perhaps widely, from area to area. Difficulties are bound to be particularly acute, for example, in large urban areas, especially those which were badly bombed during the war. In this connection Your Committee would like to draw Annex 11 attention to a suggestion put forward by Liverpool Corporation, that some central plan might be devised whereby the more favourably placed authorities might assist those less favourably placed by making available information as to possible foster-homes in the areas of the former.

27. The considerations mentioned in the last paragraph also apply, however, to Scotland, and cannot by themselves be considered to debar the possibility of raising the proportion of children in care boarded out in England and Wales to the level which obtains north of the Border. Your Committee cannot believe that, were the need for more foster-homes fully appreciated in England and Wales, the people of those countries would be any less ready than the people of Scotland to undertake this self-rewarding form of public service. The conclusion must be that, despite considerable efforts on the part of many local Q. 1106 authorities, the public in England and Wales have not yet been made sufficiently aware of the need for foster-homes. This is recognised by Q. 827-8 the Home Office, who agreed that the main obstacle to greater boarding out is the fact that the need for foster-parents is not widely enough known, apart, of course, from the ever-present problem of finding people who are sufficiently public-spirited to accept the more difficult children. The second problem is in fact a particular aspect of the first—the lack of knowledge of the need for foster-parents.

28. While Your Committee fully recognise the many and varying difficulties that face local authorities, and the dangers attendant upon slack or careless administration, particularly from the acceptance of foster-parents without the closest scrutiny, they are convinced that the welfare of the children themselves, and the need for due care in the expenditure of public money, alike demand that the boarding out of all suitable children in satisfactory foster-homes should be the primary objective of all concerned.

29. Taking these two considerations in order, there is no doubt that local authorities are well aware that the Home Office regard boarding

Q. 392

out as the best policy in the interest of the children. The Home Office state that they lose no opportunity of impressing their views upon the local authorities; nevertheless, Your Committee have received the impression that the Home Office are inclined to dwell on the desirability of more boarding out, rather than to insist that it should be treated as a matter of urgent and vital necessity. It is worth while recalling that during the period between the publication of the Curtis Report and the coming into force of the Act of 1948 the Home Office in fact armed themselves with stronger powers than they now possess. Under section 4 of the Children and Young Persons (Boarding Out) Rules, 1946 (S.R. & O., 1946, No. 2083), local authorities in England and Wales were required in principle to board out every person committed to their care as soon as possible with a suitable foster-parent and, where this had not been done within three months, to report the reasons to the Secretary of State and apply for his consent to the alternative arrangements made. These provisions were superseded when the Act of 1948 came into force, and the consent of the Secretary of State to alternative arrangements was no longer required. The responsibility of the Home Office was, however, in no way lessened through the abandonment of the particular powers referred to. It is not enough for the local authorities merely to be aware of the wishes of the Home Office. What is necessary is such constant stimulus as will produce marked improvement upon the results already achieved. Your Committee do not underestimate the value of what has already been done. They consider, however, that the results obtained so far are rather disappointing and that there is a tendency among local authorities, with some exceptions, to emphasise the difficulties of further boarding out, rather than the need for it. They would like, therefore, to see the Home Office transmit, with still greater emphasis, the sense of urgency which it is their duty to feel.

Annexes
3 (1) and 13.

Qs. 1159-72

Q. 1165-6

30. At this point Your Committee would like to refer to a particular matter, involving both the Home Office and a local authority, namely the decision of the London County Council not to board out any child without the agreement of the parents. This practice, as the Council itself points out, limits the number of children available for boarding out. The Home Office know of this practice, and state that it is unusual and not one with which they agree. While, however, they have discussed it from time to time with the Council, they do not appear to have taken any steps to bring the practice to an end, and they implied that their inaction was due to the fact that the Council "feel very strongly indeed" about the matter. The Home Office and the Council cannot both be right, and Your Committee hope that steps will be taken to bring to an end a situation which is, to say the least, anomalous.

31. Turning to the second consideration, namely, economy in the expenditure of public money, it appears to Your Committee that this does not receive the attention that is due. The main reason for this is, probably, that at the time of the passing of the Act there was so much leeway to make up that all the emphasis was placed, quite rightly, upon ameliorating the condition of the children, and the need for economy was treated as a minor matter. But times have changed, the service should have got over its growing pains, and the need for securing the maximum value for every penny of public money that

is spent is, or should be, present in the minds of all those responsible for the administration of the nation's affairs. Bearing this in mind, Your Committee note with regret that although half the cost of the child care services is met by the Exchequer, the Home Office, representing the Treasury in this matter, rely almost entirely upon local authorities to secure a due measure of economy. Although the Home Office recognise that to secure proper economy is one of their principal duties, in the execution of this duty it appears to Your Committee that they are inclined to limit themselves to moral suasion in general terms. Your Committee reach this conclusion because there is little evidence that the financial aspect of the boarding out policy has been impressed upon local authorities, although the large savings which could be made entitle it to a high place in the many arguments that can be advanced.

32. Your Committee recommend:—

(i) That immediate consideration should be given to the question of securing far wider publicity for the need for suitable foster-homes, either by national or local efforts, or both.

(ii) That the Home Office should issue renewed instructions to local authorities to the effect that boarding out is, with due safeguards, the primary objective. Regular returns should be made, to the Home Office and to each Children's Committee, accounting for each child that is not boarded out, and giving the reason why.

(iii) That particular attention should be given to the means of training children to become suitable for boarding out, if they are not suitable when first coming into care.

(iv) That the Home Office should consult with the local authorities on the organisation of regular exchanges of information which might assist authorities with difficult areas to board out some of their children in the areas of authorities more fortunately placed.

(v) That the Home Office, while keeping the interests of the children in the forefront, should never allow local authorities to lose sight of the financial aspect of child care, and the need for economical administration, in the interests both of the taxpayer and of the ratepayer.

CHILDREN IN LOCAL AUTHORITY HOMES

33. Although the proportion of children in care who are provided for in local authority homes has been diminishing, the number of children in the homes is still on the increase, as the following table shows:—

TABLE 7

	<i>England and Wales</i>	<i>Scotland</i>
1949 (actual)	24,508	1,322
1950 „	25,067	1,482
1951 „	25,183	1,555
1952-53 (estimated)	29,243	1,655

34. Both in England and Wales and in Scotland the problem of housing this growing body of children has had to be met, in the main, by the purchase and adaptation of existing buildings. The building of

Annexes
1 (25) and
2 (4)

2 (9)

new homes and the replacement of the many old and often unsuitable homes provided under the Poor Law has been curtailed by the restriction on capital investment. The policy has been to aim, wherever possible, at getting children who are in care for long periods into small family homes taking from 8 to 12 children each, rather than to assemble them in the larger units which were at one time customary.

35. The cost of keeping a child in a local authority home has steadily increased. The following table shows the average cost per child per week during the last three years:—

		<i>England and Wales</i>			<i>Scotland</i>		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1950-51	...	4	12	1	4	13	4 (actual)
1951-52	...	4	18	8	5	3	6
1952-53	...	5	5	1	5	9	11

(estimated)

Annex 1, Appendix I, contains a table showing the various items which contributed to the average cost per child per week in the homes of certain English local authorities in 1950-51. The largest item is invariably that of salaries, wages, etc. A similar table for certain Scottish local authorities is given in Annex 2, Appendix I. For the sake of comparison, Your Committee obtained figures showing comparable costs in the homes of three of the principal voluntary organisations; these figures will be found in Table 10 (paragraph 41).

36. The tables of costs in local authority homes referred to in the preceding paragraph again reveal a wide variation in the average figures. In England, the lowest average weekly cost per child (among the selected examples given) is £3 2s. 0d., and the highest £9 13s. 1d.; in Scotland, the lowest figure is £3 9s. 11d., and the highest £6 12s. 3d. The differences reflect variation in costs not only between one local authority and another, but also between one home and another. The second point is clearly illustrated in the table given by the London County Council showing the average costs of the different types of home which they administer. Various factors contribute to this variation, including the number and type of the children in a home, the skill in management of the house-parents and the convenience or inconvenience of the buildings. Nursery homes, and homes for special types of difficult or backward children, naturally tend to be more expensive to run, since the ratio of staff to children is necessarily higher in such homes.

37. As appears from Table 3, expenditure on local authority homes is by far the largest item in the annual expenditure on children in the care of local authorities in England and Wales. It is estimated that in 1952-53 it will account for £7,990,144 out of £13,576,691 so spent. In Scotland, where the proportion of children in local authority homes is so much smaller, expenditure thereon does not bulk so large, but it is still the largest item, being estimated to account for £473,000 out of £1,234,384 in 1952-53. The more detailed comments of Your Committee on this expenditure are therefore made in paragraphs 48 to 62, where the expenditure of local authorities is considered as a whole.

Annex 3
(Table II)

Q. 329

LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN IN VOLUNTARY HOMES

38. The second of the two ways in which, under section 13 of the Act, a local authority is entitled to provide for a child for whom boarding out is not immediately practicable or desirable is by placing him in a voluntary home, the managers of which are willing to receive him. The following table shows the number of children so provided for in the last three years:—

Annexes 1
(27 and 32)
and 2 (11)

TABLE 9

				<i>England and Wales</i>	<i>Scotland</i>
1949 (actual)	...	...	...	5,968	1,663
1950 „	...	...	...	6,453	1,794
1951 „	...	...	...	6,638	1,745
1952-53 (estimated)	...	...	...	7,872	1,745

In 1951, the last year for which final figures are available, the proportion of children in care housed in voluntary homes was about 10.5 per cent. in England and Wales and about 17.5 per cent. in Scotland.

39. Under section 29 of the Act every voluntary home must be registered with the appropriate Secretary of State who, under section 31, may make regulations as to the conduct of homes and for securing the welfare of the children in them. The homes are regularly visited by the inspectors of the two responsible departments. The Home Office gave their considered opinion that conditions in the best voluntary homes are as good as those in the best local authority homes.

Qs. 900-1

40. Payment by local authorities in respect of children whom they place in the homes of voluntary organisations is regulated along the same lines as is payment for boarding out (as described in paragraph 15). Each local authority is free to spend what it thinks fit on an individual child, provided that its total expenditure does not exceed an average amount per child fixed by the appropriate Department. At present, the maximum average rates per child both in England and Wales and in Scotland are £3 a week for children under five and £2 10s. a week for children of five and over. These amounts do not represent the full cost of maintaining a child, it being the view of the voluntary organisations that the organisation ought to bear some of the cost. The actual rates paid are fixed by agreement between the local authority and the voluntary organisation concerned. The estimated average weekly payment per child by local authorities for all such children in 1952-53 is £2 9s. 2d. in England and Wales and £1 12s. in Scotland. These average weekly rates are markedly lower than those for children in local authority homes (£5 5s. 1d. in England and Wales and £5 9s. 11d. in Scotland, omitting central administrative costs in each case). Your Committee are satisfied, however, that it would be wrong to urge local authorities, on grounds of economy alone, to place more children in voluntary homes rather than in their own. Such a policy would be contrary to that underlying the Act of 1948, and would probably be repugnant to most local authorities. Nor is it certain that the voluntary organisations, which at present do all they can to meet the requirements of local authorities in this respect, would be able to deal with large numbers of additional children.

Annexes
1 (26) and
2 (11)
Q. 276

Qs. 721-2,
727

Q. 490
Qs. 492-6

41. Your Committee think it worth while, however, to draw attention to the comparison between the actual average cost per child in voluntary homes (as distinct from the average payment made for children placed there by local authorities) and the average cost per child in local authority homes. The following table shows the average weekly cost per child in the homes of three of the largest voluntary organisations:—

TABLE 10

Dr. Barnardo's Homes

<i>Girl's Homes</i>			<i>Boy's Homes</i>			<i>Nursery Homes</i>			<i>Mixed Homes</i>			<i>All Homes</i>		
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
2	14	9	3	5	9	4	4	9	3	0	10	3	6	4

Church of England Children's Society

Q. 420.

<i>Babies (up to 2 years)</i>		<i>Toddlers (aged 2 to 5)</i>		<i>Babies and Toddlers</i>		<i>Boys and Girls (5 to 15) (with Master and Matron)</i>		<i>Boys and Girls (5 to 15) (with Matron only)</i>		<i>Boys only</i>		<i>Girls only</i>		
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
4	12	10	4	7	4	4	6	5	2	17	0	2	14	9
												2	14	4
														2
														11
														5

*National Children's Homes**Ordinary Branches**Nursery Branches**Special Branches (Diabetic, Cripples, Sanatoria, etc.)*

£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
3	2	2	4	12	0	4	7	4

These figures are indeed in striking contrast to those for local authority homes, quoted in paragraphs 35 and 36, but no firm deduction can be drawn from such a comparison without a detailed examination of the conditions contributing to the costs in each case, particularly such matters as numbers of staff and the salaries and wages paid. Nevertheless, in view of the very high opinion, quoted in paragraph 39, expressed by the Home Office as to conditions in the best voluntary homes, Your Committee think that the comparatively low costs in voluntary homes are worthy of note. They suggest that local authorities should be ready to learn all they can from the voluntary organisations which, since they are financed by voluntary effort, are compelled to exercise, as they clearly do, a very high standard of house-keeping.

PARENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS

42. The parents of children in care are liable to contribute, according to their means, to the cost of the maintenance of the children until they reach the age of sixteen years. Receipts from such contributions are accounted for as appropriations in aid. Unless a contribution order has been made by a court (when committing a child to the care of a local authority as a "fit person") it falls to the local authority to seek to reach agreement with the parents, if any, as to what payments shall be made. Where agreement cannot be reached, local authorities can themselves apply to a court for a contribution order. It is for the Home Office and the Scottish Home Department to see that local authorities carry out their responsibilities in this respect. The Treasury have not thought it necessary to investigate the present system of collecting contributions. The amounts collected in contributions since the Act came into force are shown in Table 2 above. Annex 1 (23)

43. When a contribution order is made, the scale of payment is, of course, entirely a matter for the court to decide. The court are, however, required by statute to have regard to the parents' means, and local authorities in England and Wales have been advised by the Home Office to adopt the same principle when seeking to make agreements with parents. No maximum has been laid down and the present practice is that each local authority makes its own scale. One English local authority witness expressed surprise that no investigation had been made into the various systems adopted by local authorities. The view of the Home Office is that parents ought to be required to pay a reasonable sum towards the maintenance of their children when in public care, and they stated that they have the impression that parents could pay more than they do at present. On the other hand, it must be remembered that there are numbers of children in care who have no parents, and others whose parents are not in a position to pay any contributions. A detailed investigation in Glasgow led to the conclusion that there was little chance of getting contributions in respect of more than 25 per cent. of the children in the care of that city. Your Committee do not, therefore, suggest that any very great economies could be obtained in this field. They recommend, however, that the Home Office and the Scottish Home Department should consider giving more detailed guidance to local authorities as to the scale of payments to be used whenever it is feasible to require contributions from the parents of children in care.

44. Where contributions are made under a court order, the local authority cannot write off any sum due without the authority of the Secretary of State. When contributions are made under an agreement, however, writing off is entirely a matter for the local authority. It was not possible for Your Committee during the time available to obtain complete figures of the amounts of all parental contributions written off by all local authorities over a given period. The sums written off, in respect of contributions under court orders only, amounted in England and Wales to about £26,000 in each of the financial years 1948-49, 1949-50 and 1950-51, and in Scotland they total about £4,300 since the Act came into force. Evidence given by selected local authorities suggests that the proportion of contributions which local authorities succeed in collecting has been slowly rising since the date of the Act, and that in the year 1951-52 it averaged somewhere between 60 per cent. and 70 per cent. Here again, there is probably not scope for any

Q. 929

Q. 934

Q. 1128

Q. 1129

Q. 929

Q. 936

Q. 1126

great economies. Apart, however, from any sums that may be saved, it is very important, from the broader aspect, that parents whose children are taken into care should not be allowed to think that they have thereby performed all their obligations towards them, or to the community which has taken over their responsibilities. Your Committee, therefore, recommend that the Home Office and the Scottish Home Department should take an early opportunity to stress to local authorities the importance of requiring all parents of children in care, whose means allow, to contribute and pay promptly a reasonable proportion of the expense involved.

GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Annexes
1 (40) and
2 (13 and 14)

Annex 1 (41)

45. Under section 46 of the Act of 1948 either Secretary of State may make grants towards expenses incurred or to be incurred by voluntary organisations for improving the premises, equipment or staffing of their homes, half of such expenditure being recovered from local authorities. As far as the Home Office is concerned, such grants are made, not to the larger organisations, but to smaller ones which are being run on the right lines but are hampered by lack of funds. Estimated expenditure on such grants for 1952-53 is £30,000 in England and Wales and £3,500 in Scotland. An organisation receiving a grant from the Home Office is required to complete, within a specified period, a certificate that the grant has been applied to the purpose for which it was made. Your Committee have no comments to make on this item of expenditure.

TRAINING IN CHILD CARE

46. The importance of training in child care was stressed by the Curtis Committee in their Interim Report.* Following one of their recommendations, the Central Training Council in Child Care was set up for England and Wales in 1947 to organise courses and select candidates for training. In Scotland, the arrangements are made by the Secretary of State in consultation with the local authorities. The progress so far made in England and Wales is described in paragraphs 43 to 49 of Annex 1. In Scotland only short refresher courses for the staffs of children's homes have so far been held; but it is hoped this year to begin a full training course, for house-mothers, and to hold a one-week course on boarding out work. Expenditure on training in child care since the year 1949-50 is shown in Table 2. The estimated expenditure for 1952-53 is £80,000 in England and Wales and £3,100 in Scotland.

Qs. 797-8

47. The only matter to which Your Committee wish to draw attention is that of wastage. The Home Office gave figures showing that out of 280 persons who completed a boarding out course successfully (from about 330 entrants) 34 were not known to have gone into child care work. Your Committee suggest that the Home Office might give further consideration to the desirability, if practicable, of requiring candidates for such courses to give an undertaking that, on successful completion of the course, they will for a minimum period enter some employment of the kind for which they will have been trained at the public expense. Such an undertaking is required in certain cases by the Ministry of Education.

* Cmd. 6760

THE CONTROL OF EXPENDITURE

48. Under section 47 of the Act of 1948 the Home Office are the Department responsible in England and Wales for controlling the payment of grant in respect of child care services, subject to the consent of the Treasury. The Scottish Home Department perform similar functions in Scotland. It did not appear to Your Committee that the Treasury in fact exercise any real control in this field. The responsibility for securing all reasonable economy in the running of the child care service in England and Wales therefore rests on the Home Office. The final sanction by which they can do this is the power to refuse grant. Any indication by the Home Office that they are prepared to use this power seems to act as a final deterrent to local authorities, and in fact it is seldom if ever used. It appears, however, that the Home Office not infrequently give such indications in order to enforce a higher standard of equipment, and so in fact to raise rather than lower the expenditure of local authorities.

Qs. 951, 953

Qs. 970-3

Qs. 1068-73

49. As shown in Table 3, more than half the annual expenditure on child care in England and Wales is devoted to the keeping of children in local authority homes. In Scotland, this item represents a smaller proportion of the annual expenditure, for nearly 60 per cent. of the children in care are boarded out. The comments of Your Committee in this section of the Report are therefore directed mainly to the position in England and Wales, though some of them have their application to Scotland as well.

50. Capital expenditure by local authorities is regulated and controlled according to principles laid down by the Home Office.* Before buying or renting a property for use as a children's home or hostel, a local authority has to get Home Office approval in principle. Building work is controlled on the lines recommended in the First Report of the Local Government Manpower Committee.† In general, while local authorities are free to carry out small works, subject to approval of an annual programme, larger works have to receive specific Home Office approval. All capital expenditure is at present restricted by the limitations on the general capital investment programme.

Annex 1
(33 and 34)

51. The policy of the Home Office as regards the standards of equipment which they require in local authority homes was the subject of strong representations by the two associations of English and Welsh local authorities. The Association of Municipal Corporations, in their memorandum, expressed the view that "one of the most effective contributions that could be made to the reduction of expenditure would be for local authorities to be given greater freedom to fix their own detailed standards within a broad national policy of giving to deprived children a reasonable and modern standard of care. The laying down of national standards, coupled with a rigid control, is not, in our opinion, conducive to economy, but quite the reverse. . . ." The County Councils Association wrote that "without loss of efficiency some economies could be effected in the running of children's homes and nurseries if local authorities were to exercise a greater degree of latitude in their application of recommended standards and if Home Office

Annex 5 (29)

Annex 4 (15)

* In Home Office Circulars No. 92/150, of 4th May, 1950, and No. 181/1950, of 5th September, 1950.

† Cmd. 7870.

officials were to recognise that minima and standards may differ considerably. . . .” They gave examples of cases in which, they maintained, the Home Office, by insisting upon the strict fulfilment of its requirements as to matters such as the size of beds and the number of lavatories, baths or basins, or a small reduction in the number of children in a home, interfered unwarrantably in the conduct by local authorities of their services, in a way which tended to increase rather than to check expenditure. It was not denied that it was right and necessary that the Home Office should have standards in such matters. Complaint was centred on their lack of flexibility in enforcing those standards, which, it was argued, should be related to possibilities and should be less rigid. It was also felt that such rigidity tended to prevent the finance committees of local authorities from carrying out their functions in this field, since they were sometimes told that matters on which they might have expected to express an opinion had been taken up with the Home Office, who had laid down requirements which had to be complied with. One local authority witness, however, gave it as his opinion that over the last twelve months the Home Office had rather departed from rigid application of their standards.

52. A further complaint made by the two associations and closely connected with that just described, was that the Home Office have in fact never published any standards in connection with children's homes (although they have done so in connection with nurseries). Requirements such as those referred to in the preceding paragraph appeared to be based on some set of standards, but the local authorities had never been told what these were.

53. The Home Office, in their evidence, showed that they felt that both these complaints were unfounded, but the fact remains that they were made. Your Committee do not suggest that the Home Office were necessarily wrong in all or any of the cases referred to in paragraph 51 in insisting on the rigid observance of their standards. They feel certain, however, that such rigidity is bound on occasion to lead to unnecessary expenditure or alternatively to the abandonment of some desirable project, to the detriment of the children. The Home Office have to administer an expanding and developing service in a period of great economic difficulty. Your Committee cannot believe that the standard of that service would suffer if the Home Office, having rightly defined the standards which they think best, were content to treat them as the aim to be achieved wherever reasonably possible, rather than as basic minima without which no development can go forward. They therefore, recommend that the Home Office should take further steps to ensure that all their officers understand the need for a reasonable degree of flexibility in the application of standards of equipment in local authority homes.

54. Your Committee would also like to draw attention to the view expressed by the County Councils Association that the Ministry of Education, whose relations with local authorities in matters of this kind are of longer standing, take more care to consult local authorities than do the Home Office. They suggest that the Home Office should consider whether the adoption of a similar attitude on their part might not lead to the more economical running of the child care service, without any lowering of standards. One practical form which such a co-operative attitude might at once take would be the giving of fuller

information to local authorities. To leave the local authorities in the dark as to the standards to which they may be asked to conform is not only irritating to them, but uneconomical, since it makes it difficult for them to plan ahead, and may lead, as in one of the cases mentioned by the County Councils Association, to the initiation of schemes which later have to be abandoned at a financial loss. Your Committee therefore recommend that the Home Office should invariably make such standards known to local authorities as a whole. Annex 4 (12)

55. The Home Office do not control the staff complements of local authorities, though their inspectors may observe and comment on the number of staff maintained at any particular children's home. It is normally accepted by local authorities that the ratio of staff to children should be high enough to allow the staff to give individual attention to each child. In homes for children of school age the ratio is usually about one member of staff to four children. In residential nurseries, where the children require more attention and the risk of the spread of infection is greater, the Home Office have asked local authorities to provide at least one member of staff to three children. Wages and salary rates of all staff are fixed nationally by Whitley Council machinery. No suggestion was made to Your Committee that there was any tendency, other than in isolated cases, for local authorities to engage excessive staff, nor did the local authorities themselves suggest that they were pressed by the Home Office to take on more staff than they needed. The Association of Municipal Corporations, indeed, proposed the recruitment and training of more boarding out staff as one course which might lead to a reduction in total expenditure. Qs. 276, 334
Annex 5 (11)
and (12)
Annex 5 (30)

56. The Home Office exercise no detailed control of the expenditure incurred in running children's homes. Their policy in this respect is based on the conclusions contained in the First Report of the Local Government Manpower Committee, and accepted by the Government, to the effect that, as local authorities are responsible bodies capable of exercising their own functions, detailed management should be left as much as possible to them. Home Office control is therefore on broad lines only. It is applied mainly through the inspectorate. Inspectors visit local authority homes from time to time and observe and report on such matters as staffing and catering methods. Such visits are usually followed by discussion between the inspectors and the officers of the local authority. The aim is to reach agreement as far as possible locally, and to keep official correspondence to a minimum. Monthly meetings of the six superintending inspectors are held. Annex 1 (35)
Qs. 276, 300
& 989
Q. 276
Annex 1 (16)

57. The Home Office stated that they have frequently discussed with their superintending inspectors "the need to be alive to the observance of due economy by the local authorities. . . ." But, as they themselves pointed out, their inspectors are child care inspectors, not accountants. Their duties include the visiting of approved schools, remand homes and children's homes, including voluntary homes, and the supervision of boarded out children. They do not inspect the separate accounts of each institution. It is true that the Home Office can exercise a general check by scrutinising a local authority's annual estimates, and that local authorities have to submit all their accounts to the district auditor, whose inquiries, however, are bound to be more Q. 276
Q. 304
Q. 309
Q. 311

or less limited to matters of a technical accounting nature. The fact remains that the expenditure on children's homes is not subject to any current control from a purely financial point of view by the Home Office as representing the Treasury. Nor does the machinery exist to enforce such control, were it thought desirable.

58. Another important item in the cost of child care which has not so far been mentioned, and one which equally escapes any central control, is that of the administrative costs of local authorities. These are estimated to amount to £2,132,088 in 1952-53 (£1,426,613 in direct costs, and £705,475 in apportioned costs). This represents an addition of about 12s. 4d. to the average weekly cost per child.

59. The position therefore is that the duty of securing economy falls on the Home Office, but that in the absence of a qualified staff and the appropriate machinery, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the Home Office to take any really effective action. It would, of course, be possible for the Home Office to be equipped with a qualified financial inspectorate, and the equivalent machinery at headquarters, and in this way to exercise a more careful scrutiny of and control over the expenditure of local authorities. But this would, in the opinion of Your Committee, involve a degree of interference within the field of responsibility of local authorities, which would not only be unacceptable to the local authorities, but would also run counter to the whole trend of present-day administrative policy. In the opinion of Your Committee, the problem of securing greater economy in the child care service without loss of efficiency can best be solved by a freer interchange of opinion and experience between the Home Office and the local authorities, and between the various local authorities themselves. High costs, wide variations of costs as between one local authority and another, and the other ways in which administration of the child care service is open to criticism are, in the main, to be accounted for by the absence of such a common pool of knowledge and experience.

60. Your Committee also consider that the relationship between the Home Office and the local authorities is not in every way satisfactory. On the one hand, the Home Office have not enough factual evidence at their disposal to enable them to offer useful advice to local authorities in order to secure greater economy, and on the other, the local authorities are more or less at the mercy of the Home Office in that the latter impose standards upon the former, and consequently involve them in capital and administrative expenditure, in a manner that appears to them often to be unnecessary and arbitrary. Nor do the Home Office make available to local authorities as a whole the considerable body of information which they collect from each separate authority through annual returns, access to which might stimulate certain authorities to economy and show them how to achieve it. In the opinion of Your Committee, there is clearly a need for a freer interchange of information and a greater pooling of experience between all concerned. It should also be remembered that the public are entitled to full information on every aspect of the child care service, indeed, the more the public can be made to take an interest, the better it will be.

Annex 4
Q. 1055

Qs. 1018-9

Qs. 1057-8

61. Such an interchange of information and pooling of experience can, Your Committee consider, only be effectively brought about and is only likely to achieve results in the economic field, if it is carried on through some permanent body. Two years ago the Home Office held a conference of chairmen of local authorities' children's committees and children's officers. This appears to have been a useful experiment, but it has not yet been repeated. The two associations of local authorities had themselves intended to organise a conference on child care this year, but it was cancelled on grounds of economy. Such conferences in any case are ephemeral, and possess no central machinery through which any proposals they may make can be followed up, and the results recorded. The Advisory Council on Child Care which, under section 43 of the Act, is set up by the Secretary of State to advise him on matters connected with his child care functions, does not appear to have the organisation necessary to fulfil the role which Your Committee have in mind, nor would this appear to be the purpose for which it was intended. Finally, a document such as the Sixth Report of the Children's Department, which was published in May, 1951 (the last equivalent report, from the old Children's Branch, having appeared in 1938), though well designed to give a general description of what is being done in the field of child care, makes no attempt to deal with the financial aspect of the service, nor does it contain any comparative tables at all to show what progress has been made, or what changes have come about.

Q. 997

Q. 1008

Qs. 291-4

62. Your Committee therefore recommend that immediate consideration be given by the Home Office, in conjunction with the other interested parties, to the setting up of a small permanent organisation, with its own secretariat, for the purpose of assembling, collating and distributing to local authorities all information connected with the financial problems of the child care service or likely to lead to economy. Such an organisation should comprise representatives of the Home Office and of local authorities. It should hold conferences at regular intervals and publish the information it receives periodically. Your Committee consider that the initial expenditure involved by the setting up of such an organisation need not be great, if full use is made of already existing machinery, and that it would be more than off-set by the economies in the running of the child care service which should result.

REMAND HOMES

63. A local authority have a duty to provide remand homes in their area (under the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, and the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937), and are required under the Act of 1948 to exercise their functions in this respect through their Children's Committees. On 1st January, 1951, there were 69 remand homes provided by local authorities in England and Wales with accommodation for 1,809 children (1,457 boys and 352 girls), and 15 voluntary homes used by arrangement as remand homes, with remand home accommodation for 25 boys and about 50 girls. Since then 5 local authority remand homes have been closed, and the closing of 3 more is under consideration. In Scotland on the same date there were 7

Annexes 1
(1-14) and 2
(21-31)

remand homes, as well as other accommodation available in the less populous areas when needed, providing places in all for 171 children (131 boys and 40 girls).

64. The following table shows the Exchequer grant paid or to be paid to local authorities in respect of remand homes since the Act came into force (the figures in each case being about half the total expenditure):—

TABLE 11

	<i>England and Wales</i>			<i>Scotland</i>		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1949-50 (actual) ...	201,067	19	8	10,828	4	5
1950-51 „ ...	233,921	14	6	10,270	5	4
1951-52 „ ...	237,285	0	0	11,893	0	0
1952-53 (estimated) ...	250,285	0	0	16,000	0	0

Q. 148
Annex 2

Q. 149

The weekly cost of keeping a child in a remand home was estimated in England and Wales as £8 4s. 0d. for 1951-52 and £8 0s. 3d. for 1952-53, and in Scotland the actual cost in 1950-51 was £8 15s. 9d. and the provisional figure for 1951-52 is £8 13s. 7d. These high figures are mainly due to the necessity of keeping places open for an unpredictable number of children. The slight drop in the estimated cost in England and Wales in 1952-53 is probably due to the closing of certain homes, mentioned in paragraph 63, and the consequent reduction in the number of empty places.

Annexes 1
(11) and
2 (25)

Qs. 153-8,
165, 171-3

65. The only point to which Your Committee wish to draw attention is the marked difference in the average length of stay by children in remand homes in England and Wales (28 days) and in Scotland (10 days). This appears to result mainly from differences in the practice of the courts in the two countries.

CONCLUSION

66. Great and satisfactory advances have been made in the child care services since the Act of 1948, and Your Committee consider that the time has come to review the progress that has been made and to consider the many problems that are bound to arise in the future, bearing in mind that the number of children coming into care shows no signs of decreasing and that the nation has entered upon a period of increasing financial stringency. They consider, therefore, that it would be to the public advantage if each Secretary of State were to appoint a committee to investigate every aspect of the service for which he is responsible and to report to him thereon. Your Committee recommend that, if such committees are appointed, they should be particularly charged with an examination of financial practice and policy.

67. There are two other points to which Your Committee wish to draw attention. The first is the possibility that the number of children coming into care might be substantially reduced, and much suffering and frustration avoided, if more attention were directed towards the means whereby situations that end in domestic upheaval and disaster might be dealt with and remedied before the actual break-up of the home occurs. The second point is the means whereby children who

have been in the care of local authorities are found employment or otherwise placed at the end of their period in care, whether in this country or in Commonwealth countries overseas. They recommend that any committee such as is suggested in the preceding paragraph should also be charged with investigating these two subjects.

68. Finally, Your Committee wish to put on record their appreciation of the high ideals that inspire all those with whom they have come in contact during their inquiry. It is clear that all who are working for the child care services approach their task with a keen desire to do their best for those unfortunate children who are deprived of the blessings of a normal upbringing.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

69. Your Committee's recommendations may be summarised as follows:—

(1) Immediate consideration should be given to the question of securing far wider publicity for the need for suitable foster-homes, either by national or local efforts, or both (paragraph 32);

(2) The Home Office should issue renewed instructions to local authorities to the effect that boarding out is, with due safeguards, the primary objective. Regular returns should be made, to the Home Office and to each Children's Committee, accounting for each child that is not boarded out, and giving the reason why (paragraph 32);

(3) Particular attention should be given to the means of training children to become suitable for boarding out, if they are not suitable when first coming into care (paragraph 32);

(4) The Home Office should consult with the local authorities as to the organisation of regular exchanges of information which might assist authorities with difficult areas to board out some of their children in the areas of authorities more fortunately placed (paragraph 32);

(5) The Home Office, while keeping the interests of the children in the forefront, should never allow local authorities to lose sight of the financial aspect of child care, and the need for economical administration (paragraph 32);

(6) The Home Office and the Scottish Home Department should consider giving more detailed guidance to local authorities as to the scale of payments to be used whenever it is feasible to require contributions from the parents of children in care (paragraph 43);

(7) The Home Office and the Scottish Home Department should take an early opportunity to stress to local authorities the importance of requiring all parents of children in care, whose means allow, to contribute and pay promptly a reasonable proportion of the expense involved (paragraph 44);

(8) The Home Office should take further steps to ensure that all their officers understand the need for a reasonable degree of flexibility in the application of standards of equipment in local authority homes (paragraph 53);

(9) The Home Office should invariably make such standards known to local authorities as a whole (paragraph 54) ;

(10) Immediate consideration should be given by the Home Office, in conjunction with the other interested parties, to the setting up of a small permanent organisation, with its own secretariat, for the purpose of assembling, collating and distributing to local authorities all information connected with the financial problems of the child care service or likely to lead to economy. Such an organisation should comprise representatives of the Home Office and of local authorities, and should hold conferences at regular intervals and publish the information it receives periodically (paragraph 62) ;

(11) Any committee appointed by either Secretary of State to investigate the child care service for which he is responsible, should be particularly charged with an examination of financial practice and policy (paragraph 66) ;

(12) Any such committee should also investigate :—

(i) the possibility of action to prevent children coming into care, and

(ii) the means whereby children who have been in the care of local authorities are found employment or otherwise placed at the end of their period in care, whether in this country or in Commonwealth countries overseas (paragraph 67).

**MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE
THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES
(SUB-COMMITTEE D)**

TUESDAY, 4TH MARCH, 1952

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Mr. Dryden Brook.
Sir Fergus Graham.

Miss Ward.

Mr. J. ROSS, C.B., Assistant Under Secretary of State, Mr. G. H. McCONNELL, Assistant Secretary, and Mr. W. H. BALLARD, Chief Executive Officer, Finance Division, Home Office; and Sir CHARLES CUNNINGHAM, K.B.E., C.B., C.V.O., Secretary, Mr. T. M. MARTIN, Principal, and Mr. W. L. WALKER, Finance Officer, Scottish Home Department, called in and examined.

Chairman.

131. I have one or two questions for Mr. Ross in connection with the memorandum you have been good enough to send to us. You say that councils may join with one another in establishing a remand home. Is that a general practice?—(Mr. Ross.) The general practice, Sir, is for one local authority to run a remand home and make a user arrangement with other authorities.

132. Would the guiding factor be the distance from the courts and what you call the catchment area or would it be economy of expenditure?—I think both. The first factor would be the catchment area. Unless a remand home is situated reasonably near the court, for one thing, you incur considerable expense on escorts and children are then too far from their parents, probation officers and other people who may want to see them. The second factor is certainly economy, because if there were remand homes everywhere near the courts, even small remand homes, they would be much more expensive to run.

133. Does that account for the closure of five local authority remand homes?—Remand homes are always under-used at times, and to a great extent they have been under-used in the last year or so; we have had too many places.

134. That was on financial grounds?—Yes, and at some loss of convenience to the courts, because the children then had to go longer distances very often to a remand home.

135. The next point arises out of your paragraph 4, about the accommodation of boys and girls committed to a local authority's care as fit persons. You say that is only done in exceptional circumstances. Would it mean that the boy or the girl would be permanently kept in a remand home?—Not permanently, Sir. Before the Children

Act passed into law local authorities were under a duty by the boarding out rules to board out children committed to their care as fit persons and they were kept in remand homes often too long, waiting for suitable foster homes; but they were not kept there permanently.

136. And they are not kept there permanently now?—No. Most local authorities have ceased virtually to use remand homes for children committed to their care, because it was regarded as a bad thing for the children with a constantly moving population.

Sir Fergus Graham.

137. What happens now? What is the maximum time?—We discourage local authorities from putting fit person children into a remand home at all. A child may go there as a place of safety before he is committed by the court to the care of the local authority. If he is committed, local authorities are expected to put him at once into a children's home if they cannot board him out immediately. The Children Act removed the duty upon them to board out fit person children specifically, but it put the duty upon local authorities to board out all children in their care where they can.

Chairman.

138. How often are remand homes inspected and how many people are engaged in inspection? What is the staff?—We have a staff of inspectors who inspect children's homes, approved schools, and remand homes. That inspectorate is regionalised, as mentioned in the memorandum. Remand homes are inspected mainly by inspectors in the region, not necessarily always the same inspector. I should say they are visited about three times a year.

139. And they report to whom?—There is a superintending inspector in charge of

4 March, 1952.] Mr. J. ROSS, C.B., Mr. G. H. McCONNELL, [Continued.
 Mr. W. H. BALLARD, Sir CHARLES CUNNINGHAM, K.B.E., C.B., C.V.O.,
 Mr. T. M. MARTIN, and Mr. W. L. WALKER.

each of the six regions. They, through him, report to the chief inspector in London, and so to the administrative side of the Children's Department, and a written report is made after each inspection visit.

140. Does the inspection take place without notice?—Yes, usually.

141. Is action ever taken as a result of those reports, and are many of those reports unfavourable?—Action is taken. We do not much like the term "inspector," although we use it for want of a better, but it is not a matter of the inspector assessing the worth of a home. His main business is to put the thing right in co-operation with the local people; so that we do not expect to get reports saying that a home is very good or very bad. As far as a home is not good we want to know from those reports what has been done locally to put it right, or what the inspector suggests we should do from the Home Office in London to put things right. I think we mention in the memorandum that our aim is to reduce official correspondence to a minimum and to clear as much as possible by discussions on the ground.

142. Can you make a generalisation to the extent of saying that, on the whole, you are satisfied, or that you are dissatisfied, with the way remand homes are run?—We are certainly satisfied on the whole. We think that the standard in remand homes has been raised appreciably since the war.

143. Would it be possible for you to give us a list of the remand homes that we could visit from here?—With pleasure.

144. Perhaps one or two members of the sub-committee could visit some of them. We should also like to be able to make visits without notice?—By all means. Would you like them to be within easy reach of London?

145. London is divided into two areas, is it not?—Yes, for the purposes of our regional inspectorate.

146. I think we would rather stick to the two London areas?—And the Home Counties.

Chairman.] Yes.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] They ought to be within easy reach of London.

Chairman.] Yes—London or within easy reach, something we could do in a day.

Miss Ward.

147. I should rather like to have some idea of the staffing of the homes. Is there a sort of uniform pattern, or is that in fact left to the local authorities—in other words, what check is there on local authority expenditure and how are standards applied?—

The check is applied through our inspectors who visit and who would advise a local authority whether the staff there was too heavy, or too light for that matter—if it were thought to be inadequate. There are in every remand home for boys a superintendent in charge and a matron. Sometimes, according to the size of the home, there is a deputy superintendent or someone acting as a deputy. In the larger homes there are people called supervisors who are responsible for the oversight of many of the activities of the boys. There are teachers in some of the remand homes, as is mentioned in the memorandum, though not all. Some are visiting teachers who are there part-time. That is the general pattern of the staff, plus, of course, domestic staff. The Home Office do not fix staff complements for particular remand homes in a formal way; we rely upon our inspectors to see that the staff is about right.

Chairman.

148. Now we get on to the question of cost. In Scotland it comes to a figure of £8 15s. 9d. per week, but you do not give us the corresponding figure for England?—We did not have that figure when our memorandum went to press. This year, according to the revised estimates for 1951-52, it is £8 4s. 0d. a week, and according to the preliminary estimates for 1952-53, £8 0s. 3d.

149. You would agree, would you not, that in Scotland the higher cost is due to the necessity to keep places open for an unpredictable number of inmates?—Undoubtedly so, as in England.

150. What is being done to reduce that high cost—amalgamation or economy in running?—We have explained in our memorandum that we closed a number of remand homes last year, and there are I think another three under consideration for closing now, because there are surplus places, and it puts up the cost to have those surplus places. In addition to that, some of our superintending inspectors are engaged at the present time in discussions with local authorities as to the possibility of closing further remand homes. But there is a limit to the extent to which you can close homes. You cannot make them fit exactly. Not only is there need to provide for contingencies but there is need for a minimum network of remand homes throughout the country.

151. Does that figure cover cost of transport to and from the courts and so on?—No, Sir, that is the cost of running the homes.

152. That is the salaries, administrative expenses, food and everything else?—Yes.

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153. In Scotland the average stay per child is ten days ; in England it is 28 days?—Yes. I noted that with interest, Sir. I cannot answer for Scotland—I cannot even answer for England—because we cannot pretend to know in detail the circumstances in which children are remanded. It may be Sir Charles Cunningham will give his opinion that the courts in England call for more reports on children—I do not know whether that is so, but it may be so—and therefore remand them for a longer period. (Sir Charles Cunningham.) I think that is one factor. Another possibly is that the courts in Scotland have so far made very little use of remand homes for the detention of children ; the cases we get are almost entirely remand cases proper. I do not know whether in England greater use is made of remand homes for detention purposes. (Mr. Ross.) Certainly greater use is made of them. What Sir Charles Cunningham is referring to is Section 54 of the Act of 1933 which empowers a court to send a child or a young person who is found guilty of an offence to a remand home for detention for a period up to one month. The use is variable in England. London use it ; Liverpool and Birmingham use their powers fairly extensively, but in some areas it is hardly used at all. That would undoubtedly be a factor. We know that London who deal with a considerable proportion of juveniles remand freely to the London remand homes and get reports on the children. The Home Office have for long advocated a policy of remanding children so that a court should be able to acquaint themselves with a child's circumstances before deciding on the treatment to be ordered.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

154. Is one of the reasons for the longer period of remand in England the shortage of accommodation for the further stage after they have been actually sentenced by the court?—I would not say so. The figures mentioned in the memorandum show that the average period has dropped from 33 to 31 and now to 28 days, in the first half of 1951. There was a time when vacancies in approved schools were not easily found, but that is some years ago now ; it should not affect those recent figures much.

Chairman.

155. Averages are tricky things. What would you say the normal maximum would be? I suppose you often get a minimum of a very few days, do you not?—Yes ; it would generally be a week.

156. Would you say that some children might be there for three or four months?—Yes.

157. Do you regard that as satisfactory?—No—far from it. They would usually be there for that period only if committed to an approved school. It would be quite unusual to find a child who is not committed to an approved school in a home for a period like that.

158. Why should admission to an approved school mean that they stay much longer in a home?—It is variable, but in some cases no vacancy is immediately available for a child in a particular category.

159. I suppose it would be true to say that no benefit can accrue to a child from being in a remand home ; it is pretty mixed company?—I agree that the stay should be no longer than necessary.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

160. Do you think, on this question of mixing children, that it is a good thing that children who are there on ordinary remand should mix with children who are there, as delinquents from the courts?—A remand home may be used also as a place of safety for children judged to be in need of care or protection. The experience of the Home Office is that, broadly speaking, there is not much to choose between the characteristics of the child who has committed an offence and the child who is in need of care or protection, being beyond control, in moral danger, or falling into bad associations. My opinion is that there is justification for providing for both in the same place while awaiting appearance before a court, or admission to an approved school.

Sir Fergus Graham.

161. Are there not also cases of children with cruel homes and that sort of thing, and would not they go to a remand home for a time till some suitable place was found for them?—They would often, unless the court decided otherwise. A court are not obliged to use a remand home for the child who has been badly treated by his parents. They can place him in any suitable place of safety, but commonly they use remand homes. I mentioned earlier that in my opinion the standard of remand homes had improved markedly in recent years. That is due in the main to improved staffing and better people as superintendents ; the whole thing turns on the quality of the staff. It is far more important than the kind of premises. The staff have this admittedly difficult problem of dealing with these children who come in only for a short time. We think that they are now pretty experienced and skilled in keeping the different types apart, within reason and as far as they can practicably, and in dealing with cases in the right way.

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Chairman.

162. Is any use made of voluntary organisations as remand homes?—Yes.

163. I am thinking of a place like St. Christopher's Homes?—I think it would be unlikely that a voluntary home would be used in London, because Stamford House is a big remand home for boys. Voluntary homes are used mainly in the more sparsely populated areas.

164. You refer to voluntary homes in the memorandum, do you not?—Yes. They may be used, and are used to a small extent, mainly for girls, and in some cases indeed one result of our policy of closing remand homes to keep as close as possible to the need, is that authorities have got to use voluntary homes, because sometimes when a remand home is closed there is no other near enough to send the children to conveniently.

165. To return to the length of stay, would Sir Charles say that what Mr. Ross has said accounts for the difference between ten and 28 days?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) Yes. I think there must be many factors that account for it. In Scotland the number of remand homes and the use made of them are relatively small compared with England and Wales. Where a child is remanded, for example, for a psychological report it is usually possible to get that very quickly. The cases in which there is a long wait for admission to an approved school in Scotland are at the minimum—very infrequent indeed—because pressure on approved schools has diminished. So that I think perhaps a combination of many factors accounts for the difference.

166. As far as Scotland is concerned, it seems that you have proportionally a smaller amount of accommodation available than England?—I think that is certainly so.

167. You have accommodation for 171 children, whereas England have accommodation for 1,809?—Yes.

168. But you have much more accommodation proportionately for children under the rest of the Act. Why is that? Why is Scotland apparently rather against remand homes?—I think that both local authorities and the courts in Scotland have been a little more hesitant in their use of remand homes than the local authorities and courts have been in England. It is partly also due to geographical difficulties. We have here in rather an acute form the problem of a big country with a very scattered population, and it is extremely difficult, unless we are to be faced with a quite uneconomic expenditure, to make

universal provision of remand homes. The larger remand homes actually run by local authorities, with the exception of Glasgow, serve pretty wide combinations of areas. Over a large part of the country remand home provision is made not by local authority homes at all but by an arrangement with some local officer or some local institution under which a remand home is made available as necessary.

169. But I should have thought that the bulk of the population of Scotland was concentrated in a rather restricted area, and I can imagine no city where a remand home would be more in demand than Glasgow?—The industrial belt in which most of the population is concentrated is that part of the country which is served by local authority homes. I believe the only sizeable one is the home in Glasgow which has accommodation for 43 boys and four girls. That is perhaps a measure of the limited use which is made of remand home accommodation.

170. Is anything being done to encourage the use of remand in Scotland?—We have done everything we can by way of approaches to local authorities and general propaganda. In the last resort it is for the court to decide what use is to be made of homes, and it is an extremely difficult matter to influence the courts in that direction.

Miss Ward.

171. Can you say, on the English side, where you have an average of 28 days' stay, whether in one part of the country there are longer periods in a remand home and in another part shorter periods, because remands depend—and must depend—to some extent on the methods of a particular court?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes.

172. Some courts approach the problem in quite a different way from other courts?—Subject to children awaiting admission to approved schools, in the main nowadays it is entirely court policy that dictates the length of stay. I am sorry, but I cannot give you offhand figures for various parts of the country, but we will get those out for you.

173. I know how very difficult it is—I am a magistrate myself—even to attempt to get any sort of uniformity because it is a matter for the discretion of the courts. But if a court in any particular part of the country tended to keep children longer in a remand home because of that court's policy would the Home Office think it right or expedient to direct the attention of clerks to justices to the difference in policy?

Mr. Dryden Brook.] On the same problem, and before you answer, Mr. Ross,

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I gather from what has been said that the difference in the length of time is very largely a question of difference between those who are charged with offences and are going to approved schools probably—and the difficulty of getting them in—and the others who are short-period people. Do you see any accentuation of the social problem that arises from the mixing of those two categories—those who are there for the purposes of safety, being in need of care or protection, cases where there has been cruelty in the home and not any particular fault on the part of the child—and the others who have committed an offence?—In my opinion it is all right to accommodate them in the same place—the child charged with an offence and the child who has not committed an offence but has been badly treated by his parents, or the like, or is beyond control in other cases. We do not like children remaining in a remand home for long periods after they have been committed to approved schools. Ideally we would not have them there, but the ideal could be achieved only at the expense of many more remand homes or similar places where children going to approved schools could wait. As to Miss Ward's question, the Home Office, of course, are circumspect in giving advice to the courts, and properly so. There are just over a thousand petty sessional divisions in England and Wales and it would be a matter of difficulty to compare the practice of particular courts remanding small numbers of children. If we thought that children were remaining unnecessarily in remand homes we would consider what could be done about it, subject to avoiding discouraging courts from getting the fullest possible information about children, a thing we have been encouraging them to do for a good many years, before deciding the method of treatment.

Chairman.

174. Do some courts refrain from using remand homes?—It is variable. I am speaking of juvenile courts. It is undoubtedly easier for a court in an urban area to remand because such courts are sitting every week, but in some country districts you get only occasional juvenile courts, and there is a tendency on the part of justices not to want to re-assemble if they can avoid it to deal with one case, so that those courts deal with many more cases without remand.

175. But it is not only a case of juvenile courts, after all, is it?—In relation to remand homes?

176. An ordinary court might well remand a child pending inquiries, might they not, in cruelty cases?—The child would be dealt with by a juvenile court.

177. What I am trying to get at is this. Do you feel that remand homes are not used as much as they should be in different parts of the country?—The Home Office, as I have said, advocate, as a general proposition, that the courts should have the fullest possible information before deciding on treatment, and one important way of getting that full information is to remand the child to a remand home for observation and for report to the court. But there are many trivial cases and other cases in which the court think that they can reasonably decide on a case without remand. No doubt that is so. I cannot express any useful opinion whether all courts remand to a sufficient degree; but I can say that the use of remand homes for the purpose of getting reports has developed in recent years.

178. And the Department wish that to develop still further?—As far as may be necessary to get proper information about the children.

179. Are the Department indulging in any propaganda to that effect?—That is done by our probation inspectors as judged necessary. We have a probation inspectorate who visit probation officers, help them as far as they can, assess their work, and so on, and they are the Home Office inspectors who are in contact with clerks of courts and with justices in the sense that they make a point, as far as they can, of seeing representative justices when they are visiting an area.

180. Does it largely rest with a probation officer whether he suggests remand to the Bench?—I should not think so. He could probably influence the matter by his general contacts with justices, but it is not a thing, I imagine, on which he would be asked to report expressly.

Miss Ward.

181. You say that the closing of three further local authority homes is under consideration. Supposing a decision is taken to close those homes, do you think, out of your experience, that that particular number of homes is adequate, having regard to the requirements of the moment and the financial situation of the country?—That is a hard question—as to what is adequacy. Ideally we ought to have remand homes scattered about the country at convenient distances from courts. But that is an ideal and it would be too expensive. However, we apply our minds to it as best we can, to avoid closing too many homes and at the same time to avoid having too many surplus places and also to avoid the places per child being too expensive.

182. Could I just amplify that by asking if the question of the closing of those three

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additional homes has arisen out of representations from the Home Office or out of representations from local authorities?—I do not know in those particular cases, but I know that it may arise either way. In some instances a local authority represent to us—usually to our inspectors—that their home has not been used to a reasonable extent for some time, and that they think we should close it. Sometimes they want it for another purpose—say, a children's home. In other cases we take the initiative. We have monthly meetings with our superintending inspectors on all the subjects with which they and we are concerned, and this particular subject has been discussed from time to time. I attend all these meetings. We would take the initiative there on the statistical returns that we get and then examine the situation by regions in detail and make up our minds which remand home could most conveniently, or least inconveniently, be closed. We would then approach the local authority running it and discuss with them the possibility of closing that remand home.

183. How long, for instance, would it take if a local authority said that they thought a home ought to be closed down to the time when action could be taken: quite quickly, provided the Home Office considered that it was the right policy?—Yes, it could be closed quickly. Of course, when that happens we probably want to look then, and we should be looking all the time, to see whether that particular home should be closed or another home in that area. I recall a case six months ago of two authorities in the Home Counties who both wanted to close one of their remand homes and it required a good deal of consideration as to which should be closed.

184. Because you have a responsibility for the courts, really?—Yes.

185. And for proper provision so that the courts can carry out the demands of the Act?—Yes, and for that reason it is not always possible to fall in immediately with a proposal of a local authority, which is reasonable from their point of view, to close a home. That generally causes us to look at the service in the region.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

186. On this question of percentage as compared with capacity, what is the basis of staffing? Is staffing done on the basis of 100 per cent. capacity or is it somewhere midway between what full capacity is and the actual percentage that is occupied at any particular time?—Staffing is related to the realities of the situation; that is to say, if a home had not been full to capacity for the last year we would certainly expect the local authority to hold their hand in filling new posts and not to staff to capacity.

187. But that might not carry you very far. If the staffing had already been on the basis of 100 per cent. new posts would not be sufficient to meet the situation?—I think our experience is that such reductions of staff as may be secured within a reasonable time are achieved by the method of refraining from filling posts.

Chairman.

188. I do not know if you have worked out the cost per place, not per individual child. My arithmetic may be wrong, but it seems to me to come to something like £290 per annum per place. If you divide £527,000 by 1,809, which is the accommodation, it seems to come to something like that figure?—(Mr. McConnell.) I think it comes to £5 12s. 0d. approximately per week for 1951-52.

189. Yes, that is about what it is. If you reduced the number of places, would it be possible to have any reduction of that average figure? It is quite a high figure for an average?—It compares with £4 18s. 8d. for local authority children's homes in 1951-52 and £5 5s. 1d. in 1952-53. There is this difference, of course, that in the case of the remand homes you have the cost of education which you do not have in the case of children's homes.

190. Yes; but those remand homes, or many of them, are empty. You gave me the average for those?—Not empty. That is the average figure if they were full, as the children's homes more usually are.

191. I am not speaking of inhabitants. It would be higher if they were full because you have food and other expenses?—The total cost is higher, the higher the population of the home.

192. But, still, it is a large sum?—Yes.

193. How is discipline maintained in the remand homes?—(Mr. Ross.) By the influence of the staff, Sir. The remand home rules provide that discipline should be maintained by the personal influence of the superintendent. Corporal punishment is provided for in the rules, but is not to be used if it can be avoided.

194. Is corporal punishment much resorted to?—No.

195. Is it limited to boys?—Yes, it is in the remand homes.

196. By corporal punishment, you mean the cane?—Yes.

197. Not on the hand?—On the hand, or on the posterior over the boy's ordinary cloth trousers.

198. Do the children ever complain about conditions in a remand home to the

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inspectors and do the inspectors ever interrogate them and do they ever get any complaints?—One important part of an inspector's business, indeed of anybody who visits a remand home, is to observe the demeanour of the children. They are on the look out for that, but I am not aware of any systematic arrangement.

199. No, I am not suggesting that?—We would rely upon an inspector's judgment of the demeanour of the children rather than on getting complaints from individual children.

200. But inspectors would bear in mind, would they not, that many children of the sort who go to remand homes have been pretty browbeaten or bullied in their homes, though, of course, it is likely that some would be the other way?—Yes; the inspectors are skilled in that. Their essential business in visiting any of the places with which we are concerned is to see that all is well with the child. The inspector would talk to the children.

201. How are the staff recruited?—By advertisement generally. There are no formal qualifications specified, though some of the superintendents are school teachers.

202. You did say that the appointment of a person to be in charge of a remand home is subject to the approval of the Secretary of State?—Yes.

203. Is that approval ever refused?—(Mr. McConnell.) I have not known that question to arise, Sir.

Miss Ward.

204. There are a great many people who think they are born to run places of this sort, are there not?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes. People do assume that good will is sufficient, which is a very wrong notion.

205. It is most essential to have properly qualified and experienced people?—Yes, there is no doubt about that. It is a very difficult task and one calling for knowledge and understanding on the part of the staff.

Chairman.

206. What steps do you take to satisfy yourself that such persons are suitable?—By examining their qualifications as submitted to the local authority—and their experience. We do not interview them, if that is what you mean.

207. Is there a salary scale? What I am trying to find out is whether this recruiting is done rather at random and left completely to local authorities, or is there some standardisation?—It is not done at random. The Children's Committees under the Children Act are responsible for remand homes,

as they are for approved schools run by local authorities, as well as for children's homes. I am sure they are fully aware of the importance of getting the right people for senior posts in remand homes. As to salary scales, a Home Office Committee, known as the Reynolds Committee, made recommendations some years ago about salaries in remand homes as well as in approved schools. Last year we arranged for that work to be taken over by Whitley machinery, and the salaries will be fixed in that way in future.

208. Are you satisfied that you are getting the right stamp of people to take charge of these homes?—On the whole, yes, as regards superintendents. We think we want a better type of person for the subordinate positions in remand homes. (Mr. McConnell.) May I add that the provision requiring the Secretary of State's approval of appointments of superintendents came into operation only in 1948, since when the number of remand homes has tended to contract; it has not been expanding since then. The number of new appointments, I think, has been very small since that provision came into operation.

209. You say the remand service has been tending to contract?—In so far as we have closed a number of homes since then.

210. Are you meaning that there are fewer places now than there were, say, five years ago?—I cannot give the figures, but I think that would be so. There will be fewer places at the end of this financial year than there were at the beginning, certainly.

Miss Ward.

211. Has there been any occasion on which there has been an inadequate number of remand homes available for a particular area, or is the tendency perhaps the other way?—(Mr. Ross.) No; but there is the inconvenience associated with the policy of keeping the number of places within reasonable limits. I am not aware personally of recent complaints from courts; but the people who have to escort children to remand homes are sometimes put to a good deal of trouble in taking a child some distance. That is the penalty that must be paid if one is to keep the number of places reasonably near the demand.

Sir Fergus Graham.

212. Do the county councils run small remand homes?—Yes, all the remand homes are run by county councils or by county borough councils.

(Sir Fergus Graham.) Yes. In the case of the one I know most about I think perhaps they are not reducing numbers, because we have increased the number of remand homes in Cumberland.

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Chairman.

213. Do all counties run homes?—No, Sir. There are, I think, 64 remand homes in England and Wales as against 145 county and county borough councils.

Sir Fergus Graham.

214. There is a vast institution south of the road running between Barnard Castle and Darlington. Is that a remand home?—No, I do not think so. There is the Aycliffe Approved School in that region.

215. No, this is between Barnard Castle and Darlington?—I do not know that one, Sir.

Miss Ward.

216. There is an approved school somewhere near Barnard Castle?—Yes.

Sir Fergus Graham.

217. Aycliffe is the other side?—Yes.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

218. On the question of the relationship between the Home Office and local authorities running remand homes, and the remand homes themselves, dealing with this inspectorship, what is the machinery provided? Supposing there is an adverse report from your inspector on the running of any remand home in regard, say, to incapacity of the staff, is there any machinery provided to meet that?—In all cases the inspector is under a duty to clear the less important matters that arise with the people locally or to do it informally through correspondence with the clerk of the local authority or with the children's officer. Where there was an important matter at issue it would be considered by the Children's Department of the Home Office and a letter would be sent to the local authority, or we would suggest that representatives of the local authority should come to see us to talk it over. We would pursue that until some satisfactory solution was reached. If it were unsuitable or inadequate staffing, we would expect the local authority to right that, and, generally speaking, we would keep in touch with the local authority until the position was satisfactory. That is what happens in practice. I said earlier that we do not look upon these reports as formal documents to say whether a place is good or bad. We identify ourselves with the standards of those places and act in partnership with the local authorities.

219. There may arise a case where somebody's authority must prevail. I am thinking of a case that happened some years ago in an approved school where there was an inquiry in which a colleague

of mine was one of the court. What is the final authority? Is it the Home Office or the local authority in relation to staffing if it comes to the desperate situation that a particular member of the staff is utterly condemned as being unsuitable?—The answers are different in relation to approved schools from those in relation to remand homes. An approved school is approved for the time being by the Secretary of State, who can withdraw his certificate, and has done so on occasion. The place then ceases to be an approved school, whether it had been run by a local authority or by voluntary managers. In the case of a remand home the Secretary of State has no power at present to approve or withdraw approval; he is authorised by the Criminal Justice Act, 1948, to make an order applying the system of approval to remand homes, but this has not been found necessary so far. He has power also to say that "this service is not satisfactory, and therefore I do not propose to pay Exchequer Grant on the service."

Chairman.

220. Has that ever happened?—No, not to my knowledge.

Miss Ward.

221. Would it be very inconvenient to let us have a list of where all these remand homes are?—No, we will put that in.

222. Could I ask one question about the educational side? Are the teachers fully qualified teachers?—Yes.

223. Full time?—I think I did say earlier on that in some remand homes they employ full-time teachers and in others they employ visiting teachers for part of the day, according to size and according to the general proportion of children who require education, that is to say, the younger children.

224. Then what would be the proportion of the expenditure on staff, education compared with administrative? Is it possible to provide that figure?—(Mr. Ballard.) We get just a block figure for salaries.

Chairman.] Education in those circumstances can do very little good.

Sir Fergus Graham.

225. No. They are of mixed ages and the maximum average stay is a month. I suppose in ages they range from about fifteen down to nine?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes.

Chairman.

226. What is the oldest child in a remand home now?—Sixteen.

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227. Then the main problem is the occupation of those children's time?—Yes, although it may, with a good teacher, be possible to take up a child's school instruction. But the main purpose is to keep these young people occupied.

Sir Fergus Graham.

228. The main purpose of this is organisation. You make them look after rabbits or pigeons or work in the garden?—Yes. In speaking of discipline I might well have said that one great aid to discipline is keeping the children interested and occupied.

229. That is the one thing they have lacked; you make proper use of leisure for them?—Yes.

Chairman.

230. Then it seems to me that the primary qualification of the staff is a sense of vocation?—Yes.

231. It must be almost a sacrificial labour?—Yes.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

232. Would it be true to say that of those who are trained teachers most of them would be the occupational kind of teacher or craft teacher?—Yes.

233. Not the academic type?—No.

Sir Fergus Graham.

233A. Handwork rather than decimals?—Yes, many members of the staff are interested in handicrafts, etc.

Chairman.] Are there any further questions?

Miss Ward.

234. I suppose it is not possible to divide the expenditure on staffing into education and administration?—No, because we get from local authorities only a total figure; but it would, of course, be a small proportion of the whole staff.

Chairman.

235. The educational people would not be employed whole-time?—In the bigger remand homes.

236. What is the biggest population?—About 120; that is one of the London remand homes.

Sir Fergus Graham.

237. With a turnover every 28 days?—Yes, on an average.

Chairman.

238. No. Is that places or population?—That is places.

239. There might be a population of only 90?—Yes; there might be 90 today and 110 next week.

240. And 70 the week after?—Yes

241. What about Stamford House?—It is generally pretty full. (Mr. McConnell.) The daily average at Stamford House, taking the first six months of 1951, was 99.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

242. But in every remand home the variety of staff will be so wide that it would be practically impossible to put them—satisfactorily, at any rate—into categories. We have mentioned teaching staff which would be mainly occupational and administrative; but between those two there must be people who do other jobs, such as people who are responsible for feeding arrangements and so on. We cannot envisage a remand home where it would be possible to divide the staff into categories such as we can in a school, for example, where the administrative side is very small and where it is mainly teaching staff. In a remand home, on the other hand, there will be three or four different categories with a comparatively small staff?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes. You get in some of them people who are engaged whole-time as teachers, but you find in others, say, a deputy superintendent who is also a teacher and devotes some of his time to teaching. There are also the supervision of leisure activities, and the observation of the children for the purpose of reports to the courts.

Miss Ward.

243. That is rather what I wanted to get at, because in the main if you have teachers in the sense of school teachers, I can quite see that their salaries, generally speaking, would be higher than perhaps those of catering officers or matrons, and what I really was wondering was how much emphasis was put on expenditure on teaching as compared with the actual running of these homes—food, disciplining and so on—because it could get out of balance?—I would say that it is not out of balance—in fact, I am quite sure it is not. What we attach main importance to is the impact made on the child by the remand home. Many of these children are away from their own homes for the first time, and we think that it is of vital importance that remand homes should be able to make a contribution at that stage and should give a child confidence. Our main concern is not to teach the child, because on his entry into the home a stabilizing process is necessary if he is to go to an approved school or be committed to the care of a local authority as a fit person. It is that side that is given emphasis—not merely teaching.

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Mr. *Dryden Brook*.

244. In connection with the staffing of remand homes we have mentioned teachers, administrative staff and others. With regard to advertising of posts, are there any posts specifically advertised as teaching posts, or rather is it that a certain type of teacher is interested in this kind of work and would naturally gravitate to such a post independently of whether it was a whole-time teaching post or not?—Teachers are employed to a considerable extent in approved schools and posts are advertised as such. I dare say that they advertise for teachers in remand homes; those employed are commonly persons interested in teaching backward children or with some particular social interest of that kind. I know from experience of visiting approved schools rather than remand homes that that is the kind of man who is often employed there—one who has developed some interest beyond that of formal teaching before he came to the approved school or remand home.

Chairman.

245. Have you any suggestions to make to us as to the sort of place or places we should visit in London? We ought, I suppose, to visit Stamford House?—I should think so, Sir. I would rather put in a note quickly upon that; I do not think I should like to make suggestions off-hand. I do not know what Mr. McConnell feels, but I think it would suit us if we could put in a note in the next day or two suggesting one or two conveniently situated homes.

Chairman.] I do not know what my colleagues think, but suppose we gave up one morning to it—it would not be a formal tour of inspection—that would give us a little of the background.

Miss Ward.] I think you did also say you hoped we could visit without notice.

Chairman.

246. We rely upon Mr. Ross. Obviously we should not tell them?—I can reassure you upon that, if you want to make visits without notice.

247. We are not trying to catch people out?—No, quite so.

Mr. *Dryden Brook*.

248. You want to do it informally?—Yes.

Chairman.

249. That is what I meant?—Would you want one of our inspectors to join you at the place?

250. I should think so myself?—I think it would be of assistance. He could give you

such information as you might require. (Mr. *McConnell*.) It would also make it easier to arrange a visit without notice.

251. Would you be prepared to give an assurance that there are no black spots in the remand home set-up? Presumably London would be amongst the best. Are there some black spots anywhere—places you are worried about?—(Mr. *Ross*.) I do not know of any. None has come to my notice recently. We want the remand home service to be better; we want all the services with which we are concerned to be better.

252. And to be more used, I take it?—Yes. The point I make again is that we want the courts to use remand homes to the extent necessary to inform themselves before dealing with children and young persons. It is most important for the children not only at the time but for their future.

Sir Fergus Graham.

253. May I ask what is Mr. Henriques's latest line on remand homes?—Mr. Basil Henriques?

254. Yes. He has been talking about remand homes quite lately, has he not?—Yes.

Mr. *Dryden Brook*.

255. I think there was a report in *The Manchester Guardian* recently, or in one of the papers up north?—I know that he is much in demand as a speaker.

Sir Fergus Graham.

256. He was talking some time ago in one of his little books about the use of remand homes. Special courts dealing with juvenile cases are all made to read his works. I was wondering whether he was advocating more use of remand homes or whether he was rather shy of them?—I think that there is no doubt whatever that he would advocate more use because he is most anxious to see the standards of all remand homes improved. He visited Australia a year or two ago and he found in some part of Australia a remand home that appealed to him as being very good and he spoke a good deal about it. There is no doubt that his interest is that remand homes should be of good standard and used in the interests of the children concerned.

Chairman.

257. It is a far cry to go to Scotland from England in order to visit remand homes. Do you feel that you are fairly satisfied with conditions?—(Sir *Charles Cunningham*.) I should not like to say that we were satisfied, but I do not think we

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have any black spots that need cause us anxiety. On the other hand, we have been very conscious for a good many years of the difficulty of organising the kind of remand home service in Scotland that we feel the courts ought to have at their disposal. There are 55 remand home authorities in Scotland. Of those I think eight have made arrangements with local officers or voluntary bodies for occasional use of accommodation. Of the remaining 47, Glasgow has much the biggest need and has its own remand home. That means that the other authorities are all catered for by the six remaining remand homes, most of which are very small.

258. Where are the seven remand homes situated—in the more populous areas?—Aberdeen; there is one in Ayrshire, one in Dunbarton, one in Dundee, one in Edinburgh, and one in Lanarkshire. The problems of organisation within these small homes to which Mr. Ross has referred are even more acute with us. For example, the problem of education: it would be quite uneconomical in most of them to have a full-time teacher on the staff. The ordinary staff of a home try to do their best either by giving elementary school instruction or more probably by handicraft teaching.

259. There are certain private houses or small institutions and I suppose you might have one or two children there, but what sort of places are they—not public assistance institutions?—In almost every case the usual arrangement is to use a room in the house of the local police officer or probation officer; in one case there is a Salvation Army home.

260. They would be for very short stays?—Yes.

261. You could not regard them as institutions in any sense of the word?—No. We did arrange for the position to be reviewed a year or two ago by the Advisory Council on the Treatment of Offenders, and they issued a report which was published suggesting that we should try to organise small local homes for cases spending only four days at the outside, and that for the rest we should cope with our requirements by setting up regional homes. In the main we have been driven by circumstances to the idea of the regional home as the only economic way of meeting requirements. But, even so, it is a small unit in most cases, and therefore it is extremely difficult, without being grossly extravagant, to organize it at all.

262. You could not organize it at all economically?—No.

Miss Ward.

263. On the question of escorts to and from a court and then to a remand home, is there a sort of average figure of the amount spent on travelling and the salaries of the escorts?—(Mr. Ross.) We have no information about that, because it is not a charge on the remand homes; it is one of the functions of the police and would be carried as a charge on the police. It certainly does not fall on the remand homes.

264. So that you can judge of the value of a remand home from the point of view of its accessibility to the courts, but you cannot in fact judge it from the point of view of expenditure at all?—No.

265. You have got to take it on trust that you have got a relatively convenient system?—Yes.

Sir Fergus Graham.

266. It is a matter of geography more than anything else, is it not?—Yes.

267. For instance, if you have got a large house which is a white elephant in the district it becomes a remand home?—I do not think that that is how it works!

Miss Ward.

268. I see Newcastle is not mentioned here, but if you had a remand home situated in Leeds or York to cover the Newcastle area, and you had a considerable number of people remanded from Newcastle, that would add to the cost of travelling and obviously the expenses of the escorts would also have to be provided for?—Yes, not by the remand home service, though provided for, I agree. There are more immediate considerations, or as immediate, that we do take into account—one would be the inconvenience of sending children from Newcastle to Leeds or York, because they are then inaccessible to the local services. Our aim is to maintain a reasonable network throughout the country. Ideally we might want more, but financially we cannot have more.

269. Yes, it is very difficult, and there must be some very difficult decisions to take?—Indeed, there are.

270. To keep an even balance between the one and the other?—Yes.

Chairman.

271. One final question and that is in regard to psychiatric treatment. Are psychiatrists employed?—Yes, they are employed in a proportion of cases where it is thought that the opinion of a psychiatrist is required on a child. It is sometimes arranged through the Child Guidance Clinic.

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272. There is one such place in Bourdon Street, is there not?—I do not think that will be used by Stamford House because they have the services of a number of psychiatrists, part time, as required. In other smaller homes the child guidance clinics help.

Miss Ward.] Would it be in order to ask whether you have got to carry the burden of the financial restrictions and cuts which have been indicated by the Chancellor?

Chairman.] You have got the Estimates for this year.

Miss Ward.

273. Have they got to reduce on remand homes? May I ask that?—There is a duty upon us which we try to discharge of eliminating avoidable expenditure. That duty is always upon us and it is particularly obvious at the present time. In all the services with which the Children's

Department are concerned we have that constantly in view; we discuss it with our superintending inspectors at the monthly meetings in relation to children's homes and so on. We have constantly in mind the need to economize to the utmost possible extent. We are not under orders to cut specific amounts.

274. You have no ceiling?—No.

275. You have escaped that?—Yes. (Sir Charles Cunningham.) The effect of the present situation will be to limit the extent of capital development; for example, the building of new remand homes will probably have to be postponed in some cases. (Mr. Ross.) Yes, that arises particularly in the case of children's homes; the capital investment programme limits expenditure.

Chairman.] Thank you very much, Gentlemen.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned till Tuesday next, at 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 1952.

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Sir Fergus Graham

| Major Markham.

Mr. J. ROSS, C.B., Assistant Under-Secretary of State, and Mr. W. H. BALLARD, Chief Executive Officer, Finance Division, Home Office; and Sir CHARLES CUNNINGHAM, K.B.E., C.B., C.V.O., Secretary, Mr. T. M. MARTIN, Principal, and Mr. W. L. WALKER, Assistant Secretary and Finance Officer, Scottish Home Department, called in and further examined. Miss D. M. D. ROSLING, Assistant Secretary, Home Office, called in and examined.

Chairman.

276. This morning we are going to deal with Child Care proper, as distinct from Remand Homes; and we thought it would be as well if we could come straight away into the realm of finance based on this statistical table on page 14 of your memorandum. Will you, Mr. Ross, very kindly tell the Sub-Committee what official and unofficial control over this expenditure you have at the Home Office?—(Mr. Ross.) It was agreed on the Local Government Manpower Committee recently that, as far as possible, there should be no detailed financial control over the expenditure of local authorities, that control should be on broad

lines, and that led us to adopt the same policy in controlling expenditure on children boarded out and on children placed by local authorities in voluntary homes. In each case the method is that the local authority is free to spend what it thinks fit on an individual child, provided it does not exceed an over-all expenditure based on an average fixed by the Home Office. In the case of children boarded out and certain other categories, such as children placed in private children's homes, or persons given assistance after the age of eighteen for further education, the average fixed at present is 40s. weekly. In the case of voluntary homes the average

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fixed is £2 10s. weekly for a child who has reached the age of five and £3 a week for a child who is under the age of five. The Home Office do not exercise any detailed control over the running expenses of children's homes. Control there, as far as it can be applied, is applied by our inspectors considering the staffing of the homes, the methods of feeding the children, and so on. It is a broad control of that kind. We have monthly meetings of our superintending inspectors, who number six, and in the last year to eighteen months we have discussed with them at frequent intervals the need to be alive to the observance of due economy by the local authorities with whom they are in pretty constant touch. We do not control staff complements. We have considered from time to time whether it would be possible to give guidance to local authorities as to the optimum case load of a boarding out officer, but we have not so far been able to do it. Their duties vary greatly and the kind of territory they cover and the time occupied in travelling vary, and so far we have not been able to give guidance of this kind. Building work is subject to control in this way: local authorities submit an annual programme of the work they propose to do in the next financial year; we approve some of that, a small part of it because of the restrictions of the Capital Investment Programme, in principle. Then, provided the work does not cost more than £2,000, the local authority may go ahead on the basis of that approval. If the job is estimated to cost £2,000 or more then they have to submit sketch plans and specifications to the Home Office and approval of that work is given in detail. That is the method of controlling expenditure on work which has to be related to the capital investment resources available for this work.

277. Thank you. Is not the Department disturbed to find that the cost per child per week in local authorities' homes is more than double the cost in voluntary homes? I know it is an average figure and it is very dangerous to take averages, but do not you find that disturbing?—I think, Sir, we would have reason to be disturbed if that were so, but I do not think it is so. We mention in the memorandum that the amounts paid by local authorities to voluntary homes do not represent the full cost of maintaining a child. The National Council of Associated Children's Homes, when we were discussing this £2 10s. and £3 a week arrangement with them a year or two ago, themselves made the point that, where a voluntary organization elected to look after a child on behalf of a local authority, that voluntary organization should bear some part of the cost; so that it is not to be supposed that the average cost to local authorities of maintaining children in

voluntary homes is the actual cost of maintaining those children.

278. You would not go so far as to say that local authorities only contributed half the cost, would you?—I could not. I do not know. I think local authorities must contribute more than half the cost. I should add that we had representations last year, and we have had them this year, from some local authorities about the inadequacy of our rates, our £3 and £2 10s., but against that, of course, we have, in the Estimates, a figure of £2 9s. 2d. which is within the average amount that is allowed at present by the Home Office Circular. (Miss Rosling.) I think that there may be a difference in the expenses of voluntary homes as against local authority homes. The voluntary homes are not, like local authority homes, tied to national scales for the staff; some of them pay lower salaries and do not pay any pension at the end of the service; and such charges are included in the cost of local authority homes. Capital charges are included in the local authority figure, which are not included in the voluntary homes figure.

279. Do you see the accounts of the leading voluntary homes, like the Church of England Children's Society or Dr. Barnardo's homes?—I cannot answer that, Sir. (Mr. Ross.) No, we do not; we have no occasion to.

Major Markham.

280. It would form an admirable basis of comparison, would it not?—With the cost of local authority homes?

281. Yes?—Yes, it might be a useful basis of comparison. Of course, the costs of local authority homes vary greatly, as one would expect.

Chairman.

282. Do not you think it would be a good thing if there were some measure of co-operation with regard to the running of homes, especially the financial side, the money side, between all local authority homes and all voluntary homes? How else are you to get economies, because am I not right in saying that, like everything else, it is a more or less specialised technical job—it has its own technique? How are you to get economies unless there is some basis of comparison and some co-operation?—(Miss Rosling.) There is also in quite a number of cases a difference of standard. Some of the voluntary homes, I imagine, have not reached entirely the standard that one would want to see, whereas the local authority homes are in the main reaching it more quickly.

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282A. Yes; but it is the object of this Sub-Committee, or one of its objects, to suggest methods of economy. Although Mr. Ross obviously cannot give me the average cost per child in the voluntary homes, still it does remain, I think you would agree, that the cost in local authority homes is considerably higher and it has yet to be shown that the children are necessarily happier in local authority homes than in voluntary homes, and one cannot help wondering whether there is not some scope for economy.

Major Markham.

283. There is also the suggestion here that children's homes like Dr. Barnardo's do not look after the children as well as those in local authority homes?—(Miss Rosling.) It would not apply to the big organisations, but there are some smaller homes where I think it would be true to say that the standard is not so high generally. (Mr. Ross.) The standard is variable in local authority homes as well. It is true that local authorities have the advantage of having public money at their disposal; and many of the smaller voluntary homes, as Miss Rosling suggests, are pretty hard up these days.

Chairman.

284. Yes, but the taxpayer is pretty hard up, too. Surely, unless you think that the children are substantially less happy and less well provided and cared for in voluntary homes, it should be the duty of those responsible for spending public money to try to bring themselves nearer voluntary homes as far as expenditure is concerned?—It is a hard thing to say what makes children happy or unhappy. The most important thing in the lives of the children who are being brought up in public care is the quality, the interest and the affection of the staff; that is much more important than material conditions. But nevertheless the policy has been, and is at this moment, to provide decent material conditions for the children—not extravagant conditions, but reasonable material conditions; and that the local authorities have been able to achieve more easily, for the obvious reason that they have public money at their disposal and some of the smaller voluntary homes are poorer in material ways than we would like to see them.

285. That would be more a matter of capital expenditure than daily running expenditure, would it not?—With a small home it might be in running costs.

286. The money that a local authority spends on providing such surroundings would not come into the weekly cost per child so much as an initial item of expenditure?—I think that it would depend on how they financed it. If it were merely

a matter of redecoration or the provision of new chairs, it might come into running expenditure? (Mr. Ballard.) Yes; these costings here for local authority homes include capital expenditure, apart from ordinary maintenance charges in the way of food and clothing.

287. Yes; but even allowing for that—take, for instance, Manchester, where all the homes give a total capital expenditure made up of revenue and running charges of 1s. 7d. per week, and the average gross cost per child is £5 8s. 0d.—I cannot believe that even the best voluntary home runs out to that figure, does it?—(Mr. Ross.) I do not know. We have explained that we have not got figures of costs of voluntary homes; but I would be confident that the variations there are probably about as great as they are in the local authority costs.

Major Markham.] The point I should like to make here is this. I think this Sub-Committee ought to have a standard comparison of figures for, say, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, who have had a century of experience in this field, and it is possible that a Government Department may learn a great deal by straight-forward comparison with a set-up of that kind.

Chairman.] We could always ask any voluntary home to give us evidence, either written or oral.

Major Markham.] Yes.

Chairman.

288. But I do suggest the point that the Sub-Committee is concerned about is whether the Department which is responsible for this subject should have a constant basis of comparison before them, because, although this Sub-Committee is a transient creature, the Department goes on for ever?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) I do not want to intervene in this discussion, but we do, of course, have a basis of comparison inasmuch as a voluntary home like a local authority home is subject to central inspection, and we therefore know the kind of standard that is being achieved on the one side and on the other.

289. I quite agree; but Mr. Ross said—and I suppose it is the same in Scotland—that the way in which we should try to encourage economy in local authorities, or he implied this, is not through scrutiny of their accounts but through observation of their standards?—We do scrutinize their accounts; but the main method of securing economy is undoubtedly through inspection. If, for example, we found an unduly high ratio of staff to children in a local authority home that would be taken up at once, and in that kind of comparison we do have a sample of voluntary homes in mind.

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Chairman.

290. This Sixth Report on the work of the Children Department is a most interesting and fascinating document, but it has this great disadvantage, an almost complete absence of any financial references; there are no financial comparisons. In consequence one cannot get answers to the questions one would like to put, such as, for instance, "Well, doubtless the work is worth while, but is it well conducted, or are its administrative expenses too heavy?" We are now on page 14 of the special memorandum, these items amounting to £2,100,000 under the heading of administration, which is one-sixth of the entire local authority child care estimates; that is for administration alone. Could we have Mr. Ross's observations on that rather large percentage for administration?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes. It is a service which is undoubtedly costly in staff. You have a Children's Officer who is the chief officer of the Children's Committee; you have a staff of boarding out officers or boarding out visitors, according to the size of the area; you have, of course, administrative and clerical staff. That boarding out staff is expensive as an administrative charge. Their main business is to find foster homes for children, that is, to place children in the way that is generally thought to be the best way—and, incidentally, fortunately, that is the cheapest way. But their job is not ended when the children are so placed. The children have then got to be closely supervised, and that does result in heavy costs of administration in a service of this kind. The Children's Officer is responsible, through his assistants, for all that goes on in children's homes. I think I may fairly make the point, Sir, that it is not very long ago since the Curtis Committee reported and that our efforts—I do not speak to the result of them—have been made and have had to be made in the years since the Children Act was passed in 1948 to repair the things that the Curtis Committee criticised. As regards the Children's Department Report, I think it must be remembered that it is written for general information of the public and is not directed to costs, which explains why no section of it is devoted to the cost of homes. Might I now revert to a question put a little time ago? I hesitated to answer it; the question was whether some means could be found of getting local authorities and the voluntary organisations together to consider the costs of their various homes to see whether economies could be effected. My only reason for hesitating to answer that question was my doubt as to feasibility; I cannot at this moment see just how that would work. Children's homes are infinitely variable; some are in old premises; a few—too few, perhaps, from the point of view of running expenses—are in new premises; some have

large gardens which necessitate the employment of one or more gardeners, which puts up the staff ratio and the cost per child immediately; and we know from experience that it is a matter of extraordinary difficulty to get down to a final analysis of relative costs between one place and another because of the differences I have indicated. However, I did want to say that I hesitated merely because I did not see at this moment how the thing would work.

291. I asked that question because the impression I get from all these documents, reports and so on is that there is a vast amount of admirable effort being put into the subject of the deprived child, and you have a large number of local authorities and a large number of voluntary organisations admittedly under very different conditions and variable conditions. But I feel that there is a lack of a central pool not only from the financial point of view but a central pool of knowledge and experience and discussion, and I should have thought that there was a call for some secretariat or pool or some sort of annual conference where the common problems could be thrashed out?—We are closely interested in costs.

292. No—on the general question, do you not think there is room for a central pool? What does Miss Rosling think?—(Miss Rosling.) We have a Central Advisory Council on which these matters are discussed and voluntary organisations and local authorities are represented on it. When the memorandum on guidance and conduct of children's homes was drawn up, that was done with the advice of the Council.

293. I meant a little more than that; I meant some more permanent body with a secretariat who would have a statistical basis of comparison, for it would mean a good deal of statistics. But I imagine that the Central Council has no permanent secretariat like that?—Not in those terms.

294. It would have to meet at regular intervals?—(Mr. Ross.) It would need a good deal of staff too, although it might be that the cost of staff would be justified. Voluntary organisations are not under any obligation to submit their accounts to us; it does not arise because they do not get grants from a central authority. Where a voluntary organisation does apply for a grant, under the conditions explained in the memorandum, we examine their financial position. We have then an interest since they may be given public money.

Sir Fergus Graham.] Can we get any comparison between those homes that have large gardens and those which have not, because I can quite see the necessity for extra staff? One or two of the homes with

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which I am in touch are definitely provided in that way not only for the good of the children but from the point of view of the produce from the gardens for feeding purposes.

Chairman.

295. Yes. I hesitate to suggest that we should get into too much detail at this stage. I rather feel we should run to ground first the desirability—or the contrary—of some common pool of knowledge and, secondly, the make-up of this figure for administration. I cannot believe that over two millions is spent on children's officers and boarding out officers. Can you tell us the main headings under which administrative expenditure is accounted for?—We have put in a statement, Sir, for which you asked last time, giving some break-down of administrative costs.

Major *Markham.*] You have raised the point that perhaps a large slice of this two millions for administration is covered by the cost of boarding out officers and supervision of boarded out children. If that amount were properly allocated to boarding out children, in the first row of these figures on page 14 it would raise the approximate cost per child considerably above £1 8s. 10d. per week?—Yes; but it would still be lower than the cost of maintaining a child in a children's home.

Chairman.

296. 72 per cent. of the administrative expenses is salaries, wages, national insurance and supervision; I suppose that that would be 72 per cent. of the direct administrative charges—that is, £1,426,000?—(Mr. *Ballard.*) This is a direct charge.

297. 72 per cent. of £1,426,000 is something approaching £950,000?—(Mr. *Ross.*) Yes.

298. You could employ a very large number of children's officers and boarding out officers for that, even if each one of them cost £1,000 a year; but I cannot believe that there are 950 children's officers and boarding out officers, are there?—It includes administrative and clerical staff as well. We give a figure in the memorandum which shows that there must be a considerable problem in regard to administration, because, whereas in the year to November, 1951, the number of children in care rose by 4,000, in the same year nearly 37,000 children came into care and nearly 33,000 went out, which must represent a very considerable amount of work to local authorities, such as consideration whether a child is to be received into care. The business of local authorities is not to receive a child into care if there is no need for it. We issued some little time ago a circular pointing out that where relatives or friends could

suitably look after a child whose mother was ill temporarily or having another child, then that should be the remedy, and not receiving the child into care with the risk possibly of the child remaining too long, once it was separated from his parents.

299. I quite see all those factors; but I am still disturbed by the high costs of administration relative to the cost of the actual care of children. The care of children comes to roughly eleven millions and administrative costs to £2,100,000. It seems to me disproportionate. I cannot help wondering what the Treasury has to say about it, because, after all, 50 per cent. of that is presumably met by the Treasury?—It is.

300. What control has the Treasury over this expenditure through your Department?—The methods of control were considered in great detail by the Local Government Manpower Committee which made its first report eighteen months ago—I cannot quite remember how long ago, but something like eighteen months ago. Each Department had a Manpower Committee and within each Department there were a number of sub-committees or panels. There was a Children Panel, of which I was Chairman; and there was full discussion there with local authorities on the methods to be employed and the objectives, all of which was accepted by the Government, as was the report, that central control in detail should be diminished and that there should be broad financial control.

301. I think we would like to see that report in so far as it affects the Children Department?—Yes, I have a copy here, Sir. (*Copy handed to the Sub-Committee.*) (Sir *Charles Cunningham.*) Costs of administration do not relate only to the expenses of the office staff of the local authority; those whose salaries are covered by these costs are participating in the actual care of children in the sense that they are finding homes for them and generally looking after them.

302. How many are there in England and Scotland?—(Mr. *Ross.*) There are 145 county and county borough councils in England and Wales; they are the local authorities concerned. (Sir *Charles Cunningham.*) In Scotland there are 51 posts of children's officer and, in addition, there are 46 field assistants.

303. What are the total administrative costs for Scotland?—They are given in the paper which we have handed in this morning. The total, including apportioned expenditure, stationery, and allied services, is £121,000. The bigger statement is an analysis of the costs in certain local authority homes; the smaller one is the break-down of the administrative expenditure.

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304. I do not think that we can pursue this point in detail. I would rather direct our attention to the need for some more direct Treasury participation in the control of expenditure of this nature, because I do not think the public would be satisfied if they thought that it was costing more than eleven millions to keep this very large number of children and over two millions to supervise them. It is more than eleven millions because the voluntary homes contribute their own quota, as you have already said; so that one might say thirteen millions to keep them and two millions, or more, for administration?—Yes, I appreciate your point; but may I repeat what I think I have already said, that we are enjoined as officials to see that the utmost economy is exercised? That has been particularly so in the past 18 months and more acutely so in the past six months; and it is our endeavour to do that. But I have explained that we do not exercise detailed control over expenditure, though it is a fact that repeatedly over the last 18 months at our monthly meetings with the superintending inspectors we have returned again and again to the need for them—they are child care inspectors, I should say, not accountants—when visiting local authorities for general purposes and in visiting children's homes, to see that there is no extravagance; we attach great importance to the point.

305. With respect, I cannot feel that the Treasury watchdog is adequately represented by inspectors who just receive a general impression from a quick visit, and it must be a quick visit, to a home, who say, "This home has been run extravagantly or economically". If you are controlling expenditure of money it can only be done on the basis of figures?—Yes—if it is to be detailed control, Sir, that is true.

306. Are you giving the Sub-Committee to understand that that, in effect, is the only real measure of control over local authority expenditure that you exercise?—In the running of children's homes. I mentioned other methods in relation to boarding out and to the payments they make to voluntary homes. (Sir Charles Cunningham.) It is, I think, important to stress that the Local Government Manpower Committees in both countries, whose reports were accepted, emphasised that local authorities are responsible bodies and ought to be left with a fair measure of discretion even where public money is involved. It was accordingly the object of the two committees to devise means of safeguarding the Treasury interest, which did not involve a meticulous control of expenditure. For that reason on things like boarding out we decided upon an average figure, beyond which a local authority should not go, and in the case of children's homes, for expen-

diture other than capital expenditure, to rely in the main on what is, after all, a pretty detailed inspection. The inspectors, from their contacts with these homes, do know the number of children, the ratio of children to staff and the general standards, and from their contacts with other local authority homes and with voluntary homes they can exercise a very important influence in keeping costs at a reasonable level.

307. There are six inspectors?—(Mr. Ross.) There are six superintending inspectors. It is explained in the memorandum that in England and Wales the Children Department Inspectorate is out-housed in six groups, two with headquarters in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Cardiff; each of the six groups is under the charge of a man or woman with the rank of superintending inspector and they have with them a group of inspectors.

308. How many inspectors would be relied upon to recommend economy or to keep an eye on expenditure?—The Children Department have just over 80 inspectors, about 20 of whom are in London. They are a Chief Inspector, two deputies, specialist inspectors, including the Medical Inspectorate, and the remainder in the regions, that is to say, about 60, an average of 10 per region.

309. Would you rely upon all of them to deal with children's homes?—Yes. They have a common function. They visit approved schools, remand homes and children's homes, including voluntary homes. They also survey the organisation of local authorities for the boarding out and the supervision of boarded out children—a thing to which we have attached the utmost importance. I have no doubt the Sub-Committee will have in mind some of the figures given in the memorandum. The Children Act requires a local authority to board a child out unless it is not practicable or desirable for the time being, that is, unless there is no suitable foster home or unless a child for some reason is not suitable for boarding out. In 1946, according to the Curtis Committee, 29 per cent. of children then in the care of local authorities under the Poor Law were boarded out. At the end of 1949 that figure had risen to 35 per cent.; at the end of 1950 to 37 per cent.; and at the end of 1951, according to a provisional figure that I have got, to 38.5 per cent., and those increased percentages are on a larger total number of children in care.

310. Yes. I think we will deal with boarding out later on. What I am now concerned with are the methods. You say these 80 inspectors of various ranks can be relied upon to keep a strict watch for economy?—It is one of their functions.

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311. Do they inspect the accounts of each institution?—No.

312. What recommendations do they make, and to whom do they make them, with regard to economy?—I think, again, we explain in the memorandum that our desire is to keep official correspondence to a minimum. The inspectors' instructions are to clear what they can in discussions locally, and generally, after visiting a children's home, they see the Children's Officer.

313. You would expect that nine-tenths of their conversations with the Children's Officer would be concerned with the actual question of the welfare of the children rather than with the accountancy aspect?—I would certainly expect that a large proportion of their conversation would be with regard to the condition of the children.

314. Do you still really think that any serious contribution is made to economy and to the economical running of these homes by the existence of these inspectors?—Yes, I think so—in the matter of standards of equipment of the homes and in regard to standards of staffing.

315. You are asking a great deal of an inspector who is doing his or her job really as a vocation to say it must be cut down in any way, are you not? Surely their object must be the other way round?—No. I have said that they are not accountants and their main function is not that of inspecting the financial arrangements. They have, we think, a vocation for child care. We are in close touch with our inspectors. We have monthly meetings with superintending inspectors and we see inspectors in other ways, and they are as anxious as are the administrators to make sure that no money is spent needlessly.

316. But they are not qualified in that respect—that is, from the financial aspect?—No, they are not accountants; they are not financial inspectors.

317. No. Would you agree that there is room for some more expert financial—I hesitate to use the word control—vigilance over expenditure that varies in such a startling manner?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) I think there are two points there. The first is that while inspectors are not accountants or finance officers, they are qualified to judge of the things which produce expense, in particular staff and the ratio of staff to children and the general standards of a home. The second point is that the actual accounts of the children's authorities are, of course, audited not only by the appointed auditors

of the local authority concerned, but in connection with grant claims they are test checked by our own officers.

318. Does that mean that comparison is made between running the homes in one local authority's area and in another local authority's area?—Certainly. Where we do not have an exact comparison is between the costs of a local authority home and a voluntary home; but within the local authority field we have the most ample information as to relative costs of homes in different areas.

Major Markham.

319. The point has been brought out here that there are accounts here and that they are vetted by you, and that it is also a function of superintending inspectors particularly to exercise financial vigilance. But you also say that superintending inspectors never see these accounts. How, then, can they exercise any vigilance?—They exercise vigilance by seeing to what standard a home is being maintained. If they find an unduly high ratio of staff to children that is either taken up by the inspector in the locality or it is reported to the Department, as it is, after all, on items like staff that the bulk of the expenditure is incurred.

320. But the usual way in the case of officers of this kind is for them to have special training and their special interest is to see that every home under their care reaches at any rate a minimum standard, which means additional expense. Financial vigilance, therefore, is exercised in the field of bringing up the standards to a higher level, which is a very good thing and an important point. But my point is that it is not exercised in the reverse direction of bringing down excessive expenditure because, first of all, they are never in a position to check accounts—a point that has come out this morning—and, secondly, their whole training is in the opposite direction?—One can only say that in our experience where an inspector does find a staff ratio in a home higher than he believes it ought to be he does bring it to notice, although in another home, where the standard is low, he would similarly make an effort to bring it up to a reasonable level.

Chairman.

321. What do you mean by "bring it to notice"—whose notice?—In one of two ways: either by discussing the matter himself with the Children's Officer of the local authority concerned, or by putting in a report to the Department, in which case we would take it up with the Clerk of the local authority.

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322. How many reports have there been recently in Scotland of that nature to your Department?—I can recall two reports quite recently, but it is by no means an exceptional thing for a report of this kind to go forward.

323. What does England say?—(Mr. Ross.) I do not see all reports. (Miss Rosling.) I know that there have been a few, but not very many.

324. So that that defence against extravagance is a little sketchy, is it not?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) I am afraid I cannot agree with that comment.

325. Surely one is bound to. Let me make it quite clear that the last thing anyone on this Sub-Committee wants to do is to injure any child in any way whatever. We have to approach this matter from the point of view of finance; that is our main function?—Yes.

Major Markham.] I think the point is definitely established that there is not adequate vigilance.

Chairman.

326. When you get expenditure on local authority homes varying between £7 3s. 7d. per child per week and £2 15s. 9d. per child per week, and granting all possible differences in conditions—large gardens or whatever you like—it is, to say the least, startling, and one would like to know what measure of control is exercised and what steps you can take when you perceive these startling divergences?—I think that these differences in costs, when one examines individual cases, are very easily explicable. For instance, a home for infants costs vastly more than one for older children. It depends on the type and the number of children, and that is one reason why the costs in so many voluntary homes, at any rate in Scotland, are relatively low. They are very large homes. We have one home with 900 children and another with 350.

327. May I come back to this point, which is this divergence: is the divergence noted and are the explanations, which, as you say, may well be satisfactory, all gone into?—Certainly.

328. Then what is the explanation of this enormous expenditure on local authority homes, particularly this one with 75 children, of £7 3s. 7d. per week, and what is the corresponding explanation for a home with 40 children at £2 15s. 9d. per week? You may have it both ways—an explanation of extravagance or of cheeseparing, which may be to the detriment of the children?—I cannot deal with that case because it is English, but I can say that the highest cost we have in Scotland is £5 16s. 0d., which is for a nursery home in Edinburgh, dealing with children of a type which demands a very high ratio of staff to children.

Major Markham.

329. You mean they are backward or deficient children?—Difficult infants. (Miss Rosling.) If they are very young, there is a high proportion of staff; for instance, where they are infants under two it is necessary to have more staff because the children cannot be left alone and everything has to be done for them. That is, of course, very expensive.

Chairman.

330. I quite accept that there may be explanations, but what I want to elicit from you is whether these explanations have been demanded and whether the Department has felt uneasy at these figures. In short, was the whole matter gone into?—It is a fact that they have been gone into. We have recently got out lists of the homes where the cost was the highest and the lowest, because, of course, they are both equally worrying.

331. True?—We have instructed inspectors to look into those costs.

332. Whom have you asked?—(Mr. Ross.) The superintending inspectors.

333. Who are not qualified accountants?—No. We admit that obviously we have not got a staff of qualified accountants or finance officers engaged on this work. Our main task in recent years has been a different one—to see that the condition of the children was repaired and to extend boarding out; and the fact is that there are 950 local authority homes in England and Wales. The policy which was accepted by the Government was set forth in the report of the Manpower Committee. This has meant that we have not—and we do not pretend to have done so—gone into these explanations in detail. It would be an enormous task. I do not say that that is a reason why it should not be done, of course.

334. Perhaps it is not fair to ask you this question; but is it not possible that the expenditure of a comparatively small sum might not only reduce the costs to the Treasury and to the ratepayer, but might also produce greater efficiency and benefit the children themselves? So much for high costs. But when it is a case of low costs, which might be to the detriment of the children—that might be a possibility—what steps are taken then?—(Miss Rosling.) It is the same. The superintending inspectors are asked to examine the running of an establishment and to find out from it if there is an explanation. For instance, you have here the example of Manchester with a very high cost for a nursery school. The answer to that we know; the staff are too numerous, daily unqualified staff: that was obvious to an inspector visiting the

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place; it did not require close examination. A conference was arranged with the local authority with the object of re-organizing the nursery to do away with some of the staff.

335. Has it been done?—No, because the matron became seriously ill and the authority did not want to hold the conference without her; but it will be held almost immediately, now that she is better.

336. That is a matter of detail. Here you have 65 children costing very nearly £650 a week; in other words, it must be one of the highest educational or maintenance costs in the world, must it not?—It is an extraordinarily difficult nursery from every point of view; it would be bound to be a costly establishment; half the children are under 18 months.

337. £10 a week per child?—It has to have an estate manager attached to it, which adds to the cost.

338. But is not that all the more reason for your Department not letting the grass grow under its feet for one minute?—The authority have been told by the inspectors that it is wrong and that they should be doing something themselves about it.

339. That is just what a central Government Department exists for—in order to stop an authority spending too much and delaying. Surely, after the Department discovers that, not one day—and certainly not a week—should be allowed to go by before rapid steps are taken to check it?—(Mr. Ross.) We have got to act in partnership with local authorities, Sir. As Miss Rosling has explained, we are taking action in those cases.

340. Yes, but for how many weeks will this drift on at that rate of expenditure?—While I have said that we have no finance inspectors, it would be wrong if the Subcommittee got the impression that we are idle in the matter; I hope I have explained that we are not idle within the limits of our resources of staff. For example, some months ago we sent to our superintending inspectors a statement in respect of each local authority which was extracted from the grant claims. It gave the cost per week per child per local authority over all their homes. At one of our monthly meetings we discussed that and instructed the superintending inspectors to get their inspectors to examine these figures, to examine the two extremes initially, the highest and the lowest, and to find out in conversation with the local authorities how this came about. They are engaged upon that now. We have reverted to it at one further meeting since we discussed it initially, and we were told then, as we expected, that the circumstances were

infinitely variable not only in relation to organisation and staffing of homes but in relation to the ways in which local authorities return their expenditure. There are all those factors which have got to be looked into when it comes to examining figures.

341. I have got the impression that you are fully aware of the need for economy and are doing your very best as a Department with the tools at your disposal, but the machinery simply is not there. Inevitably, perhaps, 90 or more per cent. of your attention is fixed on what one might call the welfare side, and a very little part of your energies, your staff, or your expert knowledge can be directed to the pounds, shillings and pence aspect?—Certainly a large proportion of our attention is directed to the welfare side. That has been our job as we have conceived it since 1948.

342. And feeling that you have got much leeway to catch up, the money side of it must rather take its chance, or is that unfair?—I think that takes it too far, Sir. The point was raised, I think, and reasonably raised, as to whether inspectors, as distinct from administrators—as I understood the point—could bring themselves to be concerned with costs. I did say that the inspectors are as much concerned with costs as we are—subject always to the maintenance of proper standards for the children.

Chairman.] Yes. I think you made that point very clearly.

Major Markham.

343. There is one other point there, and that concerns the question of travelling costs which involves the inspectors themselves to a very large degree. In Scotland, with the type we have there, nearly 10 per cent. of the entire cost goes on travelling expenses and obviously quite a lot of that is done by the inspectors themselves?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) That, I take it, is the travelling expenditure of the children's officers attached to a local authority; it is mainly incurred by boarding out officers going about the country finding homes for children or inspecting those who are already boarded out.

344. In Scotland there are these great concentrations, as the next table brings out; therefore, presumably, you have it as high as in England because of those concentrations. Whose job is it to check these travelling expenses of the children's officers, their staff, and the supervisory expenses of the superintending inspectors?—(Mr. Ross.) It is brought out clearly in the Local Government Manpower Committee's report, that local authorities are responsible bodies, and it is their function as responsible

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bodies to check the travelling expenses of their officers. It is the business of the Home Office to check the travelling expenses of the inspectors. One reason for outhousing or regionalising the inspectorate in 1948—or the main reason—was to secure improved efficiency and to put the inspectors nearer their job. A second reason was to avoid waste of time in travelling and unnecessary expense in travelling. That is achieved in large measure by regionalisation of the inspectorate. (Sir Charles Cunningham.) May I correct the impression that the relative cost of travelling in Scotland is lower because we have children boarded out or rather concentrated in a particular area? It will be appreciated that a great many of those areas are in places like the Western Isles and the Highlands, to which the cost of travelling is high. On the control of that cost, while we have no detailed control over the necessity for a particular journey, the grant claim is, of course, audited not only by the auditors of the local authority but by our own financial staff. So that we do have knowledge of the rate of payment which is made to these officers for their travelling work.

345. We get this phrase coming in "by their own financial staff". Would you explain what that means?—In Scotland we do not have the system of district audit which is in operation in England. The accounts of local authorities are audited by chartered accountants who are appointed by the Secretary of State. These appointed auditors certify the grant claims which are made to us. In addition to that, we have travelling officers of our own Department who visit the offices of local authorities and test check the claims for grants which they make to us.

346. But is it not the main job of those certified accountants to see that everything is in order and according to the rules and regulations and not, as it were, to question policy or the interpretation of policy?—It is primarily the duty of the auditors of a local authority's accounts to see that the expenditure is legal.

Chairman.

347. And vouched for?—Yes, and vouched for. On the other hand, the district auditors in England, I think I am right in saying, have been asked to bring to the notice of the central Departments any cases of extravagance which come to their notice, and certainly our own people in Scotland can be relied upon to do that.

348. Would it be true to say that in Scotland they do not make a recommendation for surcharge?—An appointed auditor can recommend surcharge on the grounds that the expenditure is illegal.

349. Do they often do that?—Quite frequently, yes; they do it by interim report.

350. Then the only difference between the two countries is that in England he is a civil servant, whereas in Scotland he is not, but are not the functions the same?—Yes; but because he is a civil servant there is an additional safeguard in the Treasury interest, and we do—as I think is not considered necessary in England—arrange for a grant claim to be test checked by our own people. (Mr. Ballard.) May I just add one point, and that is on the administrative charges? It says definitely in the Manpower Committee's report, as I understand it, that local authorities have to satisfy the district auditor that the charges are equitable and reasonable, which is a safeguard from the Exchequer's point of view.

351. I think that we have almost thrashed this subject to a standstill; but I should like to be assured that your Department is disturbed when it sees these wide variations and would like to go into it further if it had a chance?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes.

352. Now may we turn to this Sixth Report, which no doubt you know by heart and probably wrote. Would you say that this is meant to be a popular document rather than a detailed report of your activities to the House of Commons?—Yes; it is not a Command White Paper.

353. No; it is a Stationery Office publication?—It is produced at intervals—the last interval was a long one—mainly for the information of the public, and it is a large public who are interested in these subjects: it deals not only with child care but with juvenile delinquency, which is also of much interest to the public. It is also to inform Parliament, but it is not written primarily for Parliament.

354. Would you think it a good thing to publish some document which would both mention finance in that it was an annual publication and would provide some criteria for comparing one year with another?—We have considered the frequency of the publication of this report. We think that annually would be too frequent, that there would not be sufficient change to note in a document of this kind. We have in mind the possibility of publishing it at intervals of about two years, but I think that that would be dependent on the progress that had been made and on developments in the period. We want, when we do publish a report, to have something new and of interest to say.

355. Why I made that suggestion was that I have a feeling that on child care large sums are being voted and that the taxpayer has not got much idea how those sums are

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being spent and has not much idea as to the progress that is being made in one year as compared with another or what progress is being made in a matter to which you have already referred, the number of children boarded out, and that it is desirable that the whole work of your Department should be brought more into the light of day. It is a matter in which the public is keenly interested, and I think your Department would be helped by such a public searchlight?—I agree as to the public interest and as to our strong desire to let the public know what is being done. It assists child care in every way. We have made the point repeatedly to local authorities that, if they are going to bring up their children in the way they should be brought up, then it is essential that the public locally should be interested in the children and should know what is being done. As one example, we attach the utmost value to what are called the uncle and aunt schemes, which are mentioned in the memorandum; but you cannot get a scheme of that kind running unless the public locally know what is being done and are induced to take an interest.

356. Would you like to tell the Subcommittee what sort of progress you think has been made in the direction of formal steps, as distinct from informal proddings you take, to bring the local authorities up to the standard that you think desirable?—Yes. I mentioned earlier that we try—and I think succeed reasonably—to work with the local authorities as partners; our inspectors are in touch with children's officers and with clerks, and from time to time, by invitation, they attend the meetings of Children's Committees. It has probably fallen off now—Miss Rosling could say—but in the first two or three years after the Children Act was passed we saw representatives of local authorities constantly in the Home Office in London.

357. Do you mean of all local authorities?—Broadly speaking, all local authorities sent representatives to discuss with us their problems, developments and their ideas. That was running in parallel with the contacts our inspectors were making with the local authorities in the areas. The contacts are maintained but local authority representatives have occasion less frequently to visit us in London than in the earlier years.

358. Why would you say that had fallen off?—(Miss Rosling.) Soon after the passing of the Children Act, the local authorities were very anxious to discuss their plans generally; they were just beginning to take stock of where they stood, because some of them had not even one home for children, and they were very anxious to discuss what their line should be. Now they do that pretty often still, but not so much as formerly.

359. Take this single question, the uncle and aunt or godparents scheme, contact between local life and the children's homes and the work of the children's offices: Have you any machinery that you set in motion to see that every local authority has that degree of contact?—It would come out when the inspectors were visiting children's homes; they would find out that the children had not got contacts outside them that they ought to have. It is one of the things that we would mention to local authorities when they are visiting us.

360. It would be done by word of mouth?—Yes.

361. Can you tell me off-hand, or have you any idea, what proportion of children in local authority homes have been adopted by a godparent?—I should say that certainly half, probably more than that. It is very hard to say exactly, but it is a much more regular thing now for a child to have contacts outside.

362. I think it would be true to say that if you made a real push about it you could bring that figure up to 100 per cent.?—Yes, but it is rather deceptive in some ways because you get the kind of person who is very anxious to be an uncle but is rather foolish over it and takes the child out, spends a lot of money upon him, giving him expensive presents—an attitude which is not really related to his situation; it is like boarding out where you have to make a careful selection.

363. Has every local authority home a liaison committee in touch with local life?—No, I would not say that; but I should say that most homes now have got some organisation which is helping them to find uncles and aunts, other than the W.V.S., which is looking for people for them.

364. What steps have you taken with the local authorities that have not got some such organisation?—We urge them to get in touch with a suitable one.

365. What answers do they make?—I cannot remember an authority which has ever refused to do it.

366. Why have you not seen that they all do it, because I have always thought that was one of the most important things for a child in a home?—It is a very important thing and they are encouraged to do it; but it is a difficult thing to make a local authority do something immediately you want them to do; I only wish we could.

367. You have had two or three who have done it?—Yes; but a great many of them are only now coming to the stage where they are looking at that kind of thing. They have had to spend a great deal of time and trouble getting so far.

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Chairman.] But it is so very simple; it is only a matter of getting hold of the local Women's Institute.

Sir Fergus Graham.] It is far more simple in a town district than in a rural district.

Chairman.

368. No. If a home is in a village or near a small town, there are dozens of such organisations—Rotary clubs, Women's Institutes and so on—and you have only got to ask them and it is done?—We do give them the names of organisations to help them; we make the contacts for them in many cases.

369. But then it still fails in some cases?—It still is not carried through sometimes.

370. I am not attacking them in any way, but are not there any further steps that could be taken?—(Mr. Ross.) I think it must be remembered that the immediate task of child care has been entrusted to local authorities, and we have to march in step with them. I do not think that it would be wise or right to attempt to get them all to do the same thing all at once; our inspectors cannot be in constant touch with them, but the essential function of the inspectorate is to see that all the things that we have been discussing—boarding out, conditions in children's homes, and so on—are reviewed, as well as the development of this uncle and aunt scheme. But local authorities, according to their own views, fix different priorities, and we would not want to seek to decide that for them. We have had a great deal to do in these last few years and we have done our best to keep everything going.

371. I am sure you have, and in the face of great difficulties. But I personally hold the view—I bow to expert opinion—that the most terrible thing that could happen to a child is to feel that there is nobody who takes a continuous interest in him or her. I feel that, whereas in any local authority or voluntary home—and when I say "home" I mean institution—there is seldom any continuity in the sense that one or more persons are interested in the child and in that child's life, it seems to me that the only substitute you can have for that is some outside person who remembers the child's birthday and gives him or her a party now and again and comes and sees the child occasionally. Do you agree that it is lack of continuity, whether it is nurse or teacher, which is so felt; there is always change; nobody remembers little Tommy six years ago; and there is no permanence?—We are glad to hear you say that. There is another person who is important in the child's life, and we have stressed this point about continuity in the memorandum which we sent out with the regulations. That

person in the house mother. It is explained in the memorandum that the object nowadays is to house the children in small groups as far as they cannot be boarded out, and not in large homes, not even in cottage homes, in preference to small family group homes. It is the heart of the house mother's business, or the house parents', to provide the security that every child needs.

372. But the house parent may not know that child all his child life?—No.

373. And there are a number of large homes which do not have house mothers; for instance, there is one in Glasgow with 900 children. It makes my blood run cold to think of any child of mine being in that sort of institution, however well run?—There we do advocate the formation of the children into groups, even in a home of that kind.

374. Is there any continuity?—There should be, if house mothers are appointed to look after groups of children. I agree that, since they are in employment, they may move and they may marry. I am not belittling the influence of an uncle or aunt, but I want to make the point that the influence of a home and of a house mother also is an essential element in a child's life.

375. Yes. I do not know if I am right here, but would not Miss Rosling say that in many cases the uncle or aunt, or the god-parents, as I prefer to call them, represent the only measure of permanency and continuity that you can have in a child's life?—(Miss Rosling.) It could provide it. I do not think we have had enough experience to say it does. We do not know whether the system would continue during all his childhood—we hope it would—but its main use, I think, besides giving him a friend who may continue to take an interest in him, is to give him contacts with the world outside, taking him out and letting him see how an ordinary household is run.

376. You do attach primary importance to it, do you not?—Yes; and in the memorandum which Mr. Ross has mentioned we do stress that, even in nursery homes.

377. Why have you not trodden on the toes of local authorities very hard, and so constantly, that every single child in the care of a local authority has that sort of relationship?—(Mr. Ross.) It is a wide field and we try to keep everything going. I do not take you to be suggesting that we should instruct our inspectors to concentrate on this for a time, and I do not think that would be a good method of doing it. For one thing, when they visit an area they have got to deal with a multiplicity of things. But this is a thing we have tried to develop as we will continue to do.

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378. You do not quite share my own view, that this is absolutely cardinal?—Yes, I do.

379. I should regard that making of an outside contact, as well as the elements of permanence and continuity, as the peg on which to hang the whole of that one child's welfare?—In mentioning the house mother and the part played by her, I do not belittle the part that may be played by the uncle or aunt. I think the house parents' part, the persons in the children's homes, is also of cardinal importance in a child's life.

380. And that is what you might call an internal influence, not an extraneous influence?—It is the main influence the child has; he is seeing and relying on that person day by day. I do not want to be driven into making comparisons; they are different.

381. I quite understand what you are driving at and I quite accept it. Can you tell us what local authorities are neglecting this?—No, I have not got that information. (Miss Rosling.) No, I am afraid I cannot.

382. Will it be possible to let the Subcommittee have a memorandum on the progress of this movement, if you like to call it so?—(Mr. Ross.) The uncle and aunt and the godparent scheme?

383. Yes?—Yes, certainly.

Chairman.] Thank you very much.

Major Markham.

384. I want to mention a case here of a particular institution that I know of that seems to concentrate on taking the type of child that nobody else in this work wants at all, that is to say, the children of murderers and of men sentenced to very long terms of imprisonment. In that particular type of home do you get this vital home factor that we have been discussing? I would very much welcome your expert views on what steps are being taken to improve that sort of humanistic feeling in this type of home?—I do not know off-hand. (Miss Rosling.) I do not think it is quite accurate to say that they are the only people who take that type of child. I know of others.

Major Markland.] I put it as an example. When the uncle and aunt system falls down, they are the most neglected children in the whole country.

Sir Fergus Graham.

385. Unless they are very large homes?—It does not fall down with this particular type of child because I know of certain Salvation Army Homes with two or three children of murderers and children of others with unhappy pasts.

Sir Fergus Graham.] The important thing is surely that the home should not be recognised as concentrated.

Chairman.

386. I must say that I hold the view that if only this were more widely publicised the question would solve itself?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes. It certainly could be extended, and we want it to be extended.

387. Have you anything you would like to get on the record about boarding out and as to the methods you use to encourage boarding out, because from the point of view of the taxpayer it is most important that boarding out should be extended?—Yes. The first and most important thing is that the Children Act puts local authorities under a duty to board out every child in their care unless, for the time being, it is not practicable or desirable; that is the basis of it, and that provision was put in the Act deliberately. In all our meetings with local authorities or, for example, with groups of children's officers, we stress the importance of extending boarding out. There is no question that this is known to every local authority in the country and I should think it is accepted by all. As to methods, we have asked local authorities to arrange for their children's officers, or members of authorities, to address Women's Institute meetings and other meetings of that kind in their localities. Local authorities tell us commonly—and it is easily believed—that the best recruiting agents are people who have already had foster children and who find that they have gained thereby as well as the children gaining. It is possible for them to interest their neighbours. Local authorities do some recruitment also through churches; they use a variety of methods. About two years ago—and this illustrates the importance that we attach to the subject—we had a film on boarding out made called "Family Affair", and by arrangement with the Central Office of Information that film was shown in a very large number of cinemas throughout the country. We put in an immense amount of work at the time in advising children's officers in advance of the time of showing and asking them to see that the showing of the film was brought to the notice of institutes and other organisations of that kind. As to the results, the Curtis Committee said in their report that in 1946, 29 per cent. of the children in care of local authorities at that time under the Poor Law were boarded out. At the end of 1949, when we got our first annual statistical return from local authorities, the proportion of children boarded out was 35 per cent., at the end of 1950 it was 37 per cent., and according to provisional figures, at the end of 1951 it was 38.5 per cent. I would mention that these percentages for the later

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years are related to an increased number of children in care. We are satisfied that the local authorities are fully alive to the need to board out and are doing their best to extend it. We have been discussing recently the question whether more could be done by way of boarding out children who are handicapped in one way or another. There is a tendency, and probably it is a wise one, to board out, initially, the children who are likely to settle happily in a foster home. In the first place, it is of vital importance to children that the placing should be right; there is nothing that damages a child more than being placed somewhere and then withdrawn.

388. When you board out a child, the intention is that that shall be permanent, is it not?—May I come on to that in a moment—short-term boarding out? I have been speaking of long-term.

389. That really means for the rest of a child's school life?—Yes. It is that I have had in mind as I spoke. In the second place, it is important that the foster parents should find that taking a child in that way is altogether a good thing, because it is by that means that more foster homes are found. We have been discussing on the Advisory Council on Child Care whether boarding out might be extended to a greater degree to children who are handicapped in one way or another. The sort of suggestions that have been made are that professional people could be approached specially to take a child who is difficult in some fashion, realizing the additional difficulties that there would be, and one or two local authorities have already gone some way in that kind of specialised boarding out. What I have said relates in the main to boarding out a child for an indefinite period—probably for the remainder of his school life. There is need also to find foster homes for children who come into care temporarily because, speaking broadly, we would rather a child were placed for a short period in a suitable foster home than in a children's home. We think it is better for the child.

390. Do you mean anything up to a year?—No—in the main, probably anything up to three months, the sort of case where a mother falls ill or is having another child; and so we want to extend boarding out to those children, rather than that they should be placed in children's homes. Probably the most difficult type of case is the intermediate case, where a father may have been widowed and is not at the moment able to make arrangements for his child to be looked after, or where the mother goes into a sanatorium for a fairly long period, it may be a year or two. Foster parents who will not become too attached to the child have to be found if that child is to be boarded out wisely. It is a most difficult

thing to ask of foster parents, but it is another form of boarding out that we want to develop. Still another form, a simpler one, is finding holiday foster homes for children who have no home of their own to which they can go on holiday from a children's home. Local authorities make arrangements in a great variety of ways: they may take the children in a children's home to a holiday home by the sea. That is a method that we do not altogether favour, even though the children may enjoy it. We prefer, if possible, that the children should go on holiday with a family, which is probably the best arrangement, or to a foster home, or with another child in a children's home if he can go on holiday to his parents, relatives or friends.

Chairman.] Thank you very much. I would like to leave you with this thought, that perhaps two-thirds of children, as Miss Rosling said, are suitable for boarding out. If you boarded out another 10,000 children that would save the ratepayer and taxpayer combined 10,000 times the difference between £5 2s. 2d. and £1 8s. 10d.

Major Markham.] It would not quite be that, because there would be other costs, including travelling expenses, and so on, to come into it.

Chairman.

391. Yes. It looks very much as if you would save something like £36,000 per week to the taxpayer and ratepayer?—Yes.

392. I do venture to suggest that the Department should look at boarding out from the point of view of cost as well as from the other point of view, and that they should take firmer steps with local authorities almost compel them, and urging them to get a move on with boarding out, looking at it from the point of view of the taxpayer?—I do not think you can compel a local authority. I do not think anybody could have attached more importance to boarding out than we have, and the figures I have quoted give some indication of that. We have said on many occasions that fortunately boarding out is not only the best kind of care but is also the least expensive, not only in money but in manpower. It is true that you require staff, and considerable staff, to find foster homes and to supervise the children. We have told local authorities in the past that staff of that kind is well employed; but, subject to this, it is cheaper to maintain a child who is boarded out, and you do not then employ staff in a children's home as you do otherwise, because the foster parent looks after the child as she would her own child.

393. Yes. But the main task of this Sub-Committee is to recommend fields for economy, and certainly it appears to me, and I think to other members, that here

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there is a vital field for finding economies. It is one which would redound to the benefit of the children?—Yes. We are in complete agreement with you, Sir.

394. That was only a vague figure, but if you save £36,000 a week, that is getting on for two million a year, is it not, and if you see it possible even to save half of that by taking much more urgent steps with local authorities, I think it is worth bearing in mind?—(Miss Rosling.) Except that we have got to act with caution upon this. It is possible for a local authority to say, "Very well, we will board out" and then they will go ahead and do it. But if it is not well and carefully done, children boarded out may be placed in great peril.

395. There have been some very unhappy cases?—Yes, and you can spoil that by having half a dozen cases where it is known that a child was difficult or something went wrong and as a result you have the very people who might be inclined to take the child set against boarding out. It is not a matter that can be hurried.

396. I quite understand that; but I am wondering if your exceedingly tactful, cautious and wise approach to local authorities could not have a little extra stimulus added to it?—It has been going ahead steadily all the time since the passing of the Act.

397. And bearing in mind the very large sum of money involved. I will leave that thought with you, anyway?—(Mr. Ross.) You can be assured, Sir, we will provide all the stimulus we think is necessary, and we think we have been doing it. We attach first-rate importance to boarding out, but I agree with Miss Rosling that it is not a thing that can be rushed. In the Sixth Report on the work of the Children's Department we quote figures to show the highest and lowest proportions of children boarded out by local authorities, and several people—that is, people versed in child care—have mentioned that to me and have suggested that perhaps we were wrong in quoting figures in that way. I do not think I had to make any particular concession to them, but their suggestion was that it might be read as measuring the

standard of local authority child care by their place in the league table, so to speak, which is not a thing we want to do. We simply cannot afford, from the point of view of the children, to let it be supposed that we think that the best child care local authority is the local authority with the highest proportion of children boarded out.

Sir Fergus Graham.

398. Certainly not. You are up against a very different geographical question there?—Yes.

Chairman.

399. Yes, I quite accept that, but the primary function of this Sub-Committee is to see that the policy laid down by Parliament is carried out at the lowest cost consistent with 100 per cent. efficiency, and it does seem to me that here there might be a loophole for more economy?—As we have observed, fortunately there is no clash between the interests of the child and economy in the development of boarding out.

400. That is why I fastened on that point.—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) On this point, I ought in fairness to Scottish local authorities say that boarding out is not only recognised as the most desirable method of child care, but is also the traditional method. In consequence, our percentages already are considerably higher than in England and Wales. The difficulty at the moment is not in Scotland the willingness of local authorities to board out, but the difficulty, which we share with England, of finding suitable homes in which to board children out. We have used all methods of publicity and propaganda to which Mr. Ross has referred.

401. You do not both of you think there are further methods?—(Mr. Ross.) I dare say there are, Sir.

402. I hope you will consider them?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) We have found that suitable opportunities taken by Scottish ministers of calling attention to this have produced good results for the foster parent system. A well-timed appeal at Christmas tends to produce a better response than others.

Chairman.] Thank you very much.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned till Tuesday, 25th March, at 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 25TH MARCH, 1952.

CHILD CARE.

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Sir Fergus Graham.
Major MarkhamMr. Wade.
Miss Ward.

Colonel E. St. J. BIRNIE, Acting Honorary Secretary of the National Council of Associated Children's Homes and Secretary of the Church of England Children's Society; Mr. E. H. LUCETTE, M.C., General Superintendent of Dr. Barnardo's Homes; Mr. W. H. POWELL, Secretary to the Administrator of the Crusade of Rescue; and Mr. C. F. WALPOLE, General Secretary of the National Children's Home and Orphanage, called in and examined.

Chairman.

403. Colonel Birnie, you are here representing the National Council of Children's Homes, as well as the Church of England Children's Society. I would like you to tell the Sub-Committee something of the functions of the National Council. What we want to know is how much co-ordination there is between the various voluntary organisations, both technical and financial?—(Colonel Birnie.) The National Council was formed, I think I am right in saying—Mr. Lucette must correct me, because he has been a member much longer than I have—with the object of meeting once a month, and there are nominally either one or two members of each of the big voluntary societies as members of the National Council, and every month we write in to the Honorary Secretary at the time—it happens to be myself at the moment—putting forward any particular items which we want discussed at the next meeting, which really means difficulties that we are undergoing. It may perhaps be a question of trying to get the 5s. children's allowance paid, or it may be even something quite small, like difficulties in connection with our small Homes all over England; or it may be something very much more important, like a measure that is coming up to Parliament, perhaps, on the children's side, upon which possibly we have not as a body been consulted, and we feel that we should put up certain facts which we would like included in amendments to that Bill; in fact anything of that kind that any of us feel would not perhaps carry much weight if we ourselves put it up as separate societies, but which would carry rather more weight if it went up from the National Council, which would mean the unanimous verdict of all the voluntary societies, and which therefore we hope would have more weight, as we control between 25,000 and 30,000 of the destitute children of England.

404. Could you give us the names of the societies which you regard as the principal societies?—Of our members?

405. All voluntary societies are members, are they not?—No, not really. The members are Dr. Barnardo's, the National Children's Home, the Church of England Children's Society (that is my own Society), the Crusade of Rescue, the Shaftesbury and Arethusa Homes, the Jewish Board of Guardians, and the Children's Aid Society. I do not know whether Mr. Lucette can add to that list? (Mr. Lucette.) Quite a number of other societies which are provincial in nature; that is to say, there are certain societies like the Josiah Mason Orphanage. This is the Central Council, and it has also set up area groups. We have a North-West, a North-East, a Southern and a Western Group, and some societies which are in fact small—they may have no more than a single Home—have contact with us through these Regional Groups; and they send a representative of the Group to our central deliberations which take place every month, as Colonel Birnie has explained.

406. The Group does?—(Colonel Birnie.) Yes. They hold their monthly meetings also.

407. Would you say that it was an organisation for raising grievances and difficulties, or could you say that it was one which endeavoured to co-ordinate the efforts of all the societies and to exchange information?—I would say more the second. (Mr. Lucette.) As the major societies are extremely differently organised, some of them being run predominantly by Councils of voluntary members, and so on, this Association had, in forming itself, to recognise—

408. If I may interrupt you there, when was it formed?—(Mr. Walpole.) Six or seven years ago, Sir. (Mr. Lucette.) They had to recognise the continuing identity of each of the Homes, that is to say that in joining this Council Dr. Barnardo's Homes as such do not lose the power to direct Barnardo's, but it is an Association for common representation on matters of common interest. It is an Association through which information intended to

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reach voluntary societies can reach them without the Home Office having to get off about 100 letters; and having in view those two main functions of common representation and common receipt of instructions, it is an organisation which can take common action when common interest has been established by discussion; but at no stage have we yet sunk our individual control as societies by some imposition of regulations by the National Council.

409. The point I want to lead up to is this. Do you have any discussion or contact with each other with regard to the financial side of running the Homes, either money raising or money spending?—(Colonel Birnie.) I would say no to that. We would only discuss, perhaps, such a question as this. Supposing the Home Office wished to fix the weekly sum of money which is payable to the voluntary societies for any local authority children who are in our care, for instance: if a subject like that cropped up we would amongst ourselves discuss whether or not the sum the Home Office wished to allow for that purpose was sufficient, and we would then discuss that and each society would give its own views as to whether or not they would find that sum sufficient or insufficient.

410. Would it be true to say that this sum, which I see is £2 8s. 5d., an average overall figure, and which in this coming financial year will be £2 9s. 2d.—that those figures, or the corresponding ones from your own side, are all the same all the way through? The same sum is paid to all societies, is it not?—Not necessarily. The rule is that a local authority is not permitted to pay more than those two sums mentioned: £2 10s. 0d. a week for a child over five, and £3 a week for a child under that age, on an average; so that if in very special cases it cost a little bit more, then the local authority are authorised to pay more, but they have got to save somewhere else in order to bring their average down over the year to the sums fixed by the Home Office.

411. Do you mean they save with another voluntary organisation?—Yes.

Major Markham.

412. This is a very important point. When was this top limit fixed?—(Mr. Lucette.) I think the discussions about this started as long as four years ago, and I think Colonel Birnie would agree with me that the rates which were approved by the Home Office had, prior to their going to the Home Office, been under discussion by the National Council.

413. By your Council?—Yes; and although, as Colonel Birnie has explained, in operation they may be slightly varied,

the basic figures of so much for a child above five years of age and below that age were acceptable and agreed to be acceptable by the constituent societies of the National Council. I think my colleagues would agree that that is an accurate statement.

414. In other words, three or four years ago it was accepted as a net average working figure?—Yes, it was a figure acceptable to the constituent voluntary societies and acceptable at the time, and it was pressed upon the Home Office as being the figure which we thought should be approved.

415. In that intervening three or four years, as we all know, there has been a very steep rise in almost everything, food, clothing, repairs, and rates. Is this figure attached in any way to the cost of living?—If you mean, Sir, does it fluctuate with the fluctuating cost of living index, I should say the answer is definitely no. The position is that this approved rate varies very sluggishly, and therefore it has remained substantially unvaried since it was fixed four years ago.

Chairman.

416. Does it represent as far as the Homes are concerned in some cases less than is spent on the child and in some cases more?—(Colonel Birnie.) It represents less in every case.

417. By how much?—I can give you our figures if you want them.

418. Would you put them in?—Yes; I realise you want them.

419. Will you put them in to us in the form of a document?—Yes, I can certainly put them in if that would help you.

420. Read them out now, and then put it in as a document?—Yes. This, of course, is only the Church of England Children's Society, my Society, and I may say that other societies have quite different figures. I think it is important, probably, for the Sub-Committee to realise why our figures are so different in the different societies, and why in the first place I said I felt that any evidence in a case like this could only be for my own Society. The reason is that we all really run our societies differently. The National Children's Home, for instance, have very big Homes in many cases, and perhaps Mr. Walpole will want to speak about that later. My Society have about 108 Homes at the moment all round England, and they are all the small type of Home. There are actually 29 Nurseries, and all our other Homes are individual units, and I think to some extent the kind of Home which is the comparison which you want; it is, I think, nearer possibly to the local authority type of Home which you are really thinking about. In giving these figures, I have tried to make

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out an average for the simple reason that no two homes of our own are ever the same. There is a tremendous number of things which go into the making of a Home, into the actual expense and running of a Home, even though there may be 15 children in one Home and a far greater number in another Home. Perhaps I may just tell you some of the things that have to be taken into account. The Master and Matron, for instance, of one Home may be extremely good managers, the wife may be an excellent cook, and in that particular little Home there may be a quarter of an acre of a really nice orchard, and another quarter of an acre of soft fruit, and whenever one goes to that Home one sees cupboards full of jam made by the Matron of the Home, because she is a really good manager, and so is her husband, and between them they run the place extremely well in that way. It may also be a Home where the local people are friends of the Society and are tremendously fond of the place, and who go out of their way to supply fruit, and have pound days, on which perhaps any amount of stuff is sent down to the Home, thus saving us any amount in actual food. Now, there is one Home; that Home will cost us very little. Now, another Home, with just the same number of children in it, with the same staff, and with a Master and Matron, who may be good, but not such good managers, they may be a bit extravagant, they may have an enormous garden which is unproductive, and we may not be able to get anything out of it, and if we do we have to put gardeners in, so that it costs more money. The Home may have enormous cellars, or it may be the type of house where you simply have got to have central heating and all the children will perish with cold in the winter; your fuel bill may be £500 or £600 a year, whereas in the other house it is possible that the fuel bill may be only £50 or £60 a year. There are all those differences; in fact, the differences are so enormous between our houses all over the country that I have tried here merely to strike a balance. I have done it in types. We have three different kinds of Nurseries, first of all, Nurseries for babies aged 0 to 2, and here I have taken the following headings: general running costs of the Nursery; extra cost of things rather like expenses for summer holidays and treats at Christmas; presents for birthdays, and that sort of thing. Then equipment required—that is general equipment, not heavy stuff, but general small equipment that is needed throughout the year; repairs needed to the house throughout the year; that is just really redecoration, and anything like a wall that has to be repaired or a roof that is leaking, and that sort of thing. Then I have also included alterations—those five items—alterations being if we find that we have to put in central heating somewhere, or if we find that we must have

another bathroom, etc., etc. Taking those five headings, my costs are as follows: Babies, 0 to 2, £4 12s. 10d. per child per week; Toddlers, that is Nursery for children 2 to 5, £4 7s. 4d. per child per week; Babies and toddlers, that is the Nursery which takes children from the ages of 0 to 5, £4 6s. 5d. per child per week. Then I have two mixed groups which I have called A and B. Taking the mixed A family group, that is with a Master and Matron in charge rather than with a Matron only, ages 5 to 15, the figure is £2 17s. 0d. per child per week. Then mixed B, which is the same thing, children 5 to 15, with only a Matron in charge rather than a Master and Matron, £2 14s. 9d. Then Boys' Homes, age group 5 to 15, £2 14s. 4d.; Girls' Homes, age group again 5 to 15, £2 11s. 5d. I have here also two other items, but I have only included those items I have mentioned to you because I felt that it was really nearer to what you wanted. In addition to that I have on this sheet here departmental costs.

421. What do you mean by that?—Departmental costs include the Society's portion of the Pension Fund contributions. Our Masters and Matrons are all members of a Pensions Fund. Then there are the salaries of the Homes Department staff; that is the staff at my headquarters which deal with all the Homes; and the inspectors. We have inspectors who go round all our Homes reporting on them all the time. It includes advertising for staff, which is a very heavy item, and all expenses of a general nature directly relating to the running of the Homes.

422. Not attributable to a particular Home, except the pension part of the salary?—All that I have mentioned is our general administrative work that we have to do here in London for the whole of our 108 Homes.

423. But the pension element applies to individuals, Matrons and other people?—Yes, Masters and Matrons.

424. So that all the rest is sheer overhead?—All the rest is shared. Now, in addition to that, you will realise that in this Society we have to have a fairly big staff here in London to deal with the general work of getting children into the Society, arranging all our adoption work, as we are an adoption society also, and arranging our fostering out, the foster-parents or boarding out scheme, as well as arranging emigration, after-care, and a lot of other things. In addition to that, there are legal costs, of course. Now, we always put down for booking purposes a sum amounting to 15 per cent. of our annual charges in any Home as the share of that particular Home towards the general expenses of the Society.

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425. Has that 15 per cent. figure been included in these figures that you have just given us?—No.

426. So that you would have to say plus 15 per cent. for overheads?—Yes. These two items I have now told you about, including departmental costs, are not included, but with departmental costs and headquarters overheads the figure now brings us to a totally different sum, if you would like to have that?

427. Yes?—Counting in the new items 8 and 9 on my sheet, that is departmental costs and the 15 per cent. headquarter overheads, I get my totals as follows: Babies, £5 11s. 4d.; Toddlers, £5 5s. 0d.; Babies and toddlers, £5 4s. 0d. Mixed A, £3 10s. 2d.; Mixed B, £3 7s. 7d. Boys' Homes, £3 7s. 1d.; Girls' Homes, £3 3s. 9d. May I also make just two points here? One is that this does not include, of course, the fact that we consider that about once in every fifty years we have to write the house off altogether and buy another one. Secondly, these figures I have given you are for 1951, and I know you will appreciate that for 1952 they will rise; I do not really know that I can safely say by how much, but we can put it at something fairly heavy.

428. Do you get the Children's Allowance?—The 5s.? (Mr. Lucette.) No, Sir. (Colonel Birnie.) The answer is Yes and No. I should like to explain about the 5s., because I think it is misunderstood rather widely; I know it is by a great many of our supporters. I think Miss Ward has probably heard about this question in Newcastle. She knows our Nursery there well.

Miss Ward.

429. Yes.—But I think there is a misconception about it. The facts at the moment are as follows. The Children's Allowance is given to the parents. Now, if we have that child in our care we claim the Children's Allowance from the parent, and we will say that the parent agrees to give it to us, and does give it to us. If so, there is no further argument; we get it, and that is all right. But in many cases, of course, the parent says: "No, we are drawing the Children's Allowance, but we are not going to give it to you in spite of the fact that you have got the child." We then say to them: "Well, now, if you take that line the authorities, the tax people, will eventually catch up on you and they will not only fine you for the money you have taken and not passed on to us, but they will stop giving it to you, and so neither will you get the 5s. nor will we. So, for goodness sake, give us the 5s. and be sensible." Sometimes they say: "Well, that is all very well, but they will take a very long time to catch up with me, and in the meantime I am going on

drawing it." When they say that, we cannot force it out of them, and we lose, though eventually they get caught and are also deprived of it. Now, we have tried, through the National Council—and this shows the kind of thing the National Council does to try to help all its societies—to get legislation passed if it is necessary to go as far as that, so that we could say to the tax people: "Now, there is the 5s. from Mrs. So-and-so, whose child we have got, and rather than pay it to Mrs. So-and-so and make us go through all the administrative difficulties of getting the money out of her, will you kindly give it to us direct across the triangle here?" The answer has always been: "No. It is a family allowance, and we will give it to Mrs. So-and-so. If she gives it to you, well and good; if she does not, well, we will stop paying her."

Major Markham.

430. Which Department has made that decision—the Treasury?—I think it is the Inland Revenue Authorities.

431. Surely it is not the Inland Revenue which decides to whom the Children's Allowance shall be paid?—I think you probably know more than I know about that—in fact I am sure you do—but all I know is that whoever we have applied to—and we have tried to do it at the highest level through the Home Office—it has always been turned down.

Chairman.

432. I know the Sub-Committee will consider that point, and if they think it right will refer to it in their Report?—Now that the Budget has come upon us, and we all agree it is a good Budget, we do not want to upset the show by putting in a lot of grumbles, but what we do want to do is to put in what we consider a few fair things, that is to say, things like this allowance, that has now gone to 8s., and to which we are morally entitled. That is a thing we have already put up.

Chairman.] We will discuss that privately.

Miss Ward.

433. When you are not able to get the allowance, do you have to notify that to the Ministry of National Insurance?—No. When I say "No", I really mean no as far as my Society is concerned. We do, I am afraid, employ a method which perhaps is not a very good thing. We sometimes say to the parent: "Look here, if you do not pay us we will tell them."

434. It is not automatic; so that in fact there must be a considerable number of people whom the tax authorities never do in fact catch up with, because after all there

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must be a considerable number of people who do not pay Income Tax?—Yes.

435. So that the tax authorities could not catch up with them?—Yes.

Major Markham.

436. Where the child is definitely an orphan do you automatically get the 5s., or the 8s. as it is now, Children's Allowance?—We get the Orphan's Allowance, which is separate and quite different.

Mr. Wade.] But it is equivalent in amount.

Chairman.] You have given us just the very figures we wanted. I wonder if the other witnesses could make corresponding statements?

Mr. Wade.

437. Before they do that, may I ask a question? The Homes you referred to as mixed A and B: are they smaller than the others or do they average out about the same?—No, they are actually smaller.

Chairman.

438. Following that up, you did say that you thought that the figures would be helpful to us as they would compare with local authority Homes. You mean in the number of children?—Yes; I may be wrong here, but I rather gather that local authorities also have what I would call single unit Homes and not groups of cottage Homes grouped around a school or anything like that, as some of the societies have.

439. You are talking of 30 or 40 children in a Children's Home?—Less than that, Homes with 12 to 24. Some of our Boys' Homes have got 30, a few, but even that we consider too large, and we are bringing all our Homes down to a maximum of 24. (Mr. Lucette.) May I begin by agreeing with Colonel Birnie, that if one is looking for economies they begin, if they do not end, with management, which is the Superintendent. It may be very disappointing from the point of view of analysis, but it seems to be the actual fact; it comes out very strongly, when one compares the highest and the lowest in any class of home, for the correlation between management and low cost seems to be much higher than the correlation between numbers and low cost. In regard to the figures which I have here, I had to take them just straight out of the books as we keep them. I have done no on-costing; I was not in a position to do it in time.

440. Perhaps you, too, would not mind handing in something in the form of a document?—Yes, certainly. Now, you

may say that we are speaking about Homes of an average size of 20 to 30 children. In the Girls' Homes the total cost per child per week averages out at £2 14s. 9d. There is no on-costing in that; that is to say, we have not shown any figures for buildings, for a particular reason; I will not weary you with the reason why unless you wish to hear it; and we have not on-costed anything for expenditure on administration, though that can be done if you wish to have those figures when I put the document in.

441. What are the ages you are dealing with?—Those will be children of school age, 5 to 15 plus. I do not know if the maximum and minimum would interest you.

442. Yes, they would interest us?—The highest is £4 11s. a week and the lowest is £1 15s. 5d. a week. You have my word for it that the difference in the actual goodness of a Home would not be marked to that degree of variation at all. Taking Boys' Homes—and here we do run rather larger units, although in many cases they are split into cottages and cottage groups—the overall cost per child per week is £3 5s. 9d.

443. Is this for the same age group?—Yes; and the difference in range from highest to lowest is £4 4s. 2d. to £2 1s. 5d. Curiously enough, the most expensive there is the much bigger Home, which is one of the things which make me say that the correlation between management and cost is greater than the correlation between numbers and cost.

444. Would Colonel Birnie say that he finds the same style of variation?—(Colonel Birnie.) Yes, though I was rather surprised at that one. There is a very wide difference; there is no question about that.

445. So that you would all agree about management?—Yes; we have a very definite average in our Homes that are well below it and those that are well above it. (Mr. Lucette.) When we come to the Nursery Homes, there is the very important factor that the majority of our Nursery Homes, although not all, are Nursery Training Homes, and there you have a very large number of staff; they are staff in training, so that you are apt to get nearly much the advertised ratio of one member of the staff to one child.

446. That is from age 0 to 5?—Yes; and the figure is £4 4s. 9d. (Colonel Birnie.) It is amazing how like ours it is. (Mr. Lucette.) The range is hardly worth quoting, because strictly they are not comparable, but obviously the most expensive is a

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training establishment and the least expensive is not. That happens to be in Ireland. I think that would be evidence which would merely cloud the issue. I am more than willing to put it in, but it does not offer any inference at all. Now, in mixed Homes of school age the cost goes down to £3 0s. 10d. per child per week, but we get some wide variations, from £4 9s. 0d. maximum to £2 6s. 0d. There the most costly is also a very small Home of 13 children only, and the least costly is a distinctly large Home of 42. I do not know whether the next thing that I would say to you is particularly relevant to your purpose, but roughly speaking the ratio of salaries to complete costs is somewhere in the neighbourhood of one to three.

447. Is that in any given Home?—I believe that if you drew a graph of salaries to total costing you would find that salaries tended to provide roughly one-third of the total cost.

448. Not including headquarter salaries?—No, I am speaking of costs allotted to a Home. If you turn to hospitals and some of the very special Homes where you have staff who are paid on a national scale—I am only quoting facts, I am not expressing any prejudices—you will find that the ratio of salaries to total cost increases enormously, and is most marked in the case of the outright hospital. (Colonel Birnie.) I have figures which I will give you. (Mr. Lucette.) Our hospital costs us per patient, roughly speaking, £10 a week.

449. Where is that?—At Barkingside.

450. I do not think it is quite fair to bring that in, is it?—I will leave that to you. I am only trying to make the point that there is a difference between salaries which in fact were agreed by the National Council and those salaries which we all adopt, and I thought that was in some part an answer to an earlier question of your own.

451. Yes, it is of great interest. Now perhaps Mr. Walpole will give us his views?—(Mr. Walpole.) A great deal that has been said by my friends applies very largely to the general work of the National Children's Home, particularly regarding averages. We ourselves have got about 40 different homes; some of them are quite small, very much on the lines of the Children's Society, whereas others have as many as nearly 200 children, but they live in cottage groups, so that generally speaking the children live in little houses, about 10 or 12 in each house, with perhaps two sisters or workers looking after them. We find that as far as costs are concerned, in all the ordinary branches of our Homes, it costs us or will cost us, because what I am speaking on now are the estimates

for the year that is about to begin—we start on the 1st April—£3 2s. 2d. as an average.

452. Is that from age 0 to 15 plus?—It would be mainly from 5 to 15, because most of those under five are in the Nursery branches. In the case of the younger children, that is under five, the average would be about £4 12s. 0d.; and in quite special branches where we are doing diabetic work, sanatorium, T.B. and so on, it works out at £4 7s. 0d. The fluctuations are very similar to the figures which have already been quoted by the other societies. For instance, in the ordinary branches, and we can generally think of them as housing both boys and girls mixed, because most of our branches are mixed in that sense, the fluctuations vary from £2 5s. 0d. to £4 4s. 0d. per week, making an average of £3 2s. 2d. In the case of Homes for babies and toddlers the fluctuation is rather less, from £4 2s. 0d., the lowest, to £4 16s. 0d., which would be the most expensive. On actual figures, I have not got any details, Sir, but in the main I should think that it is very similar to the other societies, although I would estimate that our administrative costs, overheads and so on are under 15 per cent. We would suggest it is slightly over 10 per cent.

453. You will not mind putting in some document?—We could do so, yes.

454. We should be very grateful if you would?—We will do that with pleasure. (Mr. Powell.) I am rather handicapped in that the Administrator was unfortunately out of town on a prior engagement when we got notice to attend this meeting, and I should like to express his regrets. We have not prepared any special set of figures, but I have been asked to say that we would be pleased to put in hand any evidence which you might find useful for your purpose. The Crusade of Rescue is a comparatively small society which assists children in the Dioceses of Westminster and Brentwood. There is another society doing similar work, namely the Southwark Catholic Rescue Society, whose area covers London south of the Thames.

455. Is not there in your Church an overall organisation that can speak for all the Children's Homes?—Yes, the Catholic Child Welfare Society.

456. Whom could we ask to come and see us, who could speak for all Catholic Children's Homes?—A representative for that body.

457. Are all your societies members of the Council?—The Catholic Child Welfare Council is represented on the National Council of Associated Children's Homes.

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(Colonel Birnie.) We have representation from them on the Council in the person of Canon George.

458. That is only the Diocese of Westminster?—Yes. The present representatives of the Catholic Child Welfare Council on the National Council of Associated Children's Homes are the Very Rev. Canon Bernard George, Administrator of the Crusade of Rescue, for the Dioceses of Westminster and Brentwood and the Rev. E. Arbutnott, M.A., Administrator of the Southwark Catholic Rescue Society, for the Diocese of Southwark. (Mr. Powell.) We have a separate Council of our own which meets once or twice a year and discusses all points which affect the various Homes in the country. I think perhaps some representative from that body would be the best person to give you some evidence, although, of the various societies, I suppose we are more qualified than anyone to give you the information necessary, because we are the oldest of the societies—we have been formed now for 92 years; I think we are older than some of the other societies as well; and, of course, the experience we have gained is quite considerable. The only thing in which we differ is that our administration is not secular. All the administration of our Homes is done by religious bodies, and the cost to us, although it follows a very similar pattern to the figures already given, is, I think, comparatively slightly lower as a result of that, the administration being done by nuns, and the administration of the head office being done by priests. Our Council is a voluntary body of priests and laymen of experience in that particular subject, so that we do get a little benefit from having an administration of that sort. I am not qualified at the moment to give you any definite figures; I can only say they do follow roughly on the figures you have been given by the other societies; they are within the range of between £3 on average for children of five and below and £2 10s. and upwards for children above that age.

459. Yes. Where you would save money, I suppose, would be in regard to the question of salaries?—Yes, I should say that is our main saving all round, in that the work is chiefly voluntary. Our Homes are, of course, on the larger side; they do not follow the pattern of small family groups yet. We find it more economical—we always have—to have larger Homes with more children. It is easier for administration. In any case, our Homes were built when the larger type of buildings were in vogue.

460. Would you say that in the larger Homes it was less easy to secure for the child an individual and personal background to its existence?—I think perhaps that

might be true, as it always is. When you get a large community they do not get that individual attention which they get in the smaller community.

461. Are there any Homes where children do not have individual personal possessions?—I do not think that is so. (Colonel Birnie.) Certainly not in any of ours.

462. I was very much disturbed to read paragraph 100 of the Sixth Report on the Work of the Children's Department, published last May by the Home Office. Have you seen the Report? This is what they say, speaking of voluntary Homes: "In many Homes there are good supplies of toys and equipment for play and hobbies for children of all ages, but less often are there sufficient cupboards, drawers or lockers for each child to be allotted his own place for his own possessions." You do not know what Homes those remarks refer to?—(Mr. Lucette.) I think it is certainly true, of every voluntary society, and I should imagine that every local authority must have suffered from the extremely short supply of certain types of furniture; for instance, we have not been able to get as many bedside lockers as we want. It is also rather difficult to get the right sort of receptacle for private toys. We have to use a great many makeshifts, which we hope presently to do away with and have the ordinary lockers.

Miss Ward.

463. I do not think it is quite so much a question of lockers as to whether they have got the possessions?—Indeed, yes. I was referring to what I believe was in the text that was read. It does definitely say there are no lockers, and I was trying to say that in fact I can well understand an inspector going round and saying: "Well, here you are using a chest of drawers, when the children ought to have their own drawers."

Chairman.

464. No. My point is identical with the point Miss Ward has raised. I do not care where they keep them—it may be in an old packing case or in a garden shed—but I should like to be assured that all children, except, of course, babies, have personal possessions?—I can only speak for my own society. Our own view is that if children do not have their own personal possessions you merely have constant thieving and pilfering. It is absolutely essential for a child's salvation and for its proper bringing up that they should be instilled with a proper respect for other people's property. You cannot do that unless they have possessions. Of course, they have to learn to join in community life, and indeed they do, but unless there is provision made,

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as there must be, for personal possessions, there is chaos. (Colonel Birnie.) As far as we are concerned, I think I can say that every single one of our Homes—and I have now seen the whole lot—has got, not one, but two or more places for the children's personal possessions. They have all got lockers, and when they go down into the playroom every child has a locker to himself where he keeps his own books and particular toys that he has bought out of his pocket money, and he keeps them there. In addition to that, we very strongly encourage the idea that every single child should have its own drawer in a chest of drawers for its own clothes, not so much for the outer clothes but for the more intimate things like small handkerchiefs, with possibly their names on them, and little treasures which they keep in their bedrooms. If I go to a place, I quite frequently say: "Now will you take me and show me some of your things?" and they will take me up and show me their drawer, open it and pull out their own things. I think all the voluntary societies are very keen that the child should be what we call really a man of property.

465. I am very glad to hear you say that, but I cannot get away from paragraph 100. It also refers to clothing being kept in a communal store?—We are very much against that. Of course, every Home has got its store where winter clothes are kept in the summer and where summer clothes are kept in the winter. Naturally you have that sort of thing for every child.

Miss Ward.

466. May I ask one question to get back to the subject of staff? I think you all really said that the question of expenditure is related to management, and what I was really wondering was, out of your very great experience, whether you think, from the point of view of guidance and directive laid down, there is anything that could be done to encourage, perhaps, more people to take an interest in what is, after all, a great way of serving the interests of children and of the country. I know it is difficult, because I have noticed sometimes the changes of staff that have gone on in various Homes that have come under my notice, and I know it is sometimes extremely difficult to get the right matron or the right husband and wife to run a Home; but, as I say, I was wondering whether you yourselves had any ideas as to how it could be made more attractive, or if it is necessary that it should be made more attractive, or whether you feel you have got a very wide field to draw from, or whether there is such competition for first class people that it is difficult to get hold of them?—(Mr. Lucette.) In trying to answer your question, I am sure I am being very rash, and I am also sure that my

answer is highly opinionated, but I do actually believe that there is no correlation between high salary and good service.

467. I was not even meaning a high salary?—No. I am dealing with another point. I hope I shall not be misinterpreted as arguing in favour of sweated labour, but my argument is that you will not get the quality you are looking for out of a mere directive which adds certain forms of enticement to this sort of work. That is not to say that staff should not be adequately paid. What I would say—and again I am being highly opinionated—is this, that the great difficulty in recruitment is that many people are not available for this work until they have left childhood rather a long way behind them. The curious thing is that some kind of personal misfortune is one of the finest pieces of training for this work. I do not know how you can advertise for such people, but it is nevertheless true that experience in that way increases sympathy and real affection, which are two of the characteristics without which no one is of any use in children's work.

468. You do sometimes have to try people out, do you not? You cannot tell until you have tried them out?—We are always trying people out, and we are quite ruthless if they are no good. (Mr. Walpole.) We are finding that some of our very best people today are those who entered our own training colleges years ago. We have two child care training colleges, one of which has been functioning now for a matter of eighteen or nineteen years. Some of those are in charge of our smaller homes and they are doing amazingly well. But it is true that there are certain other types of appointment that you have to look outside for, and all we can do is to let people know in every possible way that there is a great opportunity for a career and a vocation if they have the right interest in and concern for children.

Major Markham.

469. I am interested in this point about training. Are these training colleges open to all those who are vocationally attracted?—Subject, of course, to the report and recommendation of a selection committee, which consists of some of our own executive officers and representatives of the Home Office; and, in fact, the Home Office now, although it is quite a new development, has a very decisive say in the matter, because they pay part of the cost.

Miss Ward.

470. Are they people who come through the Council of Child Care? That is the Home Office one which receives a part grant for training, is it not?—Yes; we ourselves find the candidates by public advertisement, and they come up for selection

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before ourselves and representatives of the Home Office.

Chairman.

471. Would you expand that a little? What is the *locus standi* of the Home Office in selecting people?—The situation there is that in the last two or three years they have agreed to pay something towards the training costs of the students, and, quite naturally, as they are going to pay part of the cost, they want to be quite sure that the candidates applying are in their judgment suitable for the work.

Major Markham.

472. In these training colleges there is no preliminary bar in regard to people who, shall we say, want to go into Catholic homes or into overseas service or anything of that kind? The bar is simply upon what the Home Office or your own Council decide is the potential vocational aptitude of an applicant?—That is so; and if I might just explain a little further there, we have two colleges; one of them is 100 per cent. for what we call members of the sisterhood of the National Children's Home; it is not exclusively religious, but it is an order of women who have devoted themselves to this work, and at the college at Highbury all of them enter into what is called the sisterhood of the home after a period of probation. At the Princess Alice College in Birmingham the net is cast much wider, and we have had there students of all types—Catholics and folk from the West Indies, and indeed anybody who is really anxious to get an understanding of how a children's home should be run and to become qualified for the work.

Mr. Wade.

473. Are these training colleges subsidized to a certain extent?—Yes.

Miss Ward.

474. Do you get a grant for your training colleges or is a grant attached to each student, if that is the right word to use?—The grant would be made in the sense that each student would be allowed so much, very much in the same way that a teacher who is training might be allowed so much. Then so much is allowed also for tutorial costs, but in practice the bulk of the cost still falls upon us. We think it is worth doing, so we continue.

475. How many people can you train in your colleges?—Thirty at each centre.

Chairman.] Coming now to a slightly different field—I will ask Colonel Birnie first: Have you any views as to the reasons why the average cost per child in voluntary homes is substantially below the average cost per child in local authority homes?

Major Markham.] May I intervene there? My impression was, during this morning's investigation, that that was not so, that the figures we have had given to us this morning are quite contradictory of those given on page 14 of the previous memorandum which we considered last time. If we could clear up that point before your question is answered, with great respect, I should be glad.

Chairman.

476. I quite agree. I do not think Colonel Birnie has seen this memorandum. This was given to us by the Home Office, and we have been given figures for the coming year. We are told that there are over 27,000 children boarded out, that the cost per week per child—a complete overall average—is £1 8s. 10d. Then in local authority homes we have been given the figure of 29,000 children, cost per child per week, £5 2s. 2d. Then local authority hostels, 741 children, cost per head per child, £3 15s. 0d., but we need not consider that. Now we get to the voluntary children's homes, and this is the average of the grants made to your organisation, £2 9s. 2d. per week. Of course, all these figures are estimates based on an average arrived at by combining all sorts of very dissimilar circumstances?—(Colonel Birnie.) I think that figure of £2 9s. 2d. is the average given by local authorities all over England to voluntary societies for one child. Yes, but my point is that local authority homes cost per child per week £5 2s. 2d.—that is all children from 0 to 15 plus, I take it, all over the country, whereas, judging by these figures you have given us, the average for all the voluntary associations would be considerably less. I may say that this is leaving out a large sum for general administration direct and general administration apportioned, which would raise those figures for local authority homes considerably. Therefore, I think I can answer Major Markham. It is quite clear that the average for local authority homes is substantially above that for voluntary homes.

Major Markham.] Yes, I agree, but what I think is misleading is that the figure of £2 9s. 2d. is given.

Chairman.] No; I am not bringing that in. The figure I was taking was £5 2s. 2d.

Major Markham.] From this morning's evidence the impression that I have at any rate is that the overall cost of children in voluntary homes is somewhere about £4 a week, whereas, as you rightly point out, Sir, in the local authority homes it is over £5 a week. There is therefore this rather striking difference of 25 per cent.

Chairman.] Do not forget that £2,100,000 is the cost of administration which is not

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apportioned in any of those figures, and certainly would greatly increase the £5 2s. 2d. if it were. So that I think my question stands.

Major *Markham*.

477. Yes?—I naturally have merely to hazard a guess.

Chairman.

478. Of course?—I should say that we get a lot more voluntary help in our homes everywhere. I mean this sort of thing. I am frequently called upon to resist the kindness of friends who say that they would love to get up a bazaar for my particular homes, St. Christopher's, in such and such a place and that out of the proceeds of it to give the home a television set. I write firmly then and say, "It is extremely kind of you, but if you would kindly hold the bazaar and put the money into the cost of food and clothing for the children rather than giving them something which, after all, is a luxury, I should be extremely grateful." Sometimes they write back and say, "No. We have made up our minds. They must have a television," and then I have to accept it. But sometimes they are sensible and will say, "We perfectly well see your point." The important thing is food; we have to feed these children, and so on, and therefore, they say, "We will give you our £80 (or whatever it is) the proceeds, to pay for that." That does not affect these figures; but when they give in kind it does affect them.

Sir *Fergus Graham*.

479. If they give you such items as jam and other foodstuffs, then it does?—Yes—and the produce of the harvest and so on. It may not come to a great deal but it represents a certain amount. Then there is another thing, and this is what I have noticed. A master or a matron may write to me and say they wish to give me notice; would I kindly give them a reference? They may wish to go to a certain local authority home. They send me the paper in connection with it, and sometimes I look at the staff at the place to which they are wanting to go. It is sometimes enormous, to my mind.

Miss *Ward*.

480. That raises a very important point.—Yes. That is my impression, but, as I say, I am hazarding a guess. It may be a bigger home than ours; but I have often seen, when looking at the list of staff, Master or Matron in charge, Assistant Master or Matron, three other permanent staff, and that sort of thing—three gardeners, perhaps. Four adults in charge.

481. I suppose that the staff of every local authority home is laid down. Do you lay down in your homes the number of staff

to be employed, or does it entirely depend on the matron?—Yes, we lay it down, but naturally it is subject to much fluctuation according to the size of the house. But, roughly speaking, taking one of our ordinary houses with, say, 20 children, there would be a Master and Matron, a first assistant and possibly a second assistant at a big house, though not always. There might be one daily coming in, and, if there was a big garden, one gardener. That would really be the maximum. We have homes with 12 children in them which are run with a Master and Matron and one assistant and probably one daily, but that is all.

Chairman.

482. Would the other Witnesses agree with what Colonel Birnie has just said?—(Mr. *Walpole*.) It seems to me that quite definitely the difference in the cost of local authority homes and voluntary homes does lie first in the question of staffing. We have tried—and I think we have succeeded quite adequately—with a somewhat smaller staff, partly due to the fact that that staff is a very specially selected staff who come to the work in a vocational spirit and who never bother about things like overtime pay. Then there is another point. I think there are less overheads, generally speaking, because the administration of the voluntary societies is kept, of necessity, down to a minimum as regards costs; and if one might say it almost in parenthesis, in connection also with the salaries of the people who are employed. We always look for people who are very strongly drawn to this type of work, so much so that they do not come in because of the big salary attached to the job, but because they feel it is a job they want to do. That sort of thing does have its reflection in costs. (Mr. *Powell*.) I think I have already stated that in my first intervention. (Mr. *Lucette*.) Again, I am afraid this does not help your inquiry very much, though I agree with all that has been said about salaries; but we know that our salaries are below the NALGO scales, and I hope you will not think we are sweating our workers. In case you do, may I say that we have quite a number of instances of people coming from local authority service back to us, so that our service need not be thought to be linked in any way with unattractive conditions. But the point I want to make is this. We have to raise our money, and if you have to raise your money you are very careful how you spend it—and you watch it all the time. If you are spending somebody else's money you know in fact the sock is not quite empty and that makes a difference. If you ask me to prove that point, I cannot do it, but I can tell you that if we come across superintendents whose costs rise beyond what we think is justified there is an extremely easy way of addressing

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their mind to what matters. The money that they are spending is money freely contributed by somebody in the street. I know it does not help you, but it is a fact which tends to make us not pursue perfection *in vacuo*. We pursue perfection by getting six pennies for sixpence, and I think that is a very real point when it comes to standards in our homes.

483. Every organisation, I take it, has inspectors?—(Colonel Birnie.) Yes.

484. Are some of those inspectors specially trained in accountancy?—You see what I am driving at?—Yes.

485. Who keeps a watch on the accountancy side—the head office or inspectors?—We at head office keep a watch on the actual expenditure of every home. We have our honorary treasurer; every single home makes out its monthly accounts and they are sent down to my headquarters.

486. Where you have an audit department?—Yes—where two departments deal with it: the Homes Department, in the first place, who go through the averages and see every single item, and there are any number of items on this sheet. They check up every single item. The average for food throughout the Society is, shall we say, 15s. per child per week. They may find that one home is spending 16s. or 17s. That is immediately checked up.

487. And why? Questions are asked?—Exactly. We then check it up and find out why; it may be this reason or that reason. It is nearly always, if it is above, a bad manager in the way of the matron; if it is very much below we sometimes rather worry about that too; we do not like that, because we like our children to be well fed, and if we find one that is low we want an explanation from that home. It may be that they say, "The reason is that we have had a most wonderful gift from (say) America. We have had about ten cases of marvellous food and we are simply running free at the moment." In the Accounts Department, where I have a qualified chief accountant, he and his people work out all these averages for us; then once a fortnight I have a Finance Committee in London for which I am responsible; I run it myself. That consists naturally of honorary people, who again scrutinise all these expenditures and are in fact my council for controlling it.

488. Yes. But I think that really it is quite obvious to all of us that a voluntary organisation imbued with that spirit and carefully run gives better results than when the supposedly bottomless pockets of the taxpayer and the ratepayer are involved?—Yes.

489. Leading on from that, this seems to me a very important question. If local authorities were to ask you to take more

children, would you be prepared to help them, because quite clearly, from the point of view of this Sub-Committee, if you tell us that "We, a voluntary organization, could take 10,000 more children at an average of £2 9s. 2d. a week" instead of having £5 2s. 2d. spent upon them by the local authorities, it would provide a very great field for economy. Could you take any more children from local authorities?—I should like to put it in this way. We have for a long time fully realised that what we get from local authorities does not cover what it costs us to keep those children, but we have always gone on the principle that we are a voluntary society with a duty to destitute children, wherever those children may come from, even if we have found them ourselves or if they come through moral welfare workers or through a local authority, and that therefore we are not going to argue the matter at all about cost. Again and again cases come to me in regard to which I am told that we are not going to get any money for a particular child for some reason or other.

490. I am sorry to interrupt you, but if you were to charge a local authority the full cost per child would you then be prepared to accept a considerable influx of additional children?—If we had room for them. (Mr. Lucette.) A thing which we could not stand up to would be a fluctuating policy. Supposing for one year we were asked to augment our accommodation in order to care for more children in need. If that were wanted of us, I have no doubt that the voluntary societies could make a move to expand. I say nothing about the rate. But what I do not think they could possibly stand up to would be moving along that line for two years and then finding that the bias had changed to local authorities, who might very well say, "Look here, we have got our own homes. We are running our own affairs." We could not stand up to fluctuations of policy like that.

Miss Ward.

491. Is there capital expenditure apart from anything else?—Yes, on things I have not mentioned.

Chairman.] This is purely hypothetical. If this Sub-Committee were to say that it was so impressed by the more economical way in which homes are run by voluntary organizations that it thought that steps should be taken to get local authorities to hand over more children to voluntary organizations—and possibly pay for them—would that be a reasonable recommendation, though obviously I have not discussed it with my colleagues?

Major Markham.

492. I am very much in agreement with the trend of this question. But I do not

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think it is only a matter of money. I do think that there is a psychological difference between a voluntary home and a local authority home. A voluntary society from the very nature of its origin has got a certain amount of interest outside the home that materializes in the way of outside contributions to the home—uncles and aunts and other friends—which the local authority home does not possess. Therefore, I should say that not only on financial grounds but for the sake of the children themselves, we should consider, after these gentlemen have withdrawn, this very large question to which you, Sir, have drawn our attention as to whether the extension of the voluntary system, with naturally assistance from the national exchequer, would not only be of benefit to the nation as a whole but of benefit to the children?—Please do not think I am trying to waste your time, but when the Children Act came in I approached a number of local authorities with the special intention of getting a high degree of co-operation between them and us. The reaction was quite friendly and favourable, but it did not result in anything very substantial. So that, while I cannot give an absolutely straight answer to your question, I would ask that consideration be given to this fact, that if you made a recommendation on those lines it might easily be killed—I hope I am not using an incorrect phrase—at local authority level, and that might be rather disastrous for the practical implementation of what you wanted, because, again, to embark upon a plan of expansion which might be killed not at the highest level but at a secondary level would still leave the matter in somewhat of a difficulty. I only want to call attention to that, because, human nature being what it is, people want to run their own affairs. If a recommendation went out that local authorities might co-operate more freely with us, it would not in my judgment go quite far enough.

Miss Ward.] May I put one point on that because I would like it put on record in view of what you have just said? I hardly think that it would be within the competence of this Sub-Committee to put quite such a direct recommendation.

Chairman.] That is for later discussion.

Miss Ward.

493. May I just finish? My mind is moving in the direction of saying that it possibly would be wise to carry out a general inquiry outside a Parliamentary committee, which obviously is not competent to take in all the pros and cons of this question, in order that we might arrive at some conclusion, both from the point

of view of finance and of the love and affection that we all want given to children—that it should be looked at from that point of view by people who are competent to consider every aspect of the matter. That would cover your point, you see?—(Colonel Birnie.) We do very much ourselves want to spread our work in every way; that is the principal thing. The Ministry has asked us in the last few years to do this and we have done it; the National Children's Home and ourselves have now started homes for diabetic children, but that is not perhaps what you mean—that we should take on more work?

Chairman.

494. Before you go on, may I put this to you? I ought to have asked you this question earlier. With regard to these 7,872 children who are paid for by local authorities in voluntary homes, on what basis are they selected?—The local authority children?

495. Yes. Why do some of them get sent to you and some to local authority homes?—I think the reason is because they have nowhere to put them.

Miss Ward.

496. It is a question of placing at the appropriate moment; when a case has to be dealt with, it is a question of finding a vacancy?—(Mr. Lucette.) I think there is a little more than that. A local authority is a "fit person" to receive a Custody Order under the Children Act; the local authority takes into care; and therefore if the child is quite obviously in grave need the obvious person to go to, except in the case of someone who knows a voluntary society very well, is a local authority. The local authority, then, being in some cases overburdened, will go to Barnardo's, and will say, "Will you take such and such a child?" Our policy has always been to give help to children in need, and if a child has been taken into care by a local authority we say, "That is evidence that the child is in need," and we do not argue about the particular children they refer to us. (Mr. Walpole.) There is one point. Very often a child is put in the care of a local authority, and we have a tendency at the moment to increase the ratio of children who are taken from local authorities. I might mention that actually 11 per cent. of the children in our ordinary homes to-day have come from local authorities. If we increase the number from local authorities it means that we must reduce the proportion who come to us by direct application in other ways. We have no objection in principle to that, so long as we are assured that any child for whom we are finding a home is in need.

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Chairman.

497. To clear my own mind, voluntary homes are not themselves concerned with boarding out?—(Colonel *Birnie*.) My society is very much in favour of boarding out.

498. You do not try to empty your homes in favour of boarding out?—Yes, we do.

499. Then there is a vast field of inquiry about that?—Mind you, there are a lot of people who think in all kinds of different ways about that; but as a society we ourselves consider that, much as we try to do it, we cannot in our homes give a real family life to a child.

500. Will you also give us the figure of what you pay to the foster parent in boarding out?—Yes, I can give you that roughly. (Mr. *Powell*.) I will get it for you, Sir. (Colonel *Birnie*.) I can tell you straight away; it varies between about 22s. 6d. a week for some children up to as much as 32s. 6d.

501. The average figure given here by local authorities for this coming year would be £1 8s. 10d.?—That is just about what it works out at with us. It all depends, really. If the child is boarded out with a home where the people are really well off themselves they do not ask for more, but if the child is boarded out with a poorer home, naturally nowadays with things so expensive we have to pay more.

Miss Ward.

502. Arising out of the changed circumstances after the war and the different approach of people to all sorts of social matters, are you finding it just as easy to

keep your voluntary committees interested in working for the raising of funds for the Children's Society, or is it becoming a more difficult problem?—We are one of the few societies that have these voluntary committees. I should say, on reflection, that the recruitment of the young into our voluntary committees is difficult because they have so much to do at home; they have to cook and do everything like that; but the actual interest in our work through the local committees is still as great as ever.

503. What about Dr. Barnardo's?—(Mr. *Lucette*.) I am not really competent to answer that question because we are divided into two sections and I am responsible only for the children's side of the work. I will nevertheless try to give you an answer. Probably there is a slightly increasing resistance to supporting voluntary societies—I do not mean anything lurid at all, but I think that as people become more conscious of State provision there is an increasing tendency to hesitate before giving.

504. That is what I want to get at. I cannot help feeling that when they open up these new local authority homes and see the additional amount of money that has got to be found by the ratepayers, people will say, "We are making our contribution; why, therefore, should we go on helping these voluntary societies which have had our assistance in the past"?—Undoubtedly.

Chairman.] Thank you very much for attending. We may want to ask you to come back, and I hope for our sake we shall have to do that because your evidence has been most interesting and helpful.

*The witnesses withdrew.**Adjourned till Tuesday next, at 11 o'clock.*

TUESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 1952.

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Mr. Dryden Brook.
Sir Fergus Graham.
Mr. A. J. Irvine.

Major Markham.
Miss Ward

Mr. E. AINSWORTH, Children's Officer, Mr. R. E. GRIFFITHS, Director of Establishments, and Mr. F. HOLLAND, Deputy Comptroller, London County Council; and Mr. R. BROUGH, Children's Officer, Glasgow Corporation, called in and examined.

Chairman.

505. May we start with one or two questions about Remand Homes, in order to get them out of the way? Why is it

that in Scotland the average length of stay in a Remand Home is a good deal shorter than it is in England?—(Mr. *Brough*.) I am not aware of the length of stay.

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[Continued.]

506. Ten days in Scotland and twenty-eight days in England?—I would not say it was as much as ten days in Glasgow.

507. What is the average length of a child's stay in Glasgow?—I do not know that, Sir.

508. We had a Memorandum from the Scottish Office in which we had a figure given to us that in Scotland the average length of stay is about ten days, whereas in England it is about twenty-eight days, and I wondered what difference in practice there was?—As far as Glasgow is concerned, last year we had about 220 on detention for varying periods in the Glasgow Remand Home and 940 on remand.

509. And I see at St. Vincent Street the the average stay is 10.2 days?—That must be the correct figure.

510. Have you any knowledge as to why the average stay of a child in a Scottish Remand Home is shorter than in an English one?—It may be that we have more vacancies in Approved Schools—that probably is the answer—more vacancies than in England. (Mr. Ainscow.) I think that may be to some extent the reason. It is the case that for some long time there was a shortage of vacancies in English Approved Schools, and that is just being overcome, but this still obtains in certain classes of school.

511. What proportion of children would you say go from a Remand Home to an Approved School in London?—I would not care to answer that categorically, Sir.

512. I rather wonder whether Mr. Brough's answer is a complete answer, and I was wondering whether that would account for such a difference in the length of stay?—There may be another reason, Sir. It is because certainly in London the Magistrates like to have information concerning the children who are coming before them.

513. And the Scots do not?—I would not say that; I would not know.

514. What would Mr. Brough say about that?—(Mr. Brough.) Since June, 1951, there have been 282 boys admitted on Approved School reports; that is the term we use—"admitted on an Approved School report".

515. That certainly would not account for this startling difference. But neither of you can give me any reason why it is that ten days is the total length of stay in a Remand Home in Scotland. Do you think you use Remand Homes as much in Scotland as in England? I think you do,

by the figures?—Yes, we do. I have prepared a statement for our Local Education Department. The Approved Schools in Scotland are not operated by the Children's Department.

Miss Ward.

516. And it comes under the Scottish Education Office and not under the Home Office?—Approved schools in Scotland (with one exception) are operated by Boards of Managers. The Scottish Education Department is the responsible central department for these schools. The exception mentioned is Mossbank Approved School, which is run by the Education Department of Glasgow Corporation.

Chairman.

517. But they are operated by the Local Education Authorities?—The Education Departments of the Local Authority operate Approved Schools. The Children's Department have not taken over Approved Schools in Scotland. (Mr. Ainscow.) It varies in England, Sir. For instance, in London the management of schools as apart from education is in the hands of the Children's Committee, but the responsibility for education in the Approved Schools is with the Education Committee.

518. Yes?—(Mr. Brough.) Education is the same in Scotland. It is in the hands of the Education Committee.

519. Does that apply to all Scottish Remand Homes?—To Approved Schools, Sir. (Mr. Ainscow.) We were speaking of Approved Schools.

520. I was speaking of Remand Homes?—Remand Homes would come under the Children's Department.

521. We are not concerned with Approved Schools in this Sub-Committee?—As regards Remand Homes, the management is with the Children's Committee. (Mr. Brough.) I have prepared a statement for the Education Department. They were perturbed when they thought that boys in the Remand Home were too long waiting for admission to an Approved School, and I have prepared a statement giving individuals' names and the dates of admission during the last month, and we are going to see whether six, seven or ten days is too long, and what was the cause of the length of time that they were in the Remand Home.

522. I think you said something like 270 or 280 went from Glasgow to Approved Schools?—Yes.

523. That is out of a total admission of 1,270 in St. Vincent Street?—Yes.

524. I do not want to flog a dead horse, but I think there does seem to be some

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strange difference in practice between the two countries, and I should like to have known what it is. If you can enlighten us upon it we shall be very grateful. Perhaps you will write in to us about that?—Yes.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

525. That seems to be accentuated by Mr. Brough's last statement that in the statement he has prepared for the Glasgow Education Authority they are alarmed at even six to ten days' stay, that they regard that as being too long to remain in a Remand Home, whereas in this country the practice is 28 days on an average?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Yes. Might I say that with regard to children in Remand Homes in England, if they are waiting for an Approved School, then that tends to knock up the average stay, and it is certainly a factor in the 28 days. But, in the case of London, as I think I said before, Magistrates wishing to have information remand a case back for psychiatric reports, which take some little time to prepare, and I should say it would take certainly not under a fortnight before it would be possible to go back to Court with the proper background story as to a child's suitability or otherwise.

Sir Fergus Graham.

526. I gather the point is that London is now concentrating on Stamford House Remand Home, which is now regarded as an observation and classifying centre, and it was at Stamford House that we noticed there were experts' reports on children in the Home, and that some experts came to the school on given days?—Yes, that is so.

Chairman.

527. Two of us visited Stamford House unofficially the other day, not as this Sub-Committee, and I understand that you can answer some questions about that?—I will try to.

528. I certainly was rather disturbed at the large number of psychiatrists' reports demanded, because it is very expensive. Surely the basis of psychiatric treatment is that you should have a fairly long period of observation. Now, would it be fair to say, in your opinion, that it has become rather an obsession with Juvenile Courts and that it is being overdone?—I would not say so, and as regards the length of time under observation, the psychiatrist who considers the case of a boy before him has the advantage of having all the boy's previous records, school reports, home surroundings reports, and so on, which are available to him.

529. Would you take it from me that psychiatric opinion, as far as I have found out, is based on a single interview, which

does not seem to be very valuable?—Boys are in a Remand Home for three weeks, shall we say—a fortnight to three weeks—and in that time the psychiatrist has an opportunity of more than one interview.

530. I think in most cases it is one interview at Stamford House?—It may be one interview there, Sir, but there is a good deal of background information about the boy which is available and which is taken into account.

531. How much does each visit of the psychiatrist cost?—I think it is four guineas a session.

532-3. I will not pursue the matter any further, but I must say that I have often wondered whether this idea of a psychiatrist's report is not being a little overdone and is becoming a sort of fashionable cliché?—I think you have to remember that by Section 35 of the Act the local authority is under a duty to make available to the Court information on the child's home surroundings and medical record, and that, I take it, is part of the medical record.

534. Yes; but that is an extravagant way of doing it, and a common sense interview, I should have thought, on the part of the people running the Homes would probably extract more information and give a rather better balance?—It is not extravagant if it saves any boy from an unsuitable method of treatment, which would be extravagant.

535. Nevertheless I think there is a danger of over-elaboration in all this, and I must confess I think it is becoming rather fantastic, the number of boys remanded for psychological reports; but, of course, that is the expression of a personal opinion?—We are in the hands of the Court, Sir, in that respect.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

536. When you mentioned a fee of four guineas, does that mean for each interview, or does the psychiatrist who comes to interview there see more than one boy?—It is a session.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

537. Is it true to say that in Scotland less reliance is placed on psychiatric reports than south of the Border, and is that the explanation, perhaps, of the shorter period in Remand Homes?—(Mr. Brough.) No. I would say that where a boy has no obvious mental defect we do not call for a psychiatrist's report, but we have an Education Department psychiatrist available, and he visits the Remand Home more or less every day, but only for children who are thought to require examination.

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[Continued.]

538. Is he a permanent officer?—Yes, of the Education Department.

539. So that he is not paid on a fee basis?—No, he is not.

Miss Ward.

540. He acts in a dual capacity, then?—For education and for public health also.

Chairman.

541. Please realise we commend Scotland for passing children quickly through Remand Homes. There is nothing particularly desirable in a child spending one, two or three months in a Remand Home. It is much better that he should get to his permanent destination.—We are, of course, watching where a child has any mental defect, and that is examined.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] How many children would the psychiatrist be able to interview in a session?

Chairman.

542. When you say a session, you mean each interview. What does that mean?—(Mr. Ainscow.) It means a session of about two hours.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

543. With how many children in that period?—It all depends to a certain extent on the cases; I should say probably two to three; but, again, if you wish precise information I would rather give it to you in writing.

Chairman.] No, I do not think it is significant enough to ask you to write a memorandum about it.

Miss Ward.

544. To some extent it is true, is it not, that what action is taken does depend on the recommendation of the Magistrates? For instance, if a Probation Officer has been in touch with a child's home before and is in a position to give a report to the Bench, it may be that the Probation Officer suggests to the Bench that psychiatric treatment would be beneficial from the point of view of the Magistrates' decision—in other words, before the Magistrates come to a decision—and is it not true that the whole service, so to speak, is linked with the approach of the Magistrates when the case comes before the Court, so that it is slightly difficult to lay down exactly how a particular case is going to be operated, so to speak?—Yes. The real point of the psychiatric interview or interviews in the Remand Home is one of diagnosis; it is not so much treatment.

Miss Ward.] No.

Chairman.] We have some even more important questions to go on to, so that I suggest we leave that.

Miss Ward.] Could I ask one other thing? You did ask these gentlemen if they would write in about differences in the length of stay. Would not we really get that information if we asked for a memorandum from the Scottish Office and from the Home Office?

Chairman.] We did ask the Scottish Office about that.

Miss Ward.] Is not it a little difficult to ask a witness from Glasgow to comment upon that?

Chairman.

545. It is only a comparatively minor matter, so that I suggest we leave this and get on to the subject of the boarding out of children, which I think is quite the most important question we have to deal with. If I may start with London, may I thank you for this excellent Memorandum, but I must admit that I am disturbed at the small percentage of children who are boarded out in London as compared with the average for the rest of the country, and I wondered if you could say something about that, Mr. Ainscow?—We really started intensive operations of boarding out round about 1949; our Department was only framed in 1949, and at that time we had 965 children boarded out. Between then and the present time we have boarded out up to a total of 1,796—in other words, we have doubled the number of children boarded out. As regards children coming into care, we are on all fours with the rest of the country in being able to tackle the problem of boarding out those children at the outset, but in a place like London it is difficult. When the Department was formed in 1949 we had something like 6,000 children in establishments, and those children had been there in many cases for a very long time, so that it was not easy nor practicable nor even desirable to board many of them out, because their roots were already in the large establishments. It is a fact, I believe, that it is easier to board out and more desirable to board out a very young child, and that it is very difficult to board out a child over eleven, so that we are faced with a backlog which is taken into account in assessing the percentage of those boarded out in comparison with the total.

546. Why does that particularly apply to London?—London is by reason of its size different from other places; it is rather difficult. London has got about six or seven, we can now say, very large establishments which were formerly establishments belonging to certain boroughs, and we just inherited this terrific agglomeration of children.

547. I still do not see why London should be a worse place than other cities

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or counties. Speaking from memory, the percentage boarded out throughout the whole country is something like 38 per cent., and London cannot do better than 24 per cent. We are told by the Home Office, by Miss Rosling, that, speaking very roughly, she would say that two-thirds of the children are suitable for boarding out—I am trying to give you the whole picture at once—and that the average cost per child to board out in this country is £1 8s. 10d., whereas the average cost of children in local authority Homes is well over £5. Therefore, very large economies can be made in that field, and it is generally, I think, agreed that it is very much better for a child to be boarded out?—Not all children, Sir.

548. But children who are suitable for boarding out?—Yes.

549. When one realises the burden placed on the ratepayers and on the Treasury by keeping a child in a Home, when it may be possible to board that child out, it makes one uneasy.—Yes, Sir; but this is a matter which cannot be done in a hurry unless we are going to do untold harm to very many children.

550. That must surely apply to every other local authority in the country?—I would suggest that it does not apply possibly to the same extent as it does in London, because many of these new departments are quoting figures of what has happened since they started, and the method laid down in the Act for the ascertainment of which children are suitable for boarding out is that of passing them through a reception centre. Many places have no reception centres. We are getting one going, though it is not in full tilt yet; it is on the way; and I believe that I am right in saying that if the records of reception centres that have been operating are consulted, notably the one at New House, it will be found that not as many children are amenable to boarding out as one would naturally suppose.

551. In other words, you would not accept Miss Rosling's figure. I am not trying to set your mind against her?—Speaking for London children, I would be uneasy about it. I certainly do not think we could board out 60 per cent. of the children now in our care and not do damage to some children in our care.

552. Of course, it is impossible to generalise with any hope of achieving accuracy, but what figure do you think London could work up to?—We set ourselves an interim target of 2,000. I think we shall now go out for another target of 3,000.

553. But surely out of 7,338 children you ought at least to aim at boarding out half, ought not you?—We are boarding

out to the extent of our ability with all newcomers. We take the children coming in; we examine every child to see whether it is suitable, and if it is we try to board it out.

Major Markham.

554. I am very disturbed by what seems to be the implication—perhaps I misunderstood it—that something like 60 per cent. of these children in the London Homes would not benefit by a proper family life under the boarding out system?—I am not exactly saying that, except in this sense, that of the 6,000 in our care some of them have been in our care for many years, and the only homes they have ever known are these big establishments. They do not all of them present themselves as suitable for boarding out; but apart from that people like to receive as foster-children generally small girls—we have quite a lot of large boys, and it is not easy to board out these husky lads of eleven, twelve and thirteen.

555. With big appetites?—Yes; and moreover they just do not fit in. I think it is common knowledge that the boarding out of the older boy is not as easy as it might be. The happy hunting ground for boarding out officers is the little girl with curly hair, and not all our children conform to that type.

556. Will you fill in a missing date here? You said that you had taken over a rather difficult situation from the London boroughs. What was the date of that take-over?—I am saying that we inherited the whole set-up which had formerly been under the London boroughs, and each of these rather big places was formerly the concern of either a borough or a group of boroughs.

557. When roughly was that date?—1st April, 1930.

558. So that you have had twenty-two years?—The situation was never quite the same up till 1948 as it is to-day. Boarding out really had not come into its own. It will be remembered that boarding out was not possible except for orphans and deserted children under the Poor Law Order of 1911, I think it was. I know it was only late on in the 1939-45 war that the Government came to the conclusion that they would lift the ban on boarding out of children under the Poor Law in order to enable a child who was not an orphan or deserted to be boarded out. So that that may explain why it was not possible to board out so many of these children.

559. May I now take it that your very definite policy has been for some years to board out wherever possible?—Yes, I believe in boarding out; it is my responsibility. I have been boarding out since 1933.

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and I had the reputation in another place of doing quite a lot of boarding out by way of pioneer work.

Chairman.

560. Where was that?—In Manchester. I was then in the Education Department, and we had the duty, which was only shared by about twelve others, I think, of operating the Poor Law arrangement through the Education Committee, and boarding out was one of our strong points.

Major Markham.

561. Is it also the policy of the present authority?—Yes, very definitely; not only to board out but to place children for adoption where they are suitable, which is really the quintessence of child care.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

562. Referring to the figures in Appendix A, which gives figures for 1949 to 1951, I see that in the light of what you have just said in reply to previous questions there has been an increase in the total number of children in care between 1949 and 1951 to 1,657, and an increase in the number of those boarded out of 755. May I take it that that is in amplification of the policy you have just been speaking about, in other words, that since 1949 you have boarded out roughly 50 per cent?—Yes, and there is something further. Quite a lot of our children are short stay children who are not amenable to boarding out. The average foster-mother likes to receive a young child whom she is going to take into her own family and who is going to become one of her family. That does not apply to a child whose mother has gone into hospital and who has to be cared for for a matter of weeks. In that case it is not very good for them to be boarded out, though we are managing to board some of them under a special scheme.

563. Am I right in assuming that that increase in numbers is because of the increased number of children who have come in, and that the increase in the number of boarded out children is roughly due?—It is a reflection of that increase. To sum it up, it is definitely the policy of the London County Council to board out as many children as are suitable.

Chairman.

564. May I pursue that a little further? Somewhere here you say that you encounter difficulty in finding an adequate number of foster-parents?—There is a particular class of child for whom we have difficulty in finding foster-parents; those children are children in the Catholic community, and it seems, despite very determined efforts, and with the full co-operation of everybody concerned, we are not

able to board out a lot of Catholic children. There do not seem to be the places for them.

565. What proportion of Catholic children have you, very roughly?—I should say it is about one-fifth.

Miss Ward.

566-9. It does say at the bottom of paragraph 6 of the Memorandum that it is a fact that hundreds of local authority Home children are of the Roman Catholic Faith?—Yes.

570. So that that, of course, is confirmation, without quoting percentages, of what you say?—Yes. We have a large number of Roman Catholic children in local authority Homes and in the Homes of communities, and we pay for their maintenance.

Chairman.

571. I was talking of one of the local authority Homes, not one of the Roman Catholic Orphanages?—No. There are certainly 400 or thereabouts in our Council Establishments.

572. Leaving on one side the Roman Catholic children, who may present a special problem, is boarding out of children other than Roman Catholic children in any way limited by the difficulty of finding foster-parents?—It is a question of the number of staff you can put on.

573. Can you say yes or no to that question? Is it limited by that?—It is only limited by two or three things; principally it is a matter of getting out into the countryside after the foster homes.

574. The countryside? You do not board out in London?—When I came on to this job I said to the people who were working with me: "Why are we not boarding out in London?" They said: "There are not any foster homes in London." I said: "I find it difficult to believe that. We will have a special drive," and we did have a special drive, and the result of that special drive was that very few foster homes as compared with the number of children we have to deal with became available in what you might call London proper. It is a fact that four-fifths of our children are boarded out outside London.

575. But surely you are not saying that there is a lack of the right type of person amongst the citizens of London?—There are serious difficulties in London. There is a great deal of lack of space in London homes for extra children; I am putting it that way.

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576. There are plenty of childless couples?—Not all childless couples are suitable to have children.

577. But the point I am trying to get at is if the immense saving in money both to the Treasury and to local authorities were realised, and if enough stress were put upon the undoubted benefit that is derived by children from being boarded out, do not you think a renewed drive could improve those figures considerably?—I can only say that we are driving all the time. I think, with respect, that the record shown in Appendix A is not unworthy of a couple of years' effort.

Miss Ward.

578. Is it not equally true to say it is uneconomical if children are not boarded out with the right people?—It is very definitely a disservice to the child, and can result in a disservice to the financial aspect of the authority.

Chairman.

579. I thought the figures for London fell very heavily below those for the rest of the country?—It may be we have a higher discrimination as to what constitutes a child who is suitable for boarding out.

Sir Fergus Graham.

580. You have not so many possibilities of finding places where childless couples could take such children, because they are probably both employed in London?—The childless couple might have accommodation for a child, but, as you say, Sir, there is this question that very often childless couples go out to work; but apart from that we have made efforts to find more foster homes in London proper and we have not met with a great deal of success. This is the sort of thing where we are always trying to find fresh ways of finding foster homes, because we believe in it.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

581. Is it a fact that of this 24.4 per cent. that are stated to be boarded out only one-fifth of those are boarded out in London?—Yes.

582. It does strike one as a most remarkably small proportion, because it becomes, unless my mathematics are wrong, a matter of only 5 per cent. of the total, which is really fantastically small—in other words, only one-fifth of 24 per cent. are boarded out in London?—It is roughly a quarter of 1,800 who are boarded out in London.

Chairman.

583. Speaking as one born within the sound of Bow bells, I cannot accept the slur implied on London by these figures.

I can only think that the financial significance of this has not penetrated to the London County Council?—I can only say that the London County Council policy is to board out. To board out where a child may be boarded out suitably every effort has been made to find more foster homes in London, but up to now it has not met with a great deal of success. It is not for want of direction from the Committee.

584. It may be from want of staff?—No, it is not, because the Committee have never hesitated to give us more staff. The Committee have this very much in mind. When I started we had fourteen boarding out officers, and we have now fifty-two.

585. That means people finding them and looking at them?—One has to remember that when you have a boarding out officer who has a case load, you have to get another boarding out officer to replace her.

586. I do not want to harp upon this, but compared with the rest of the country it is a strange difference. May I ask you this question, rather a different one: Are you urged by the Home Office, and if so in what form, to secure more boarding out?—We have very close liaison with the Home Office, and about four days ago we had a conference between their Chief Inspector and their three Divisional Inspectors, who had been round all our boarding out system. I do not know whether it is germane to this, but in reply to the question I can say that the Home Office seemed to be very well satisfied with the general standard; in fact I think they put it slightly higher than that.

587. What I wanted was this: I wanted you to this extent to tell tales out of school and to tell me what sort of prodding the Home Office gives local authorities about boarding out?—They are always on about it. They mention it in their Sixth Report. It is all laid down in the Sixth Report on the Children's Department, and in that Sixth Report they quote the case that one single authority are as low as 9 per cent., whereas others are as high as 70 per cent. We are in the process of moving up the scale. We think we are doing it as quickly as circumstances permit, and certainly there is no disposition not to do so.

588. May I take it that the Committee and the Children's Department of the London County Council are fully aware of the financial implications of boarding out in the direction of saving public money?—The County Council has allowed me to take on boarding out officers, increasing their number from 14 to 52 in the last two years, and I think they did that on the argument that we put up to them that it was financially sound to do it, apart from and in addition to the undoubted benefit to the children themselves.

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589. They do other things besides that, do they not?—Yes; they have very important functions which are not shown in any of the published literature, because it is hidden. One part of a skilled field officer's job—and we have nine area officers with field officers attached—is to prevent children from being taken into care by exploiting the resources of families and relatives of children for whom we receive applications.

590. Then the boarding out is their sole task, because each officer looks after about 34 children?—It is not their sole task, because they have inquiries to make in families. They have to find foster homes, and they have to supervise the children who are already placed out.

Miss Ward.

591. Do you think that the financial implications of additional staff are worth it?—I think it is entirely worth it, because it is showing results. A little arithmetic on the figures that have been given this morning will show that on this small document alone, if you take the children boarded out as representing an average expenditure of, say, £2 a week, and you take the average figure for maintenance in a home which has been quoted this morning, and find the difference between those two and multiply it by 1,800 children who are now boarded out, it is really a financial proposition, apart from the benefit to the children.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

592. What is your view as to the effect of what I understand is the comparatively low level of payments to foster-parents upon this small amount of boarding out in London? Is that an important factor in your view?—No. I think it might affect some people; we should get more children boarded out if we paid what would be a lodging rate.

Chairman.

593. With a profit element?—Yes; but whether we should get good boarding out is another matter. It may be worth trying under very carefully supervised conditions, but it is a matter on which I should not be speaking, because it has not received the full consideration of our Committee.

594. Am I not right in saying that the Home Office directive and the Curtis Committee directive were that there should be no profit element in it?—Yes; I think we mention that in our Memorandum.

Miss Ward.] Could we shortly turn to paragraph 4, some possibilities for economy, because there is a very wide field to discuss there?

Chairman.] On the other hand, I think we should finish boarding out and do it in

sequence. I would rather like to hear Scotland on boarding out, and then we will work through this, because that is another subject.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

595. Following up the remark you made about figures, as you said, with 52 boarding out officers it works out at roughly 34 children boarded out per officer. Now, it does seem to me difficult to say that with all that staff of officers, at any rate, the authority is not doing all that it can to get boarding out places; that is, if the staff is doing its job. Of course, we can only get an adequate reply to that from the officer in charge. But if you take the figures as roughly 6s. a week per child, what is the staff employed in getting places?—6s. per week per child does show a very great economy, does it not? I think we can say, in reply to the question, that the officers are doing the job, and that folks like myself are very much concerned to see that they do the job. We have no qualms on that subject. Our system is such, and we have given particular attention to this, that field officers are able to concentrate on field work, and they get clerical assistance, so that they are not spending all their time filling up forms. Our insistence is to get out into the field as much as possible. The 6s. per week is the cost of boarding out, roughly.

Chairman.

596. 6s. per child?—Yes; it is possible by boarding out a child instead of putting it into a residential home to save £3 or £4 a week, including that 6s.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I am not questioning that at all, and I can see that the difficulty of the problem in London of getting boarding out places is very important. I am merely wishing to point out that the amount that is spent on the field work does indicate that the authority is alive to the problem.

Chairman.

597. Can we hear what Glasgow's experience is in regard to boarding out?—(Mr. Brough.) Glasgow has a long experience. We have records going back 170 years. We have 70 per cent. of our children in care boarded out.

598. Do you feel that you keep up a high enough standard of inspection and visiting the children who are boarded out?—Quite definitely.

599. How often are the children visited?—By regulation, at least every six months, and in practice generally every four months.

600. How often are London children visited?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Those who are boarded out short-term are specially

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visited about once a fortnight because of the risks involved. The others are visited at least once every six weeks and, after two years, that goes down to once every three months.

601. What steps do you take, Mr. Brough, to get foster-parents?—(Mr. Brough.) By advertising, by contact with the clergy, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. We have close contact with the clergy.

Miss Ward.

602. Do you have the same difficulty with Roman Catholic placings as the London County Council?—We have difficulty to an extent. We have pockets in Scotland where there are Roman Catholic communities and where we have boarded for many years.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

603. Does that mean outside Glasgow?—Yes; we have 350 of our 2,000 boarded out children in the City area. All the others are in adjacent areas and in other parts of Scotland. Many of them are in the Highlands of Scotland.

Chairman.

604. How many boarding out officers do you employ?—Seven, including the City area.

605. It is a startling difference of practice?—Our boarding out has kept up at that rate from the beginning of the century, when there were over 1,200 Glasgow children boarded out, and in these areas foster-parents have grown up taking families, and their neighbours and relations have continued.

606. It is a Scottish tradition?—It is.

Sir Fergus Graham.

607. In scattered areas they board out more than in concentrated areas in towns?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Yes.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

608. What percentage of these 70 per cent. are in Glasgow boarded out?—(Mr. Brough.) One-sixth, roughly.

609. Now, there is this very remarkable difference between Glasgow and London. The greater number of children boarded out in Glasgow has a very much smaller number of boarding out officers, and what would you say about the way it is working? Are you satisfied with the effect of the boarding out system in Glasgow?—Yes.

610. Have you had an opportunity of comparing it with other authorities and with other parts of the country yourself?—No, I cannot say I have.

611. You do not think that the children are suffering from this relatively small number of boarding out officers?—No. I visited children last week in Fifeshire, and I found excellent homes. They had not been visited within the last five months.

Chairman.

612. In a country district?—Yes, some in the country and some in the town.

613. In Kirkcaldy and places like that?—Yes, and Methil, Ladybank, Kinross and other small villages. When we have children committed by the Court to the care of the local authority, many of these families we have committed are unsuitable for boarding out in the City area, depending on their ages, of course. Where there is a family committed, you have a few of school age, and they can find their way back home if you place them with a foster-parent in the City area, so that you can use country districts for families like that.

614. Is it possible for you to say what proportion of boarding out cases prove failures and have to be moved?—We have in the last eighteen months had a campaign for boarding out. I directed that. We have boarded out about 290 children, and such is the quality of this recent boarding out that I have not moved a dozen children in that eighteen months because of bad placing.

615. What is the urge behind that boarding out campaign in Glasgow—the Scottish Home Department or the City Fathers, or what?—No, my own urge.

616. Your own personal urge?—Yes, with the approval of the Committee.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

617. I think this contrast between Glasgow and London is really important and very interesting and may be significant, and in connection with it I should like to ask Mr. Ainscow a question in regard to these four-fifths of your boarding out cases who are boarded out outside London. Where are they boarded out—in the Home Counties?—(Mr. Ainscow.) When I first came into this Department there were a few distant pockets, and I think some of that was due to the fact that it was a sort of leave-over from evacuation. We thought it was only right, from the rate-payers' and taxpayers' point of view to conduct field operations which would not entail long and wasteful journeys, so we said that we would endeavour to board out in future within about a 50-mile radius of London, with possible exceptions, one of which is East Anglia, where we have had a particularly good boarding out field.

618. You take in Norfolk and Suffolk?—Yes, that sort of thing.

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619. Because to the extent that you cover a large area, of course, the contrast between Glasgow and London becomes all the more remarkable?—Yes, Sir; but I think that there is a very significant difference between the London problem and the Scottish problem. Glasgow seems to have the run in the extreme North—that is roughly true, I think—they do go longer distances than we to board out. But we are in competition—I have not mentioned this before, but it is perfectly true—with Middlesex, Essex and all the rest of the Home Counties, and sometimes my colleagues in one or two of those places occasionally ring me up and say: “You are poaching on my preserves”.

620. But Glasgow is in competition with Edinburgh, is it not?—(Mr. Brough.) Yes. Of course, Edinburgh was boarding out for many years. They have certain areas which are recognised as their areas—perhaps not recognised, but they have contacts with foster-parents and communities, school teachers and headmasters.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] The point that strikes me about this is not the contrast but the similarity. I have reckoned it out that roughly 20 per cent. of the Glasgow children are boarded out in the City, and in the case of London roughly 25 per cent. are boarded out in the City. That is not a great contrast, considering the difference in the size of the two places.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] There is the same proportion between those boarded out in the City and those boarded out outside the City, but there is a vast and very important contrast in regard to the total number boarded out.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

621. Yes, we have dealt with that. I am coming now to the number of staff. There is a great contrast in the number of staff, I admit. There is also a great contrast in the number of times that the children are visited. In Glasgow the statutory obligation is once in six months, and that is not very much less than they do get visited. Mr. Brough said three to four months; whereas in London it is at least once in six weeks?—(Mr. Ainscow.) For the new children.

Miss Ward.] Perhaps that is something to do with Scottish tradition.

Sir Fergus Graham.] It is also something to do with the difference between rural and urban life.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] There may be something in Scottish tradition in regard to the family which makes it unnecessary for them to be visited as often as they are in the

region of London. It might be true of the North of England as well—I hope it is—but the significance to me, at any rate, is, or the significant point, I think, is the number of staff that are employed in London and the number of staff that are employed in Glasgow to achieve what I think is a fairly similar result of what has been boarded out since 1949. Since 1949 the London record is almost equivalent to that of Glasgow.

Miss Ward.

622. Could you give us a figure from 1949 of the staff that was operating in London?—The field staff?

623. The total staff. I know you said you had 14 field staff, but you also said that there were clerical people involved to help with the records, and I wondered if when you took over in London you could tell us what the staff was that you started with and what the staff is now in both cases?—I should like to be able to answer that question, but I think it is almost impossible, because of the way the job was done. One of the things the Children Act did was to concentrate this job at Central Government level and at Local Government level. Previous to that it was spread amongst various Departments, and whereas today a clerical officer in an area will be concerned with receiving a child into care, before 1949, when the Department was formed, that duty would have been performed as part of the Welfare Officer's duty; so that it would be almost impossible, certainly not this morning, to give you a true answer to what you ask.

624. But might I pursue that, and if you will forgive me for being perfectly frank, it is being continually asserted, not in this part of the world but in my part of the world, which is in the North, that you appoint a Children's Officer under the Statute, and then before very long the Children's Officer comes along and says that it is necessary to have a deputy; that, in other words, there is continual pressure on the local authority to increase the staff. Now, that very probably is necessary, but it is a tendency, and it would be helpful, at any rate to me, if we could have some kind of idea—I mean, we know all about additional responsibilities—of the expansion of the staff in your area as compared with the Scottish area, and if we could have it in the form of figures?—I am afraid we could not give you that, but I would like to say just for the purposes of clarity that our 52 officers—

625. They are all field officers?—Yes. That number has risen from 14, and they have been given to us by the County Council for the express purpose of increasing boarding out, and we have not yet had the full advantage of their labours.

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Mr. A. J. Irvine.

626. Might it be said that to visit them as often as once a fortnight might be harmful to the child-foster-parent relationship, that it is too constant a rate of visiting homes?—I can only say, Sir, that that refers specifically to emergency boarding out where we use that method. It applies to the case where the child is not in permanent care, and in such a case we get a neighbour or an aunt to take the child on for this short time, and we do it in accordance with the consent and approval of the Home Office. We do tend to step up the visiting in those cases; but even in those other cases I think it entirely depends on the relationship between the boarding out officer and the foster-mother, and it is a fact that foster-mothers who are worth their salt tend to consult the Welfare Officer at all points. It is a very sound family relationship between them, as it should be, and they do not regard it as onerous at all, in fact rather the reverse, that the Welfare Officer calls in to see them fairly frequently. (Mr. Brough.) My visiting is stepped up also in the City cases, and in some of the cases we have recently been boarding out, mentally handicapped children.

Miss Ward.

627. Could I turn to one or two other things on which I would like the benefit of your advice? I very much want to know what exactly you have to say is the legal position about the payment of family allowances. I also understand that certain payments have got to come from the children's parents to the families who are looking after children or into the local authority coffers, that there are occasions when parents do not make the essential payments, and those Committees have the right to write off those payments if they consider that they are justified in doing so. I was wondering whether you could clarify the position as to exactly what does go on in relation to these payments?—(Mr. Ainscow.) If a child is received into care at the volition of the parents, normally there is an agreement made between the parents and the authority as to the appropriate rate of contribution by the parents to the authority, and that is done in accordance with a scale laid down by the County Council which is common to two or three services.

628. Is that on the basis of the income of the family?—Yes, on the income of the family and on outgoings. It is a rather complicated scheme, but it seems to be very just to the family and not unjust to the authority. If the parent pays up, well and good. If he does not pay up he is warned, and if he does not respond we go to the Court and we ask for a Contribution Order. That occurs also in the case of the children committed to our care by the courts and also in the case of Approved

School Orders. There is the possibility of co-operation with good parents and there is the possibility of coercion of bad parents.

629. Has the Committee got the right to write off the parents' payments if they fall into debt?—What happens in certain cases is this. We give an account to the Home Office, notably in the Approved School Orders, and in those cases where we account to the Home Office we also have a word in our writing off of any bad debts. Certainly the Committee have a word in it.

630. Can you give us any figure for the last three years of debts that have been written off with Home Office consent?—No, I am afraid I cannot, Madam.

631. Would that figure not be available?—I suppose it would. I think it is a thing that we ought to say has given us a lot of trouble in going into the back history of this sort of thing, and I am sure that at the moment machinery such as you describe and would wish to see is now operating, but I would rather look forward than backward.

632. Yes; but I do not think I am out of order in pressing for the figures. There must be a figure somewhere in the books?—It would have to be got out. It would be some trouble.

633. I think it is very important, and I am going to press for it?—We will get it. (Mr. Brough.) As far as Glasgow is concerned, we have a similar arrangement for contribution. In the case of a parent who defaults, or who is defaulting with payment, he is chased up by the Court officer I have. Our contributions have more than doubled in the last eighteen months.

Chairman.

634. I think it would be very interesting if you could furnish us with some sort of figures on the lines that Miss Ward has asked for?—That would cause a good deal of trouble in finding out the cases that have been written off. You have to return a child to its parents, perhaps return a family to its parents, and once the parents have the family back, then it is impossible to get payment from those parents.

635. Back payments?—Yes; they are unable to pay.

Miss Ward.] That is not the figure I wanted. What I wanted to know was the total sum written off as bad debts in, say, the last three years, from 1949, and what the total debt written off in each year is by the Children's Committee. There must be a total debt that must be shown in the books and shown to the auditors.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] But would that figure be really significant? I am speaking now

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as a member of a local authority, and I cannot think that that is of much significance. It would be complicated by the fact that if the parent is taken to Court and that parent chooses to go to prison, then automatically the debt is written off.

Chairman.

636. Yes. I think Mr. Brough could give us a rough figure?—I could give you a rough figure, but I do not see the value of the figure.

Miss Ward.] I have gone into this very carefully, and I have had it raised to me by members of local authorities. I think it is important to see that figure.

Chairman.] I think we should be furnished with some approximate figures.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I am also a member of a local authority, and I am interested in this from my own experience.

Chairman.] Do you agree it would be interesting to have a figure?

Mr. Dryden Brook.] No, I do not think it would be worth while, if it is going to mean expenditure on labour and time, because we have to consider that too.

Chairman.] I think that if a Member of the Sub-Committee wishes to have such a figure she is entitled to it.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I agree, but from my own experience I should say that in the writing off process the greater part of the sum that is involved is by those who have defaulted and choose to go to prison.

Chairman.

637. Would you agree with that?—As far as Glasgow is concerned, we have not had any persons sent to prison for default in payment so far. (Mr. Ainscow.) I have been handling this particular question, and I find write-offs are really hard luck cases, cases where it would be impossible and sometimes undesirable to press.

Chairman.] Thank you very much.

Miss Ward.

638. Could we have an answer in regard to family allowances?—Yes. For fit person cases and those committed to Approved Schools, the Ministry of National Insurance stop the allowance at the moment of committal under the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933. For cases under section 1 of the Children Act, 1948, the parent remains entitled to family allowance if he is contributing at least 5s. per week to his child's maintenance, and in no circumstances does any family allowance go to the Council. (Mr. Brough.) It does not go direct, but we in Glasgow, when a

parent defaults, notify the Ministry of National Insurance. (Mr. Ainscow.) Yes, we do that.

Chairman.

639. May we now turn to an equally important subject, that of local authority Homes? Speaking without having consulted the other Members of the Sub-Committee, I think we should like to make a morning's visit to one or more Homes in the London area, but that we can discuss later on. The point I want to get at is this: Would you tell me what pressure there is from the Home Office or from the Scottish Home Department towards securing due economy in the running of children's local authority Homes?—(Mr. Brough.) In Scotland the Scottish Home Department inspect our Homes and demand a certain standard of efficiency consistent with economy, or rather perhaps I should say economy consistent with efficiency. The auditors question the size of staff, they scrutinise every proposal we have for improvements, they scrutinise everything, and correct us.

640. But the Scottish Home Department inspectors presumably are mainly concerned with the actual welfare of the children, but they do not scrutinise the accounts?—The auditors do.

641. The auditors, I take it, do that in the course of their audit, but that would not apply to inspection of the homes?—In the course of the audit they scrutinise every item.

642. What about London?—(Mr. Ainscow.) There is a forecast of expenditure made by the Council to the Home Office every year. The Home Office inspectors go round scrutinising our practice in the various establishments, and then there is this central control, which I think is an overall control rather. I do not think the Home Office would ever quarrel with us for having rugs in a dormitory; that is not the sort of thing they would cavil at, nor at the amount of food. That is not their job, except on an overall basis. They have the means of checking our overall basis through the annual estimates.

643. I think the Sub-Committee are rather struck by the fact that, speaking very roughly, voluntary Homes are run at least 25 per cent. cheaper than local authority Homes. What comment do you have to make upon that?—If that is a comment on the amount of maintenance that we are allowed by the grant, which is £2 10s. 0d. or £3 a week, that is not the cost of running a voluntary Home.

644. No, it was not; it was the actual cost?—On actual cost I think it is true to say that by and large local authority standards are tending to be higher than in some of the voluntary Homes.

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[Continued.]

645. Do not you think it would be fair to say that financial control was rather looser with public money than with voluntary contributions?—No. Speaking as an executive officer subject to financial control from some of my colleagues here, I can say quite definitely that the financial control in the London County Council is very efficient and very searching.

646. Nevertheless in the large children's Homes it does cost £5 1s. 6d. per week per child, and that is without any allowance for overheads?—No.

647. I must qualify that by saying that we have—?—Is that the Home Office figure, Sir?

648. Yes, this is the overall figure for local authority Homes throughout the country; that is an estimate. The local authority Homes come to £5 2s. 2d. per week; in addition to that there is a figure which is not averaged out of £2,130,000 for administrative expenses. I have not worked that out, because it is very difficult to apportion it; but even after making all due allowance the fact does remain that the best voluntary Homes spend about 75 per cent. as against 100 per cent. on each child?—(Mr. Brough.) I can quote a voluntary Home in Scotland, a good voluntary Home, which is at present being considered for an increase by our Committee. They are asking for £3 5s. 0d. a week. That is a Church Home where the staff is unpaid; so that if you add 50 per cent. for staff you are coming up to a normal local authority Home. I have one of my local authority Homes running at £2 4s. 3d. per week for 20 girls. I have a higher one at £5 13s. 0d., which is my highest.

Miss Ward.

649. How do you account for the difference between those two?—The difference in the type of child and the necessity for different types of staff. For instance, one Home takes in all age groups and also has mentally handicapped children, thus requiring a big staff. The other Home is for normal school age children over ten years of age, with a small staff.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

650. Generally speaking, do voluntary Homes have voluntary workers to do a lot of the work that is paid for in local authority Homes?—Yes.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] Does that account by and large for the difference?

Chairman.

651. Not on last week's evidence. My impression was that there was not such a lavish provision of staff in the voluntary Homes, and that there was undoubtedly a very much closer financial control. Psychologically speaking, it is impossible for

people to exercise such close scrutiny over expenditure when they know they have the bottomless pocket of the ratepayer and taxpayer to fall back upon. Then the voluntary Homes brought out very clearly the extraordinary difference in expenditure and efficiency caused by the varying types of personality of the Master and Matron?—As far as Glasgow is concerned, I take the same view as Mr. Ainscow. There is a very strict watch on expenditure. I have a monthly statement from the City Chamberlain.

652. On each Home?—For each Home. Each is detailed, and they go through every item in the Department.

653. Does that happen in London?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Not quite so frequently from the central administration, but within our own Department we have our own financial people who are constantly watching expenditure in the Homes.

654. Do they demand monthly returns?—It is rather closer than that. They get the day to day invoices and all that sort of thing. We have a pretty good idea of what is going on, and by and large we do claim that our costs are not high by reason of any inefficiency in financial control. They may be high, but they are high possibly for other reasons.

655. Such as?—Take the big Homes. As I said, we inherited those large Homes with quite big accommodation and acreage round them, and we have got to run those places apart from having the children living in them. It is like any other big mansion—it eats money and has to be kept up of its own self, apart from the children in it.

656. I should like to ask you this. What is the population of your biggest Homes?—We have about 2,648 children in seven large Homes.

657. Are they run as institutions or Cottage Homes?—One of them, at Ashford, Middlesex, is a large barrack type, but the Council have decided to close that down as soon as possible. The target date for that is July, 1953.

658. How many children has that got?—It had about 400 odd, but we are now running it down. It is something over 300 at the moment.

Miss Ward.

659. Is it true to say that part of the problem connected with local authority Homes is that they tend to get left with the more difficult children?—(Mr. Brough.) Yes. (Mr. Ainscow.) The whole emphasis this morning has been on boarding out, but there is a certain amount of discrimination in favour of the more acceptable child, and it follows inevitably that the authority's last ditch, as it were, for the very poor type is its own establishment.

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[Continued.]

Chairman.

660. The witnesses from the voluntary Homes last week said they found that children coming from the local authority Homes were the most difficult type?—I do not think that is quite true, Sir.

661. At any rate, that is another point. Now, I would like to run through the other big Homes you have got?—Those are what we call the Big Seven. Our Remand Home is a fairly big one, but that is a special case.

662. You mean Stamford House?—Yes; that is a big one.

663. What are the names of the other seven?—Ashford, Beechholme, Hornchurch, Hutton, The Hollies (Lamorbey), Shirley and Wood Vale.

664. Where is Beechholme?—That is at Banstead.

665. Where is Hutton?—Hutton is in Essex.

666. All outside London?—Yes. (Mr. Brough.) Voluntary Homes generally screen their cases on admission, and we are left with the problem children. Many voluntary homes will only admit normal children.

Miss Ward.

667. They have only got facilities for looking after normal children?—Yes, they are only staffed for normal children. Then, again, one voluntary Home I know of has the cottage type of homes, where they have a foster-mother and perhaps a domestic for 24 boys.

Chairman.

668. Have you any of these barrack Homes?—No; my biggest Home consists of two houses on a big estate, and those two houses take in 100 children. They are all babies under three years of age.

669. We were told that there was an enormous Home near Glasgow with 800 children?—That is Quarrier's Homes at Bridge of Weir.

670. What is that?—That is a voluntary Home.

671. Is it a barrack type of home?—No, cottage homes, excellent of its type. It has been in existence since about 1870.

Miss Ward.

672. Could I ask one slightly specialised question? One of the Approved Schools that I have seen in the North of England is also a cottage home and supported as a voluntary cottage home, and there they appear to be mixed, because you have the children who go to the Approved School, plus those in need of care who are normal, plus some orphans. Is it very usual to

have a mixture of types?—Normal children mixing with Approved School children?

673. Yes?—No, we would not have that at all. The Scottish Home Department would not allow normal children to go into a Remand Home, let alone into an Approved School. (Mr. Ainscow.) That is true of London too. There was a time when it was possible to get a limited certificate—it still is possible, but it is not done. Four of our places, for instance, Beech Holme, and that type of Home, are cottage homes, and we had what was called a limited certificate, which enabled youngsters who had been before the Court to be committed there on an Approved School ticket, but they were of the non-delinquent type; they were children whom the Court wanted to help, but were not of the type to require the full training of the normal Approved School. It is a sort of halfway house. That is not a good system, and we got rid of our certificates some time ago. (Mr. Brough.) My figure of £4 12s. 0d. includes administrative charges and debt charges.

Chairman.

674. With regard to the administrative charges of the Home, does that include your central administrative charge?—It includes all expenditure.

Miss Ward.

675. A proportion of your central charges allocated to each Home?—Yes.

Chairman.

676. You have not put in that figure of £4 12s. 0d. Which one is that?—No, that is Glasgow. I was not asked to submit any evidence. My figure for Glasgow for the next financial year is £4 15s. 0d., an estimated figure.

677. Per child?—Per child per week. That is an average figure.

678. Aggregated?—Yes, in Children's Homes, and that includes the administrative charges. The Children's Department have been included, the Town Clerk's Department, City Chamberlain, City Chambers, book-keeping audit and election expenses.

679. In what proportion?—That is 10 per cent. of the total of our expenditure.

Miss Ward.

680. Does the London County Council do that apportioning as well?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Yes.

Chairman.

681. What is your corresponding figure?—For the Children's Home generally?

682. Can you give a corresponding figure to that which Mr. Brough has given?—I have got an all-in figure of £6 per week.

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(Mr. Holland.) For Children's Homes it is £5 1s. 6d., and that includes central administration. There you have an actual figure of £4 10s. 3d., which also includes central administration of 5s. 5d.

683. Mr. Ainscow's salary and things like that?—Yes, all the Departments. (Mr. Brough.) My City Chamberlain of Glasgow is rather perturbed that the Council visitation, which is by regulation, is not approved for grant purposes.

684. What do you mean by that?—Children who are boarded out and visited annually by members of the Children's Committee.

685. Do you mean each child who is boarded out?—Yes. We have members going round with an officer to satisfy themselves that the children are being well looked after. (Mr. Ainscow.) Under the English system it may be done by either. In many of these authorities it is done by a qualified boarding out officer. It just happens that in our case it is done by an officer. (Mr. Brough.) But that Council visitation is not allowed in the grant.

686-7. Who pays the money?—The local authority. Yet it is done in accordance with Statute.

688. What Vote does it come out of?—It comes out of the local authority rate.

689. But it is not a charge?—It is not allowed for grant purposes, and the local authority has to bear the whole of the cost.

Miss Ward.

690. Even though it is a statutory obligation?—Yes. The Chamberlain is rather sore at that. I think it is a big figure. Could I, please, just mention one thought with regard to voluntary Homes again, if you do not mind? With regard to staff, I was just going to instance a cottage type of Home, a voluntary Home, where they have one foster-parent and one domestic for 24 boys. That foster-parent can be on duty from 7 o'clock in the morning till 10 at night. Local authorities cannot recruit staff like that. We must accept the Joint Industrial Council Awards and Whitley Council Awards for staff. There must be staff on a 96-hour per fortnight basis. There is quite a turnover in many voluntary Homes of staff because of unsatisfactory conditions, which is not good for the children.

Chairman.

691. There is one question about this uncle and aunt scheme, as it is called, which I would like to ask you. You have children of a local authority allocated to some outside person?—(Mr. Ainscow.) No. Take one of our big Homes with 400 children. There

may be a number of those children who are visited every week by their own people; occasionally there will be an odd dozen or so, or even an odd 50, who never get any visits from anybody. In those cases it is the job of the Welfare Officer who is attached to the school to see that contacts are made. The Welfare Officer seeks out an appropriate uncle or aunt, as the case may be, or both, and puts the child in contact with them.

692. Who send them birthday presents?—Yes, and have them out to their homes, and so on. They even take them on holiday.

693. Can you assure the Sub-Committee that there is not a single child in your care without an outside contact of that sort?—I cannot assure the Sub-Committee that every child has such a contact at the moment. I can only say that it is our constant endeavour to see that that is so. I do not want to be categorical: I am not going to say that there is no child who does not get a visitor and who has not got an uncle and aunt; but it would be very alarming to me to find that that was so under our system.

694. Do you check that over?—Yes; we have got people whose job it is to do that. It is the function of the Headmaster of the place, assisted by a Welfare assistant.

695. You see that they are doing their job?—We have inspectors who are going round all the time. We have got two—we hope to have three—who are seeing that that policy of the Committee in regard to child care is being exercised properly.

696. Would you ask them that specific question?—No, I have not asked them that specific question.

697. Will you ask them that specific question? We have got 5,542 children, and I personally attach the most enormous importance to that?—We do, too. We are very keen about it.

698. Mr. Brough, what about yours?—(Mr. Brough.) In some of our Homes we have an uncle and aunt scheme. We have some other Homes with a number of mentally handicapped children where we have been unable to arrange a full uncle and aunt scheme, but those children are taken out and have contacts with the outside world.

699. In other words, you could say much the same as Mr. Ainscow said, that to the best of your belief every child has an outside contact?—Yes.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] Would that be possible with the voluntary Homes? Under the conditions that were mentioned by Mr. Brough, where there were 24 children and only a staff of two, it seems to me that it

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would be virtually impossible for the staff to see the conditions which you have both mentioned were operated.

Chairman.

700. We did ask the Voluntary Homes last week a great deal about that?—(Mr. Ainscow.) We are trying, with the co-operation of the voluntary Homes, to see that the social amenities of children are improved, even though we are not primarily responsible for the day to day life of the child. We are trying that sort of thing with some of the Homes.

701. Two questions going on from that. In every local authority Home under your control can you assure the Sub-Committee that every child has personal possessions and somewhere to keep them?—(Mr. Brough.) Yes. (Mr. Ainscow.) I think we can. It is the sort of thing that in some cases is held up at the moment for the provision of lockers and that kind of thing, but by and large that is one of the principles on which we work, that a child is an individual and that his little possessions must be respected.

702. That is the prime essential. I should consider no Home was fulfilling its functions if that did not happen?—Yes; we are all on those lines. (Mr. Brough.) Even in our Baby Homes.

703. Do you have an outside committee of local residents?—(Mr. Ainscow.) We have a Managing Committee attached to most of our establishments.

704. No, I mean a sort of contact Committee outside?—We have all sorts of contacts. For instance, I spent Saturday afternoon in talking to the Chairman of the London Rotary Club Social Committee at our Lamorbey Homes. He was interested, and wanted to get his Rotarians on to it. We were able to tell him that Lamorbey happened to be looked after by the local Rotarians, but even so he is going to fill in any gaps.

705. That is it exactly?—(Mr. Brough.) Even in the case of our Baby Homes our children have personal possession, a teddy bear or some other sort of woolly toy, and when they leave they keep that toy with them.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] There was one point I wanted to make arising out of your remark about the voluntary Homes last week. I am sorry I was not here. It does seem to me that one point of difference which has been very strongly brought out is that there are two gentlemen here who can speak for the whole of the Homes in London and Glasgow, as to the principles which are involved in their control and their methods of contact. However willing the representatives of the voluntary Homes were last

week, they could not speak for the whole of the voluntary Homes in that way, and I am still of opinion that in the one example that we have been given by Mr. Brough from Glasgow it would be a sheer physical impossibility for anyone in that Home to guarantee that there could be a contact, an uncle and aunt contact, that we have been told existed.

Chairman.] I should have thought that that would be the responsibility of the Contact Committee, the outside committee, not the Master of the Home.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] There is none in the voluntary Homes; there can be no outside committee.

Miss Ward.] Indeed there are.

Sir Fergus Graham.] They are founded upon the outside committees.

Chairman.] Yes.

Miss Ward.

706. As this Sub-Committee is concerned with money, I am interested in the paragraph which says that there are more possibilities for economies. I really wondered if either of you know about that. It is in the London County Council Memorandum. I am interested in the suggestion that special National Assistance payments might be made to unmarried mothers or widows to enable them to remain at home caring for their children. In fact, if a mother does remain at home and cares for her child she does, of course, get the allowance, does she not, but she does not if she has got a child have to go out to work? Did you mean something in addition to that?—(Mr. Ainscow.) We were trying to call attention to the possibility that if the National Assistance rates were examined in relation to the mother who sometimes comes to us to look after her child because she herself is in difficulty and has to go out to work, anyhow, that it might be possible, by removing any economic worry that she has got, and therefore the urge to go out to work, that in some cases we could be saved from having to take the child into care at a cost in certain cases which is more than the woman is earning herself.

707. Does that kind of case crop up fairly often?—We see them when it crops up, and it is a matter that has to be drawn to the attention of some of our members, at any rate, who are on our Children's Committee and are interested in it.

708. It is a very interesting and important point?—I think it is a thing that could well repay a bit of research and investigation.

709. Have you ever discussed it with the Home Office?—Not yet.

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[Continued.]

Chairman.

710. I think that would be a very suitable thing for the Committee to consider?—(Mr. Brough.) As far as Glasgow is concerned, we do not encourage taking a child into care to allow the mother to go out to work. We would rather insist on the mother working in the home.

711. No; I think the point was the unmarried mother or the widow who either had to starve or work?—She has her National Assistance allowance.

712. Yes; but what I was feeling was that she could not take her child with her to work?—Then if that is so the Health Department Nursery would meet the expense there to enable her to go to work.

Miss Ward.

713. But there are a good many places where there are no Day Nurseries, and it still remains a very big question?—In Glasgow we are well supplied.

714. Yes, I think you are fortunate. It is not a problem that arises there?—No.

715. You, then, would prefer to lay the emphasis on the woman's going to work; but there is also the deserted wife who comes into that category as well?—Yes.

716. Then there is the other point about special domiciliary help?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Yes.

717. Do you think that from the point of view of expenditure if you put a home help in during the hours when the mother is out at work, because it is quite an expensive item, you could do that cheaper? I think we could, because not every woman has only one child. We had one woman, for instance, the other week who had five children, and the single domiciliary help payment would more or less cover the whole lot; whereas if we got five of them it might be £25 to £30 a week.

Chairman.

718. It would be simpler to pay the mother?—The case we are thinking about is where a woman comes to us and says: "Look here, I am going to have a baby in three weeks' time. Will you look after my children?"

Chairman.] I should have thought the husband could do something about it.

Miss Ward.] He cannot if he is working.

Chairman.

719. These are all very important points, and thank you very much for bringing them up. You have enlightened us on many things. There are no points that either of you would like to bring up to

this Sub-Committee?—I do not think so, except to say that in our case we are really in a transitional period. We are entirely at one with everybody who wants to make economies, and we are entirely at one with those people who want to board out, always provided that the children are suitable. At the moment we are engaged in an action or operation which started rather low down, as it were. We are steadily making progress towards our targets. We have attained one, and we hope to attain the others.

720. Just one last question. What is your attitude towards handing over children to voluntary Homes, bearing in mind that the amount you pay to voluntary Homes is considerably less than half what it costs in your own Homes?—In the Act it says that you must deal with a child in accordance with its best interests; you must do it by one of three ways. Adoption is regarded as the best, but that is not in the Act. The Act says boarding out first or placing in a Home provided by the authority; or if neither of those is possible placing in a voluntary Home is admissible.

721. In other words, you have a definite bias in favour of local authority Homes?—As the father of 9,000 children, I like to try to look after my own children. That is what it comes to.

Miss Ward.

722. I think that is the natural answer, as you represent local authority Homes? Yes.

Chairman.

723. Unfortunately, pounds, shillings and pence come into the picture?—Yes; but if it were my own children—and I have got three—I should hesitate very much before I took a certain course with my own children because it was cheaper, and therefore I think that a children's officer *in loco parentis* should have regard not only to public economy, or rather should have regard to the welfare of the child and also to public economy.

724. But you would not go as far as to say that the best voluntary Homes are in any way inferior to local authority Homes?—I would not say that at all; but, after all, once you put a child into a voluntary society's Home the control of that child (and, after all, the Children's Committee are responsible really) passes physically into somebody else's hands.

725. But you keep up inspections and visits?—Yes, you can visit but you must not inspect.

726. The Home Office inspects?—Yes, because it is their statutory duty, but it is

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not ours. We have the right to visit our own children in a voluntary society's Home, but we are not allowed to inspect the Home.

727. Surely you would have no criticism to make of the best voluntary Homes?—I have got the greatest respect for them. We have hundreds of children in them; but if we had our choice, if we had enough places of our own, we would use our own in preference to anybody else's. (Mr. Brough.) As far as I am concerned, I have yet to enter a better voluntary Home than some of my own Homes, and I have been to see most of the Homes in Scotland.

Miss Ward.

728. What is the number of staff in the Central Office both of the London County Council and of Glasgow Corporation?—(Mr. Ainscow.) We have 200 in the Children's Department. (Mr. Brough.) We have 38. (Mr. Ainscow.) That is people who are responsible to me personally. That is not the whole story about administrative and clerical work.

729. Would it be possible for you to let us have the figure for the whole Department—everybody?—(Mr. Holland.) For what service—the Children's Homes only?

730. No, the Children's Department.—The whole of the children's service?

731. I do not mean people who are running the Homes; I mean in the Children's Department of the London County Council.—200. Of course, the Architect and Engineer are not in the Children's Department.

732. No, I do not mean them.—The people who are running it day to day number 200 strong in the Children's Department.

Chairman.

733. You will send us a list of the Homes in the London area that we might like to visit, will you not?—Yes.

734. You could send somebody with us.—I will come myself, if I may. (Mr. Brough.) Glasgow has a staff of 38, which includes clerical staff.

735. That is for a population of just over a million?—Yes.

736. And the London County Council has a population of about 4 millions?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Yes.

Chairman.] Thank you very much, Gentlemen.

The witnesses adjourned.

Adjourned till Tuesday next, at half-past 9 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 8TH APRIL, 1952.

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Mr. Dryden Brook.
Sir Fergus Graham.

Mr. Wade.

Evidence taken at The Hollies, Lamorbey, Sidcup, Kent.

Mr. E. AINSCOW, Children's Officer, London County Council, called in and further examined, Mr. S. A. GWYNN, Home Office Superintending Inspector, London South Division, Mr. G. D. ECHLIN, Superintendent, and Mrs. G. D. ECHLIN, Matron, The Hollies, called in and examined.

Chairman.

737. What is the average cost for a child here per week?—(Mr. Echlin.) In the neighbourhood of £5 for total maintenance.

738. You do not recognize different age groups?—No, Sir, it is impossible to do that, because the homes here are a complete mixed unit; each home is a cottage and has a complete age range of both sexes from three to sixteen.

739. How many in each cottage?—Twenty in some of the cottages, and in the larger cottage blocks there are thirty-six.

740. That is rather a lot?—Yes, but there are a lot of children in care, Sir.

741. What is the staff to each cottage?—The staff in a cottage of twenty children consists of a resident house mother, with three resident staff and a daily cleaner.

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[Continued.]

742. Male or female?—All female; there is no male accommodation.

743. What sort of permanency does a child enjoy here?—They stay in the same cottage where they were originally placed.

744. I think it is a very desirable thing for a child to have somebody about it who has known it all its life. Do you agree?—Yes, I agree. The procedure years ago was for a child to be put into a particular age group, say, from the nursery cottage, then into the five-year-olds, the eight-year-olds, and so on. But we have dropped that entirely now, and there is complete hope of permanency where a child cannot be boarded out.

745. But a house mother might change?—Yes, that is always possible.

Sir Fergus Graham.

746. But the child's companions would be there with it all the time?—Yes; we would endeavour to maintain that. (Mrs. Echlin.) House mothers do not move; they have a good long span.

Chairman.

747. In your house what is the range; do they last for ten or twenty years?—It could be as long as twenty years.

748. So that it would be rather bad luck on a child if there were many changes of house mother?—(Mr. Gwynn.) It might be equally bad luck if you happened to have a house mother who was not as good as the previous one to whom a child had become accustomed; such things do happen, of course. (Mr. Echlin.) I do not think the changes are any greater here than they are in private life.

749. But you do have your parents—or at least you hope to—all the way through your childhood?—Yes.

750. Now, what about holidays; what changes do they get?—They go away for the various holidays; many of them are away for Easter to their parents.

751. What proportion have parents?—Ninety per cent.—one or both parents. But homes may have been split because of lack of accommodation, or one parent may be in hospital; but during holiday time one or other parent can generally arrange to have their child home.

752. What about those with no parents?—They are catered for under what we call the Uncle and Aunt scheme. You have no doubt heard of that scheme.

753. Yes, I know?—And there are some left whom we cater for ourselves.

754. Would you guarantee that every child gets away from the home for a

holiday? When I say "home" do you call it a "home"?—Yes, I call it a "home" with a small "h".

755. They are able to get away from the institutional atmosphere quite a lot during the year?—Yes, they are more away than they are here. In the summer they go right away. For instance, we took them to Cornwall last year.

756. Who took them?—My wife took them last year. We managed to contact a school in Cornwall who wanted to come to London to see the Festival of Britain. We took 50 of them here and they lived a community life and saw a lot of London; 50 of our children went down to Cornwall, and the 50 who came in used the 50 vacated beds. That is happening again this year.

757. You can generally get an uncle and aunt to take some of them?—Yes; the parents have some; there is a big camp at Walton-on-the-Naze.

758. Yes, but it is not quite the same as going into private houses?—I agree; but this was a private house arrangement and they have gone there every Easter. In some cases they are being boarded out permanently.

759. Are the sexes fairly evenly divided here?—No, we are overloaded with boys. (Mr. Gwynn.) It is general throughout the country. (Mr. Echlin.) It is two to one.

760. Is that because people prefer to adopt little girls?—Yes. (Mr. Gwynn.) In part, but probably because there are more boys. (Mr. Echlin.) Our Committee, as representing the local authority, is regarded as a "fit person".

761. I suppose that most of your children have come here owing to a breakdown in their home arrangements?—(Mr. Echlin.) I suppose the greatest figure is of those who have come because of a breakdown in home conditions. (Mr. Gwynn.) Over all, there are far more in care under the Children Act than are committed by way of the courts.

Mr. Wade.

762. You mentioned the sum of £5 a week. Roughly, what does that include?—(Mr. Echlin.) That includes food, Sir, clothing, staff wages, holidays, amenities, furniture, and so on.

763. What do you mean by "amenities"?—The amenities of the establishment, outings, extras all the children have, pocket money, and so on.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

764. Is there anything included in that figure of £5 for administrative charges?—That includes administrative charges.

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[Continued.]

Chairman.

765. Including the cost of the Children's Central Department?—Yes so far as it relates to this class of homes.

766. How much is that?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Taking it all in—salaries, wages and insurance, 3 per cent.

767. This is your department?—Yes; we say that 50 per cent. of all expenditure on residential homes goes in salaries and wages.

768. In your department?—No, that is the average cost of all types of staff, local and central.

769. How many shillings per week is the cost to you of your Department?—I have not got the figures in shillings, only in percentage of total cost.

Mr. Wale.

770. This £5 per week includes everything?—(Mr. Echlin.) Yes.

771. Overheads?—Yes, everything; maintenance, refurnishings, upkeep. (Mr. Ainscow.) Fuel, light and water. (Mr. Echlin.) It includes literally just everything—all administrative charges.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

772. Did you say that six per cent. represented your administrative charges?—(Mr. Ainscow.) Yes, Sir.

773. Roughly 6s. per week?—Yes.

Mr. Wade.

774. In allocating children to the different homes (with a small "h"), to what extent do you take account of the circumstances of the places from which they have come and the reasons why they have come?—(Mr. Echlin.) Great account, because otherwise it would be much too risky. Before we have a child admitted, I have a full case paper record of his or her previous habits. If a boy is obviously over-sexed I would not risk putting him in a mixed home. With the number of boys greatly in excess of the number of girls, I have to keep two homes entirely devoted to boys, purely from the point of view of numbers. So that when I am going into the case history of a particular boy and I come to the conclusion that I do not think he will fit into a particular niche, he is not put there; he goes into another one. It may be that within the first week I make a change, but after that I endeavour to make no change. When I say I endeavour, I mean it is not always completely accurate and successful, but that is what I do. We recently had a girl admitted straight from the Court. She had been picked up in the West End with some black men. Fortunately, she was all right.

Chairman.

775. How old was she?—Fourteen. I have risked it and put her in that mixed home, but not with boys of her own age, and she has settled in remarkably well. (Mr. Gwynn.) I think Mr. Ainscow might agree that the practice in such circumstances today ought to be, if the necessary accommodation existed—as we hope it will some day—that that girl and others like her should have the advantage of reception accommodation, so that we would know more about her, and not take what might be a risk in placing her straight away in a home such as Lamorbey.

776. What contacts have you with the outside world locally?—(Mr. Echlin.) They all attend outside schools.

777. Have you an unofficial liaison committee with local inhabitants?—They are always in and out, and the children visit them; they come in and out.

778. In short, you feel you are part of the community and not in isolation?—Yes. We go to outside churches and we go to outside schools.

779. And your children are accepted by the local people as civilised beings and not regarded as pariahs?—There will always be differences, Sir.

780. Yes, I suppose so—what sort of differences?—Well, they are different. I can introduce all the improvements and refinements that I can think of, but in the ultimate analysis these children are not living with their own parents in their natural home surroundings; that is the difference, and we cannot disguise it. (Mrs. Echlin.) We cannot give them their birth-right, can we?

781. No. You can only give them a substitute?—(Mr. Echlin.) Yes; it is a substitute; but I do not think the local people dwell upon that side of it at all.

782. They are not nasty about it?—No. (Mr. Ainscow.) There is none of this undesirable "ganging-up,"—the homes children *versus* the rest sort of thing. (Mrs. Echlin.) We have very co-operative heads in all the local schools. (Mr. Echlin.) They might "gang-up" to the extent that perhaps they walk to school together because they come from the same place, but they are not in a state of warfare with other children.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

783. Do you think that inhibitions are created in the minds of the children here to such an extent that they are loth to mix with other children?—No.

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[Continued.]

Chairman.

784. They do not develop an inferiority complex?—No. They take part in all the activities of the schools, such as football teams, school plays and so on; and if you went into the schools and saw them you would not be able to tell which were home children and which were not—they are all muddled up together. If anything, the home children are better dressed. (Mrs.

Echlin.) Yes, materially they are better equipped. (Mr. *Echlin.*) In fact, they are too well dressed. You have to consider public opinion, of course, in this connection. For instance, if a child comes to me with a ragged mackintosh, for the sake of public opinion I cannot send that child to school with a ragged mackintosh; he has to have a new one.

Chairman.] Thank you very much.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned till Tuesday, 22nd April, at 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 22ND APRIL, 1952.

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Sir Fergus Graham.
Mr. A. J. Irvine.
Major Markham.

Mr. Wade.
Miss Ward.

Mr. J. ROSS, C.B., Assistant Under Secretary of State, Miss D. M. D. ROSLING, Assistant Secretary (in respect of Care and Welfare of Children), Mr. W. H. BALLARD, Chief Executive Officer, Finance Division, and Mr. S. A. GWYNN, Superintending Inspector, London South Division, Home Office; and Sir CHARLES CUNNINGHAM, K.B.E., C.B., C.V.O., Secretary, Mr. T. M. MARTIN, Principal, and Mr. W. L. WALKER, Assistant Secretary, Finance Officer, Scottish Home Department, called in and further examined.

Chairman.

785. I want to start this morning by going over the question of training. I understand that expenditure on training in Child Care in England and Wales was £48,000 odd in 1948-49, that it went up to about £100,000 in the last financial year, and that for the current financial year it has dropped to £80,000. I wonder what you would like to say about that, Mr. Ross?—(Mr. *Ross.*) I think, Sir, the Estimate was £100,000 in one of the years you mentioned.

786. Yes, in the last financial year?—We spent in 1950-51 £80,000, and we think the expenditure this year will be about the same as last year, that is, about £80,000, which is the sum provided in the Vote.

787. How is that spent, and on what is it spent?—There are three main items of expenditure. The first is a full training course for people who will be employed as boarding out officers doing also after-care, guardian *ad litem*, adoption work and duties of that kind. That is a twelve months' course given at a University for selected people who have to have the minimum

qualification of a University degree or be qualified teachers or the like. The other full training course is for house mothers, and to a small extent house fathers in Children's Homes; that course lasts fourteen months.

788. Is any money expended on students in the Children's Homes themselves?—Only in so far as they are doing practical training in Children's Homes.

789. Yes; but that sum of £80,000 or £100,000 does not cover any of that, does it?—The £80,000 covers all forms of child care training.

790. But there must be many hundreds of students in Children's Homes, I suppose. Are they paid for by the Home in question or not paid at all?—They are paid for by the Home Office. All students get a maintenance allowance according to their needs, and the boarding out officer students have their fees paid, so that the cost falls on the Child Care Training Vote.

791. For instance, I went by myself the other day to a small Church of England Society's Children's Home near where I live,

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and there were several students there?—Those are people training as nursery nurses, I should think. Was it a nursery?

792. Yes, for children from 0 to 5?—Yes; that is not the training about which I am speaking. In the case of those people training as nursery nurses under the National Board, which arranges for the training, the expense—and I will have to refer to Miss Rosling—is borne in part by the Ministry of Education. (Miss Rosling.) For some part of the course, while they are working in a Children's Home, it is borne by the local authority or by the voluntary society. (Mr. Ross.) That is as to their maintenance, not as to any payment. (Miss Rosling.) Not as to their fees but as to their maintenance in the nursery.

793. In general would you say that the demand for trained people in child care is being met or is likely to be met in the near future?—(Mr. Ross.) It is being met in some measure. Of course, there will be a continuing need. We have tried in the last few years to meet both the initial need for trained people and also wastage. In the nature of things, the initial demand for trained people will diminish in the course of time and the training need will be to replace wastage.

794. You are generally satisfied with the set-up as it is and with the amount of money you have?—We are, Sir. We have a working party or standing committee of inspectors and others in the Children's Department which meets regularly to consider training schemes and the length of the courses. In fact we are considering at the moment the possibility of shortening the two main courses a little by a matter of weeks; the thing is under constant review. We have the Central Training Council in Child Care appointed by the Home Secretary which has the matter under its eye in general.

Miss Ward.

795. Could I ask a question on wastage? Could you put any figure on it; that is, what percentage of the people trained subsequently go into the category of wastage, and could you also say, when grants are made and people take up training, whether there is a minimum time of service that they have got to give after they have completed their training?—The answer to the second part of the question is no: the students are not required to enter into any undertaking. We have considered this on different occasions at the Central Training Council in Child Care, and also at the Probation Advisory and Training Board which provides a similar kind of training for probation officers, and opinion is against requiring any formal undertaking. All the people

who are accepted for training have been interviewed by a selection committee of the Central Training Council in Child Care, whose business it is to decide whether the candidate has the ability and sufficient vocation for this work, and to judge in that way whether they are likely to go into the work after training and to stay in.

796. Yes, I quite appreciate that; but, of course, the question of marriage enters into it, and if you take, for instance, students who are accepted at St. Thomas's for their nursing training, or indeed, I think, students who go to, say, the Atholl Crescent Domestic Science Training School in Edinburgh, before they are accepted for training they have got to give an undertaking to take the job on for so long. I can see both the advantages and the disadvantages when you are taking into training fairly young girls?—Yes.

797. If you could answer my first question on wastage it would put it into its proper perspective?—Yes, I am sure it will. I have some figures here in respect of persons trained for employment as boarding out officers. Of about 330 persons admitted for training, 280 qualified, which is 86 per cent. of the number who entered.

798. What happened to those?—231, or 83 per cent., of the 280 went into child care work. A further 5 per cent. went to work which was connected with the care of children but not the work in which we are interested directly, and 34, or 12 per cent., are not known to have gone into child care work; that is to say, 330 went into training and 280 completed the course successfully, and of those 280 all except 34 went into child care employment to our knowledge.

799. How long on an average did they remain?—We do not know. We have discussed that from time to time. We meet the child care training tutors at intervals; the last meeting was about three months ago, and this was discussed at length. We have not attempted so far to take any census by communicating with the people—indeed it would be difficult to do so because they change jobs, and we lose trace of them, but they keep in touch with the tutors, and we are satisfied that most of those who have gone into child care employment are still there, from information got in the way I have indicated.

800. In fact, therefore, you do not have any kind of control, even after they have had a grant from public funds, as to whether it is going to be worth the expenditure of public funds on them?—I have quoted figures which I think indicate that as far as we can judge at this stage the wastage is not excessive.

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Chairman.

801. Have not you any safeguard when you make them a grant that they will carry out the purpose for which the grant is given or that they must refund it?—No; it is a matter of judgment on the part of the selection committees which see all candidates.

802. But surely in most other branches of State activity if a grant is given for training in a certain subject it is not only a moral but a legally binding obligation and understanding that if that work is not taken up the grant shall be refunded—I believe there is in teaching, Sir, but I do not know what the sanctions are. This is a subject that we ourselves have raised on the committees who advise us on training, and on which are represented University people and people with great knowledge of this kind of work, and they are of the opinion, I know, that it is not necessary or desirable to require express undertakings from people. We know more about it in relation to probation officers, because we know when they go into employment and go out of employment and that the wastage is not excessive.

803. But surely, as a guardian of the public purse, ought not you to see that money is not spent in giving gratuitous training in a certain subject like that?—I could not agree that we give gratuitous training. Great care is taken in selecting candidates, Sir.

804. I am sure it is. But, after all, the difference between 330 and about 250 is important and should be taken into account?—About 330 went into training and 280 completed the training.

805. And 34 did not take up this work?—That wastage of 47 was due, I have no doubt, in the main to circumstances other than voluntary withdrawal from training.

806. But the 34 who completed the training and did not take up that work: what was that due to?—We have not been able to trace that they did take it up; we do not know that they did not.

Miss Ward.

807. Surely there are two points really arising here. First of all, there is the question as to whether if people accept training from public funds they should not be asked to give certain undertakings. I cannot see that there could be any difficulty about making it obligatory on them at least to let the Central Committee for Child Care know what they do after they have completed their training; I cannot see that there could be any difficulty about that. The second point is that if you take the case of a girl who becomes engaged to be married, if she is under an obligation, say, to

give a year's service, she knows at the time that she gets engaged that she has got to fulfil her contract. I mean it is only in accord with human nature, because if there was no obligation she would say: "Well, I can get married straight away." I have known that kind of problem arise among my own relations. For instance, a girl who has just completed her training at St. Thomas's has said: "Well, I must stay until my contract is fulfilled, and then I am going to get married." But if there was no contract she would only regard it from her own personal point of view as to whether it would be better for her to get married earlier rather than later?—I am, of course, in complete sympathy with that view. It is we who have raised it from time to time on our committees, because we are most anxious to avoid accepting anybody for training who is not going to be employed for a reasonable period afterwards. But we have been advised so far that it is not desirable to get these express undertakings.

Chairman.

808. Why not?—The main reason, Sir, is that our committees think, and we think, that the wastage is not excessive. I dare say those who have advised us think that it would not make very much difference in the event if we did get a formal undertaking.

809. It would make a slight difference in the money side of it, would it not? Is there anybody who can speak from the financial side about it? What does the Treasury think about it?—Our Finance Officer, Mr. Ballard, is here; but perhaps, Sir, you would like to ask Miss Rosling if she knows in practice whether there are cases in which early withdrawals might be averted by a formal undertaking.

810. I am not so much thinking of that; I am not really thinking so much of the practical aspect as of the theoretical aspect, that the taxpayers' money should not be paid out in training unless there is some guarantee that these people would either refund the money or that there would be practical results?—(Miss Rosling.) We did take advice from some of the other Departments which had in the past had undertakings of that kind. They said that the merit was not very strong because the only sanction is to compel candidates to pay back the amount spent on their training, and it is extremely difficult to collect it, because they are usually not in a position to pay anything. This goes on for a number of years, and in the end you probably do not get very much out of it. We were strongly advised not to embark upon it for this reason, that it really did not pay in the end.

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Miss Ward.] But it is a question of social responsibility and conscience. If you are going to say to a student: "You realise that this is an obligation on you, that you must give something to the State that is advancing this public money for your training," from the moral and social responsibility point of view it is a sanction in itself for that particular kind of person who is being taken into child care. What I mean is, it is rather horrifying if you are going to put in charge of children people who have not apparently got a social conscience as to their responsibilities.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] It is surely undesirable to make it obligatory for anyone to have to put in a year or two years' service of this kind, if that person has become quite satisfied in his own mind that the work is not suitable for him or her. Also so far as the economy of the matter is concerned, it is surely an inevitable feature of this situation that some people in the course of training will find that they are not at all suited, and to require those people to refund any of the money expended on their training would be an unwarranted hardship.

Chairman.] Yes; but against that surely you have this, people who are found to be unsuited: that is just too bad, and you would not try to get it back from them; but people who prove themselves so suitable that they complete the course and then run out on this, having had the benefit of this training at the taxpayers' expense, without rendering any service in return, I should have thought were in a rather different category, and that there was a case for having a legal right of recovery.

Sir Fergus Graham.] But then surely you have this factor, too, have you not, that they would not be of great value to the service; in other words, if you force an extra year out of somebody in this type of job, it may mean that they merely get the rudiments of the work and they are not really in a position to have what I might call a sensitive reaction to the job, which is the one important thing you are asking.

Chairman.

811. But the same might be said of a young man being trained as an officer in the Army at Sandhurst. But still, that is perhaps more a question for discussion amongst the Members of the Sub-Committee themselves?—(Miss Rosling.) Perhaps the Sub-Committee would check whether there is an undertaking still required of teachers, because I have an idea there was for a time and it has now been given up.

Miss Ward.] May I just give some information upon that? If a student has had an emergency training grant for teaching and has fallen down upon it for some reason—maybe a very good reason, like a death in the family—and then wishes to go back to teaching, there is no further help forthcoming from the State. The expense of any further training has got to be borne entirely by the applicant.

Major Markham.] That is another question.

Miss Ward.] In a way it is another question.

Major Markham.] This is perhaps a point—I quite agree with the Chairman on this—for the Sub-Committee when the witnesses are not here. My impression of the teaching profession and of commission training for the Services is that there is no penalty on the student who decides that he or she is unfitted for that service; but I suggest this should be left for the Sub-Committee afterwards.

Mr. Wade.

812. May I ask a question to clear my own mind? At first I understood the answer was that the reason for not imposing any condition was that the wastage was so comparatively small that it was not worth while, but from some of the later answers I have gathered that the main reason is the difficulty of enforcing any condition, and also the fact that the student, even though he or she had completed his or her course, and finding himself or herself unwilling to go on, would not be suitable, and therefore should not be compelled to continue against his or her own will. Is that the real reason, not really the question of the amount of wastage?—(Mr. Ross.) In such a matter all those reasons must influence a decision as to what is to be done. If the waste were excessive, then we would certainly have to think again, even if we were satisfied for the time being that requiring a formal undertaking was not an effective procedure; but if the wastage were excessive we would be bound to think again about it; so that both reasons are relevant. Might I be allowed to add, in reference to Miss Ward's point, that the question of moral obligation is, in my opinion, pretty effectively met. I am a member of the Training Council, and therefore sit on the selection committees in turn, and apart from judging the suitability and outlook of a candidate, one of the main preoccupations of these Selection Committees is to decide whether a particular candidate is one likely to do child care training work. If the opinion is formed that he or she is not, or if there is too great an element

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of doubt, then the candidate would not be accepted. Many candidates are not accepted on interview, and many more are not interviewed at all, because their paper qualifications are not good enough. Might I quote figures for the house mother course, which is the other main training course? Of 632 students admitted to training, 517, or 82 per cent. qualified. In regard to 21 we are awaiting information, and 36 are known not to be in child care work; that is 57 or 11 per cent. of 517.

Chairman.

813. The total percentage of successes or of those people who are doing the work is what?—It is 86 per cent., plus 2½ per cent., placed in educational establishments.

814. Do you mean it is less 2½ per cent.?—No. 86 per cent. of those who qualified are working in Children's Homes and 2½ per cent. more are working in schools for maladjusted children, which is kindred work in which we have not got a direct interest. (Sir Charles Cunningham.) So far this question has not arisen in Scotland, because we have not yet started any full training courses of the kind Mr. Ross has been describing. We have had three courses, the first lasting eight days and the other two a fortnight, for serving staffs of Children's Homes. They have been attended mostly by matrons and people who are already in the service, and there is, I think, practically no question of wastage of the kind we have been discussing. We are, however, hoping towards the end of this year or the beginning of next year to start the first Scottish course for house mothers, which would be a fourteen months course of the type which has been running in England. We had not intended any more than the Home Office have done, to make it a condition that the students accepted for training there should either have to undertake to stay in the service or refund the cost of training, the reasons for that being the same as the reasons Mr. Ross has given.

815. Are you on the whole satisfied with the staffing question in Scotland? Is there an adequate supply of trained staff in Scotland?—I think there is the same need for training in Scotland as exists in England and Wales. There is, of course, in this, as in all our services, the greater practical difficulty of providing it for smaller numbers.

816. In a memorandum we have had it has been suggested to us that the Home Office and the Ministry of Education requirements as to the suitability of Homes and for the training of students are unnecessarily cumbrous and expensive, the argument being that if a Home is suitable

for children presumably it is suitable for students?—(Mr. Ross.) Perhaps I might ask Miss Rosling to answer this question, because she knows more about that than I do, but I would like to say that the training you speak of now is not the training which is provided for in the Home Office Vote. We are again speaking of training for nursery nurses.

817. The one I referred to earlier?—(Miss Rosling.) It is probably so, because the quality of training depends on the quality of the staff who are giving the training, and not everybody is able to help a student. Some people may be very good with children, but they cannot pass on their particular knowledge. In some cases Homes vary in standard, and they are perhaps not the sort of place where there should be students.

818. Why is it necessary for the Home Office and the Ministry of Education to inspect these Homes?—They only inspect residential nurseries, not ordinary Children's Homes.

819. This only refers to nurseries, does it?—Yes, it is only nurseries where training is given for the National Nursery Examination Board's certificate. The Ministry of Education is represented on the Board.

820. You do not think it is an unnecessary duplication of work?—No, we think there is great advantage in the two Departments visiting. (Mr. Ross.) The Home Office have a responsibility for the standards of those nurseries which are residential. There are day nurseries as well, and there the Home Office, not being responsible for them, do not visit with the Ministry of Education.

821. I think we will leave the question of training, because there are two other very important lines of inquiry we should like to pursue further. The Sub-Committee is very much interested in the whole question of boarding out. We have received evidence from the London County Council and from Glasgow and other evidence which shows that there is a very wide variation in the percentage of children who are boarded out. I am speaking from memory, but I think in London 24 per cent. are boarded out, whereas in Glasgow 70 per cent. are boarded out. Various explanations have been made, none of which are wholly convincing, as to why there should be those variations, and I should like Miss Rosling, if she will, to say very roughly what she thinks the maximum percentage of children is who are suitable for boarding out in England and Wales?—(Miss Rosling.) That is an extremely difficult question to answer, Sir, because so much depends on the raising of standards of ability to board

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out. Local authorities now have succeeded in boarding out quite a number of children who are not very difficult to board out, and progress must depend on experience and on the gaining of ability to board out the more difficult children.

822. I am very sorry to press you, but it really is essential that we should know what percentage the Home Office thinks it should be possible to work up to?—It depends whether you are thinking in immediate terms or thinking of a long distance view. If it is a long term view, I think we ought to be able to reach some kind of figure somewhere between one-half and three-quarters. That includes the boarding out of the more difficult children, particularly older children such as older boys, and children who have behaviour problems.

823. I think we are quite aware of the great difficulties, and to some extent it is unfair to ask you to commit yourself to a percentage, but we are faced with this percentage of 70 in Glasgow?—Yes.

824. Would you say very roughly, then, that you think two-thirds should in the course of time be suitable?—I think that probably two-thirds is a little high. Some areas will achieve two-thirds, but I do not think we can expect all areas to do so. I would say somewhere between a half and two-thirds.

825. Why should some areas be more difficult than others; for instance, why should Glasgow be particularly successful?—In Scotland there has been a tradition of boarding out for a very long time. We have not had that tradition in England. Under the Poor Law for many years there was no boarding out at all, and until comparatively recently only orphans and deserted children were boarded out.

826. When you say a tradition, what do you mean quite? Do you mean to say that that makes it easier to find foster-parents, or that it makes local authorities more adept at finding foster-parents?—I think it is much more that it is a recognised thing that children are boarded out. The general public are more used to the idea.

827. In other words, you think it is the general public that is largely the stumbling block?—I think a great deal depends on the knowledge the general public have of this work, and that is why we are spending so much time on publicity, trying to get the idea known.

828. Would it be fair to place these words in your mouth, that the main obstacle to greater boarding out is the fact that the need for foster-parents is not widely enough known or accepted by the

general public?—Partly that, Sir, and partly that we have still to find people who are able and prepared to accept the more difficult children. There are bad periods with difficult children, and we want people now who are prepared to take them. We have got to find them.

829. How do you account for the fact that London, which is a unit almost comparable with Scotland in point of population, I suppose, is it not?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes, in population.

830. —has only 24 per cent. of its children boarded out, whereas Glasgow has 70 per cent? It needs explanation. If it is solely a question of getting the general public to be aware of the need, surely it indicates that there should be a good deal of propaganda and publicity?—(Miss Rosling.) It certainly does need that, and we are doing everything we can in that way to spread this information.

Miss Ward.] Is not there really a difference in population problems? London is a continually moving population.

Chairman.] No.

Miss Ward.

831. I mean that if you go into areas like Islington, the turnover in the population is fantastic, whereas when you get to a place like Newcastle or Glasgow there is a much more static population really?—Glasgow boards out a good deal in areas a long way from Glasgow. London would have difficulty in doing that because of the need for boarding out in the Home Counties and areas round. But there is the Superintending Inspector for London here, who could tell you in more detail what London do.

Chairman.

832. We have heard Mr. Gwynn and Mr. Ainscow say a good deal about it, but if Mr. Gwynn has got anything to add we shall be glad to hear him?—(Mr. Gwynn.) We have, through our inspectors, spent the past nine months looking very closely at the individual case work on boarding out in the London County Council area. Three inspectors have spent a very considerable time in those months with each of the boarding out officers and in each of the area children's offices in London, and we have found that in the past twenty-one months, for example, there has been an increase in London's boarding out of nearly 800 children over what it was, and we feel that there is still room for expansion and that London can and will board out more children. But they got away to a very slow start; the number of boarding out officers appointed by the London County Council was not sufficient. They have now

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made up for that and they have a reasonable number of boarding out officers, who will now be able to devote a great deal more time to finding suitable foster homes. They have been spending a considerable amount of time investigating the need for children to go into care because of the residential difficulties in London. Their Homes have been over-full, their accommodation problem is very great, and these boarding out officers have been forced through circumstances to spend a great deal of time on matters which were not strictly boarding out. That is changing. I think there is still room for expansion in London's boarding out, and that it will occur.

833. Yes, but it is still unfortunate that in London, where there are a large number of boarding out officers—?—Roughly 60.

834. —they have only succeeded in getting 349 more children boarded out in 1951 than there were in 1950. That seems a very poor return for the unremitting attention of 60 boarding out officers?—Some of them have been only very recently appointed.

835. Very well, say 30 officers. There still does not seem to be very much result?—We have found that the general case work of those individual boarding out officers in London was of a very high standard. We have already advised the Children's Officer that we think his boarding out officers have been spending far too much time on duty not strictly of a boarding out character.

836. If each boarding out officer managed to board out 10 children a year that would be a great advance?—I think that will be achieved.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] I agree very strongly with the view you are now indicating, because we were told that in Scotland not only was there this very high percentage of boarding out cases, but that the system was overall successful, and that married up to that there was a very much smaller number of boarding out officers.

Chairman.

837. Perhaps Sir Charles can tell us something about Glasgow. What is the number you have in Glasgow?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) I understand about 8 in Glasgow.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

838. That is a very striking contrast indeed. I find it in my own mind difficult to believe that this contrast is explained by matters of tradition and so on, with great respect to that view, because the impression that is left in my mind about

it is that there is a far more straitlaced, cautious and analytical attitude to boarding out south of the border than there is apparently in Scotland, and I am not satisfied that the advantages are at all equivalent to the greater bureaucracy that seems to take effect in England on this matter. Have you any observations to make as to that?—(Mr. Gwynn.) It is not for me to answer for London's boarding out methods, but London may have been slower off the mark than Glasgow. I am not familiar with the circumstances in Glasgow. London has had some 2,500 children housed in six Children's Homes, and I think you saw one of those large Homes the other day. Now, many of those children have been in that institutional life for a number of years, and the idea has been that they have spent their life there and have grown up there, so that boarding out was not forced, it was not pressed, but it is now being pressed. But, as Miss Rosling has indicated, when you now come to try to board out children who have been in residential accommodation for a number of years, it is far more difficult than boarding out a child at a younger age who has just come into care. I think it is partly for that reason that London has not achieved the same percentage of boarding out as Glasgow.

839. Why is it more difficult? One would have thought that it might be easier, that the experience that a child had had in an institution would make him more and not less suitable for boarding out?—That is not so in our experience. Our experience is that a child who has been for a number of years in a Children's Home is not as easy to place in a private foster home as a child who has never been subject to institutional conditions.

Chairman.

840. Do you really mean that?—It is a fact that a child in a large Home grows up in conditions which in many respects are quite different from the conditions you and I find with our own children in our own private homes.

841. Yes; but we are always told that these institutions reproduce as far as possible the home atmosphere. Now you are seriously telling the Sub-Committee that one of the chief results of institutional life is that it renders a child entirely unfit for an ordinary home life?—I did not say that, Sir.

842. No—more difficult to place?—Yes.

Miss Ward.] I entirely agree. I think it is perfectly obvious that if you have children living with dozens of other children and all the life that stems from that, and if you are suddenly going to take a child and put it into a foster home, where there

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may or may not be other children, that is a tremendous change of atmosphere. I should also like to put on record that I am not over pressing about foster-parents because though I know it is the right thing I think you have got to be most careful that you get the right homes. I am delighted to know that such a lot of care is taken about finding homes.

Chairman.

843. Yes; but granted the difficulties, it is very disturbing to a Sub-Committee like this, which must be considering finance as its prime charge, to find such wide variations not only between two of the countries in this island, but between local authorities in England and Wales. When you have immense sums of money involved on the one hand and on the other hand universal agreement that boarding out is a desideratum, and that it is a far more satisfactory form of life for a deprived child than an institution, you have to bear in mind all those considerations?—(Mr. Ross.) I think it must be a thing of slow growth. Tradition may be and probably is the wrong word to use; but the substantial point is that it is easier to board out children soon after they come into care, that is to say, soon after they come from a home, even if it is a bad home, than it is to board out children who have been for years in an institution. The objection to bringing up children in Children's Homes, particularly large Homes, in my opinion, is not so much that the children are not well cared for and happy, but because of the acute difficulty of adjustment they have got to make when they go out into the world and leave the shelter of a Children's Home, and that applies in large measure to the boarding out of children who have been in Children's Homes for long periods. They have got to make this adjustment.

844. May I ask you this question? In trying to increase the number of children boarded out, does the boarding out officer say: "I have such and such children, Tom, Dick, Harry and Jane, and I am looking for a home for Tom, Dick, Harry and Jane"?—(Mr. Gwynn.) She does.

845. And she tries to marry up the particular children?—Yes, she does, Sir.

846. Going on from that assumption that each boarding out officer should be given a list of children and asked to find suitable homes for them?—Yes.

847. Are all children in institutions on those lists?—They are in London. In the case of the nine area children's officers, in each of those areas, those officers have the responsibility for visiting all children in the particular Children's Homes situated in or near that area, and their boarding out

officers have the responsibility for a particular group of children within a Home. An officer will visit those children at frequent intervals and discuss the matter with the house mother.

848. When you say a Home, do you mean a home with a big H or a little h?—A big H. She will discuss with the house mother the suitability of those children within that group for boarding out, and upon the advice of the person who has lived with those children for months or years will decide whether or not a particular child is a suitable subject for boarding out. If he or she is, then the boarding out officer will go to work immediately and try to find the right foster home into which that particular child, or a brother and sister, are likely to fit. That process is going on all the time.

849. If Miss Rosling's statement that the main obstacle to greater boarding out in London is the lack of a prepared and receptive public opinion, it seems to me that there is another difficulty, that the house mothers in Homes do not recommend a large proportion of their children as suitable for boarding out?—(Mr. Ross.) No, it does not work in that way.

850. May I ask Mr. Gwynn about that?—(Mr. Gwynn.) No, Sir. There has been a reluctance in some places for the boarding out officers and the house parents in Children's Homes to get together in the interests of boarding out of particular children. There has been that difficulty, and it has been faced. There are now regular meetings of house parents and boarding out officers to discuss the merits of boarding out, so that there is a closer understanding. It is now recognised that a house mother, although she may become fond of particular children in a Children's Home, should not become over-possessive, and if it is in the interests of one of her children to be boarded out in a private foster home such a course should in fact be taken, regardless of the personal feelings of those in charge.

851. In the case of the Home we visited the other day, are we to understand that each child there has been considered for boarding out and has either been rejected as unsuitable for boarding out or that efforts have been made and have failed?—That is the information we have, Sir; but I am still not satisfied that a return should not be made, and in fact it is being made, to consider again the suitability for children to be boarded out. There is a great natural pride on the part of the Superintendent of such a Home, and of house mothers, in the bringing up of these children.

852. They cling to them?—Yes, they cling; they ought not to cling to them. It is in the interest of most children to

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go out into private foster homes, into conditions into which they must fit eventually.

Major Markham.

853. That is the point?—And that has to be done regardless of what those in charge of the Children's Homes think.

Sir Fergus Graham.] The Superintendent is clinging very likely to those children for the global good of those whom you possibly classify as institution children; in other words, for the sake of the rest of his house, so to speak, he clings to those who are leaders or prefects, or whatever you may call them, patrol leaders, those whose influence is of help to his whole work. I say that very strongly from the point of view of an institution.

Major Markham.

854. May I put this point? It has been mentioned and reiterated that there is greater difficulty in placing children who have been for a year or two, shall we say, in these Homes. Now, obviously, every year that goes by makes the problem more difficult, until finally by the time a boy or girl reaches the Home leaving age they are entirely unconditioned to be home-worthy citizens, and therefore much greater emphasis ought to be placed on selection for the boarding out of those children who have been in Homes for a few years than any other, and it is there, I think, that we should welcome at any rate a change of heart in the case of some authorities that have been spoken about this morning?—(Mr. Gwynn.) I agree entirely, Sir. That is our constant endeavour, and Mr. Ross will tell you that it is the constant endeavour of the Home Office, working through its inspectors in the field, to encourage local authorities to keep constantly before them the merits of boarding out, and particularly for those children who have been in these institutions.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

855. It is clear, is it not, that the Glasgow officers apply less exacting standards to the homes in which they will agree to or authorise boarding out, and the work in Scotland is working satisfactorily? That is true, is it not?—I cannot answer for Scotland, Sir.

Chairman.

856. I should not like that to go through without Scottish approval?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) To the best of our knowledge the system is working satisfactorily.

Chairman.] I mean that it is a less exacting standard.

15881

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

857. Surely, if anything follows upon anything else, that follows from the fact that there is such a very much higher percentage of boarding out in Scotland than there is in England; that indicates that it may be likely that less exacting standards are required. That follows, does it not?—Not necessarily.

858. Unless Scotland enjoys a vastly superior home civilisation?—It may be partly due to the fact that boarding out has been accepted in Scotland for the last century as the traditional way of dealing with homeless children, and in course of time the boarding out authorities have accumulated lists of foster-parents whom they believe to be suitable and they have been able to add to those largely through recommendations from the foster-parents themselves. I should guess that in England it would take a considerable time before a similar background of acceptance of boarding out could be created.

859. I should have thought the Sub-Committee could proceed upon the basis that the standards of conduct and environment in the homes in England and Scotland is roughly equivalent. I should have thought that would be a proper basis to proceed upon, and if it is even nearly true it seems to me to be the result of this evidence that there are less exacting standards applied to that despite that the result is satisfactory?—(Miss Rosling.) I am sure, Sir, that it is partly the question of tradition in regard to boarding out. Glasgow did not start with a huge reserve of children in Children's Homes. They have always had this tradition of boarding out, and they have not to keep this very heavy bulk of children in Homes, which London has to do.

Chairman.

860. You say the problem of London is that there is some residue in Children's Homes, and that when that generation has passed out of the picture from the care of the London County Council you will be able to work up to much the same percentage as Glasgow, and that then the larger Children's Homes will shut down or diminish in number?—That is what we are hoping, but the difficulty is that we are not boarding out to that extent. London have an aggregation of children in Homes, and it is extremely hard to start boarding out from that point.

861. It was indicated to me that while there are great difficulties in regard to boarding out—this was relating to London, one of which was that there are so many of the children who are birds of passage, not permanently in the care of the local authority, transitory, —?—(Mr. Gwynn.)

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It is true, Sir, that a fairly large proportion of children coming into London County Council care are what we call short stay children, but the majority are still long stay children.

862. Is there any difference between the Scottish and English practice for short stay children in regard to boarding out?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) The position is the same in Scotland as it is in England, which accounts for the fact that although the number of children boarded out in Scotland in the last three years has increased by between 300 and 400, the percentage boarded out in the same period has fallen. With us, as in England, the number of short stay children is growing, and this, although there has been a general increase in the total number boarded out, has effected a reduction in the percentage. (Mr. Ross.) We give a figure in our memorandum which shows the enormous turnover; I think there were in the year 1951 about 59,000 children in care at the beginning of the year and about 63,000 in care at the end of the year, but in the same year no fewer than 37,000 children came into care and 33,000 went out.

863. What is the bearing of that on boarding out?—I think in England the local authorities generally have been concentrating on the boarding out of the long term children.

864. Yes, that is the point. In Scotland they board out the short term?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) In Scotland emphasis is still on the boarding out of long term children.

865. What would England say was the minimum anticipated stay for the children boarded out?—(Mr. Ross.) A week?

866. The mother goes into hospital for an operation, which will take some time, and her three children come into the care of the local authority?—There is no minimum. We would rather, with a child coming out of his own home, put him into a suitable foster home for a week or two weeks than put him into a Children's Home.

867. That does not enter into it?—(Miss Rosling.) Yes, very often so.

868. But that is not the objective of boarding out?—(Mr. Ross.) No. The Sub-Committee will remember the figures in England. In 1946, according to the Curtis Committee, there were 48,000 in care, or the equivalent of care as we know it now, and 29 per cent. boarded out. According to provisional figures at the end of 1951 there were 63,000 children in care, an increase of 15,000, and 39 per cent. boarded out. I hope the Sub-Committee will take that as an indication that some substantial progress has been made in those few years.

It is certainly our resolve, and is a requirement on every local authority under the Children Act, to board out every child unless it is not practicable or desirable for the time being. Our full intention is—I do not know when it will be achieved—to reach saturation point in boarding out in every area.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

869. One final question on this point, on this question of relative standards. Does not it follow from the fact that there are so many fewer boarding out officers in Scotland that their standards are less high than south of the border?—I am sorry. Despite my accent, I do not know the position in Scotland.

870. Can anyone give a view on that?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) There are various factors besides that which account for the difference.

871. Would you agree that that is a factor?—One factor which has not been mentioned is that a boarding out officer in Scotland is required to pay rather fewer visits to a boarded out child than his opposite number in England.

Miss Ward.] I cannot help feeling myself—as I live just south of the border—that really there is an almost different tradition of life in Scotland in very many ways, and I do not think that you can in fact compare the background. There is certainly a different religious tradition in Scotland compared with England, and I think that that plays its part in the systems. I do not think that you could ever get a uniform pattern between England and Scotland.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] What is clear on this issue is that apparently with very good and satisfactory results Scotland has devised a less expensive method.

Miss Ward.] Then we surely get back, perhaps, to the traditions of Aberdeen.

Chairman.

872. But this is of vital importance. May I ask you this: Is the financial aspect of it pressed on local authorities?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes. I said in earlier evidence, Sir, that I had had pointed out to me by a good many people, people engaged in child care, that we were wrong in the Children's Department Report in printing a sort of League Table. We did not give the names of local authorities with low percentages of children boarded out. We gave the highest county figure and the highest county borough figure, as well as the lowest, and there was a great gulf between them. Our purpose in doing that was to apply a general spur to the lowest. It was put to me on a great many occasions—I think I found fairly

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adequate answers—that that was an indication that the Home Office judged the standards of child care in a local authority area by the percentage of children boarded out. That is not the fact. It is a factor in judging the standard of child care, because we want all local authorities, unless there are reasons which prevent it, to reach the percentage of the highest local authority, first on the child care aspect, and secondly, or, if you like, in parallel, on the financial aspect. That point is put constantly to local authorities, that fortunately the cheapest method of child care is also in our opinion the best and the right method.

Chairman.] Would the Sub-Committee like me to ask Mr. Ross and Sir Charles for a full table of local authorities' records in this respect to be circulated?

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] It would be interesting.

Mr. Wade.] Yes.

Chairman.

873. Could we have that?—Would it be published, Sir?

Chairman.] Yes, it may be.

Major Markham.] It need not necessarily be.

Chairman.

874. It is for the Sub-Committee to make up its mind. It is liable to be published?—There is obvious objection from the local authority point of view, and I think reasonably so, to publication without explanation. That is my only interest. It is a local authority interest, not a Home Office interest.

875. Considering that the Home Office is representing the Treasury and pays half the cost, it is a Home Office interest?—We are immediately interested in the figures, and we have them from the point of view of showing the variations between one local authority and another, but I am speaking merely of the fact of publishing without explanation bare figures, or bare percentages, relating to particular local authorities.

876. You do not think it might provide a spur? There would be no reason why you should not publish the explanation as well?—We did it in a different way in the Children's Department Report in publishing maximum and minimum figures

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

877. You appreciate that the discovery of a situation in which the best method is the least expensive method is an event of some moment for an Estimates Sub-Committee?—Yes, that is clear.

15881

Chairman.

878. Yes, we are agreed upon that. I think we must ask you for that document, with any explanations, and the Sub-Committee must hold itself free to public it if it thinks fit?—We will give you the document with pleasure, Sir

Miss Ward.

879. Could I just ask a question upon that? Do you really feel that there is a very wide variation in the calibre of the Children's Committees of various local authorities? It is a very difficult thing for a Government Department to comment upon that, though I think it is at the basis of good local government. You get an emphasis in one local authority on perhaps its children's work, and one wonders really how far it is possible to use the practice of the good local authorities in stimulating action on the part of the weaker local authorities?—As I explained previously, that is a main function of our inspectorate, to act as carriers of good ideas from one local authority to another. Everything is variable, in my experience, such as costs and results, as far as results can be judged. It is difficult to discover or to pinpoint reasons for those variations, whether it be the capacity of the Children's Committee or the officer or his staff, or the circumstances of the area: there are so many factors.

880. It is a very difficult thing to test the relatively new build-up of the Children's Committees, but one wants to take the greatest possible advantage from their experience, and I am wondering whether one sometimes holds back too much in regard to commenting on the weaker local authorities?—Yes?

881. One has got to bear that in mind from the point of view of the good of the children and the good of the national finances, and I think sometimes we are over apt to protect the weaker local authority's practice and not give sufficient tribute to the good local authority's practice?—Our practice—we have had an immense amount of experience in the last few years—I mentioned earlier that we had seen, I suppose, all local authorities, or virtually all, at the Home Office—is to put plainly to any local authority whose work we think is not of the required standard our views as to the deficiencies and how they might be remedied.

Chairman.

882. When you say you put it to a local authority, what do you mean by that: do you mean that you write to the Town Clerk?—No, I am speaking of seeing representatives of the local authority. It

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is done in a variety of ways ; it is done first by the inspectors who are moving about day by day among the local authorities, and they carry ideas from one local authority to another. It is done by letter to the Town Clerk or to the County Clerk, and it is done by our seeing representatives in London or by the inspectors seeing them locally. Inspectors attend meetings of the Children's Committee from time to time by invitation, and bring to their attention points that we think they should be looking to.

Miss Ward.

883. Supposing, for argument's sake, that a local authority did not respond to your guidance, then what would happen?—We keep on giving them guidance.

884. Do you ever have a local authority that does not in fact respond to guidance, because, after all, they are the freely elected representatives of the people, and I know it would be a very difficult approach?—We are fortunate in this subject of child care in that the public generally and local authorities are interested and want to do their best. There is a difference of opinion sometimes as to what is the best or whether it is necessary to do this or that, but our experience is that in the end we reach accommodation with the local authorities, though not so quickly in some cases as in others.

Mr. Wade.

885. Is there a difference of view as to whether Homes with a big H and homes with a small h are best?—That difference of view is resolved almost entirely by the fact that in the Children Act there is a duty on a local authority to board out. There is no room for difference of view. As far as my knowledge goes, there is in practice no difference of view as to the desirability of boarding out, apart from the legal obligation.

Chairman.

886. Just one thing to clear up that matter. We have had a memorandum from the Association of Municipal Corporations. We have not, of course, examined them upon it—perhaps we shall—but will you confirm or contradict this statement, which surprised me? They say: "It is understood that one or two authorities have secured a few such offers by paying boarding out rates two or three times as high as those normally granted"?—I do not know. I explained in earlier evidence that our method of financial control is by means of an average; the local authority are entitled to spend up to 40s. per week in any year on the average on their children who are boarded out and on

certain other classes—children placed in private Children's Homes.

887. It would surprise you if that were the case?—Yes.

Mr. Wade.

888. One general question. Mr. Ross used the expression "saturation point". Earlier on we had a figure of two-thirds, which I gather is a target?—(Miss Rosling.) That is with reservations; I said one-half to two-thirds.

889. Yes, shall I say approximately? Is that based on the number of children suitable for going into private homes, or is it a figure arrived at having regard to the number of foster-parents that one expects to find? Is it assumed that there will always be a proportion of children who should go into institutions, and the target is based on that number of children?—On the number of suitable children. There always will be some children who could not be boarded out.

Chairman.

890. You do not really seriously put that as high as one-half?—I think it is one-half to two-thirds.

891. No, I mean the unsuitable ones: you do not put that figure as high as one-half?—No.

892. I do not wish to force you if your opinion is certainly two-thirds, given a receptive public and efficient local authorities, that at least two-thirds of the children coming into your care ought to be able to be put into private homes?—If there is the ability to deal with the very difficult children.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] It is rather interesting to observe that this memorandum of the Association of Municipal Corporations expresses a different view from the view expressed this morning as to the effect upon children who are in Homes. In paragraph 21 of the memorandum they express the view that a period in a Home with a big H makes them more and not less suitable for boarding out. That simply shows that there can be a difference of view upon it.

Mr. Wade.] It is only a matter of a few months.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.] Yes.

Chairman.

893. May I return to a question which we can deal with quite shortly, I think? Do you think there is any room for more co-ordination of effort as between local authorities, some more powerful or more representative or more frequent meetings of

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a Central Board and so on to get a greater pooling of ideas?—(Mr. Ross.) My own opinion is that there is no need for a central association. We have our regionalised inspectorates—you will remember it is organised in six Regions—and we think that that is a suitable instrument for conveying ideas from one local authority to another. In April of last year we had the first meeting, the only meeting so far, of Chairmen of Children's Committees and children's officers. That was convened by the Home Office, and was a successful meeting according to the impression that one has gained.

894. Ought not that to meet every few months? When you get, as just an example, this very wide variation in boarding out, and quite clearly a variety of urge in different local authorities towards boarding out, would not that be a very suitable subject for discussion by a body of that sort?—I should have thought that meetings at intervals as nearly as frequent as every few months would not be necessary. Children's officers have also their Association which meets annually, and they have regional meetings, I do not know at what intervals.

895. You do not think that an annual conference of Chairmen and children's officers would be valuable?—Yes, I think an annual conference would be of value, and we have in mind, without having reached any conclusion, that we should probably have a conference of the kind we had in April of last year, say every two years—that is, Chairmen of Children's Committees and children's officers. The Chairmen of Children's Committees are invited to the conferences of children's officers, and a good many attend, I believe. Certainly periodic conferences are of value, but there is objection to having a big conference meet too often.

896. At the back of my mind is the feeling that this is a subject with its own technique, and that one area might benefit from the experience of another; the lazy ones might be helped or pushed on by being shown the progress of the more efficient ones, and the efficient ones might be encouraged. It is not a thing that should be left perhaps as much as it is now left to the diversity of local talent and conditions?—Our inspectors are moving round constantly, and thus ideas are exchanged.

897. Yes; but are you not a little proceeding on the assumption that everything is as good as it can be now?—I am sorry if anything I have said indicated that.

898. I did not mean you were self-satisfied, but I am certainly worried over this divergence in boarding out figures?—I am acutely aware of the fact that everything is

not as it should be; and if I gave any other impression I chose my words badly. We are not satisfied. We think that some progress has been made in these last few years. (Miss Rosling.) Where there is a deficiency it is discussed at the meetings by the inspectors and sometimes at the Home Office with the Children's Committees. The whole question of why there was not more boarding out would be discussed with them.

899. I did not mean to accuse Mr. Ross of saying that everything was ideal but if thinking that the machinery was as good as it could be?—These questions are taken up with the Children's Committees both at their meetings and at the Home Office. We have many meetings with local authorities at which all these things are discussed.

900. I am sure you do not neglect them. May I go now to your views on voluntary homes. It is a very difficult thing to ask you really, but would it be true to say that the Home Office think that conditions in the best voluntary homes are as good as in the best local authority homes?—(Mr. Ross.) Yes, certainly.

901. That is your considered answer?—Yes, that is my view.

902. Going on from there, would you agree that the cost per child in the best voluntary children's homes is about 25 per cent. less than the cost in local authority homes?—I do not know, Sir. I said in earlier evidence that we do not get the accounts of the voluntary homes, and I do not pretend to know—indeed, I do not know—the relative costs.

Sir Fergus Graham.

903. There is a high percentage of voluntary work, of course?—Yes, I was going to go on to that, Sir.

Chairman.

904. Do not you think that it would be of advantage to the whole corpus of opinion on the subject if there was an interchange of experience in costing between voluntary homes and the Home Office and between different local authority homes?—If it were practicable I would be very much in favour of it, but I do not know off-hand whether we would get results that would be worth the labour. We are told both by local authority and voluntary homes—and we know it as a fact—that it is a matter of extraordinary difficulty to discover just what are the reasons for the different costs in different children's homes. We discussed some of them when we gave evidence earlier, such as the type of home, whether it is old-fashioned, has grounds, and so on. Then management is a factor. Some housewives can manage their own private

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homes on sums that other good people cannot do with; the same applies certainly to the people in charge of children's homes.

905. That was very strongly brought out by the voluntary homes. They said that you may have two homes absolutely on all fours with each other, yet showing a substantial difference in costs, dependent on whether the people in charge of those homes had the gift of good housekeeping?—That I do not know.

Sir Fergus Graham.] And whether, with the house, they were getting other amenities which helped their economy.

Chairman.

906. No, absolutely parallel cases. Some would be as much as 15s. per head more than another. It was simply a question of "know-how"?—Yes. We know that is so. Some people are better cooks than others; then they may use their fruit to make jam, and so on. They possibly require, or persuade, the children to take greater care of their clothes—I know that is one of the factors. One sees that on visits not only to children's homes but to approved schools.

907. What I want to lead up to is this. I know this is not the same figure as the one I have been referring to, but the average cost per child to a local authority on account of children placed in a voluntary home is £2 9s. 2d. per week during this current year, and the cost per child in local authority homes is £5 2s. 2d. Again those are averages and are bound to be misleading. But one can say that it saves a local authority a great deal of money to put a child in a voluntary home?—Yes. I explained earlier that that does not represent the whole cost of keeping children in voluntary homes.

908. No, I accept that entirely. But in view of the fact that it saves a local authority a great deal of money, is there any move to encourage local authorities to make greater use of voluntary homes?—No; they are pretty full; there has been no movement in that direction.

909. Do not you think it might be advantageous?—No.

Major Markham.

910. Has there not been an alternative move here, to bring pressure on voluntary homes to avoid anything in the nature of overcrowding?—Yes, there has been, but it is not easy in these days of restriction on capital investment. We would have done a great deal more if we could have enabled them to get materials to improve their homes. That has been a limiting factor in recent years. There is overcrowding in some local authority homes and in some voluntary homes.

Sir Fergus Graham.

911. It would therefore be true, would it not, to suggest that if children were de-canted into voluntary homes they would not necessarily be the easiest ones to deal with?—It would be a human failing if it fell out in that way.

Mr. Wade.

912. I understand that even if it were the policy to try to send more children to voluntary homes, in fact most of them are so full that it would not help very much?—It is not our policy to increase the number of voluntary homes instead of increasing the number of local authority homes.

Chairman.

913. But why not?—We think that the Child Care Service that has been set up under the Children Act has developed and has encouraged local authorities to look after their own children, subject to full use of such voluntary homes as are now in being. Moreover, there is a limit to the financial resources of voluntary organisations; they manage within their existing resources, but I think in many cases they would not have the money to extend their operations.

Miss Ward.

914. It also depends on whether there are sufficient people left who will continue to supply money for voluntary effort. There is an entirely different attitude now on the part of the public towards this question?—There is.

915. And it would involve a complete change in national policy, would it not?—Yes.

Miss Ward.] Under the Act we have established this new Child Care Service, and what is now being suggested is that we should in fact go back upon that.

Chairman.] I think, whatever we may think about it, that is the line by which it could be secured and which has to be considered and put up if only to be knocked down—the idea that voluntary homes today are managing to produce equally good results at less expenditure of money. It does show one way in which to economise.

Sir Fergus Graham.

916. And if you get some more people to run more and more voluntary homes?—Yes, there is a great deal of voluntary work done.

Chairman.

917. And a very good thing, too?—In other cases the wages paid by voluntary homes are lower than those of local authority homes.

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918. But you have just said that you think the results are just as good?—Pardon me, Sir; I referred to the best voluntary homes and the best local authority homes.

919. Yes?—We explained previously that particularly the smaller voluntary homes are not as well equipped as we would like them to be.

920. I took particular care to say "best"?—We do not want more voluntary homes; we want to board children out. It is not the policy of local authorities to keep children in homes but to board them out.

921. In the light of what has been said to me, could I ask you whether you are not mistaken upon that, because I have been told that in the case of voluntary homes there is great objection to boarding out?—No, I am not mistaken upon that. Dr. Barnardo's board out to a substantial extent.

922. So do the Church of England Children's Society?—Yes; but not even the large organisations board out to a large extent, and where you have a small voluntary home they simply have not got the resources for boarding out.

923. That is why I was confining my questions to the larger ones. I imagine I am right in saying that Roman Catholic homes do not board out very much?—Yes, that is true, but not only Roman Catholic homes; there are other large organizations which are not persuaded of the advantages of boarding out.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

924. One can understand that the people who run the local authority homes take a natural and proper pride in the work they do and in the children whom they look after, and that many of them may be therefore inclined to discourage boarding out—one would rather expect it. I should like to know this: Are these officers who run these homes not aware of the fact—and I imagine it is a fact—that if there is a greater amount of boarding out their training in looking after children on their premises and their accommodation will still be wanted for other parallel purposes, remand homes, approved schools, and all the rest? Is that made sufficiently clear to them?—I do not think it would be the fact.

925. Does it mean this—and I want to make this clear, because I have the deepest possible respect for these people—that if boarding out really increased very much in scale some of those officers would be rather at a loss?—It does mean that. There is, of course, an unsatisfied demand for people to be employed in institutions of one kind and another, and therefore there should

be no serious difficulty in finding posts; but there are schools for maladjusted children, there are probation hostels and homes, and there are approved schools, all of which need staff. We have recognised that the attitude of the people in charge of children's homes has been of main importance in the last few years.

Chairman.

926. In voluntary or in local authority homes?—In local authority homes. Therefore, we have been at pains not only to take the initiative in pressing on local authorities that they must bring the people in children's homes into the picture to enable them to understand the general objectives, but we have, in meeting with our child care tutors, and at other meetings, such as refresher courses particularly, tried to put this across to the people in charge of children's homes. Last week, for instance, I spoke at a refresher course for boarding out officers in Newcastle and during the discussion I raised this point with them. Those were people who were doing the job, not officers doing administrative duties, but boarding out officers, and they told me, with seeming unanimity, of the attitude of the people in charge of children's homes and that that attitude had changed markedly as time went on, that they were becoming more co-operative, they were more understanding and they were accepting the fact that boarding out was in the interest of many of the children in their charge. They all made it very plain that they were convinced that they did co-operate. I do not mean by recommending which children should be boarded out, because it goes much further than that. The boarding out officers get to know the children, and they have convinced the house-mothers that they have to look forward to dealing with children who are more difficult than those they have had to deal with in the past, among whom there may be more physically handicapped children not suitable for boarding out for the time being.

Miss Ward.

927. That is one of the advantages of child guidance, on which public money is properly spent. It is a satisfactory result of expenditure?—Yes, I think it is.

928. Could I ask one point on this question of payment. In paragraph 16 of their memorandum the Association of Municipal Corporations have also made another proposal about repayment by parents, and they say: "The net costs to public funds of maintaining children in children's homes would be reduced if it were possible to raise the average rate of repayment by parents." Have you any observations on that, as to whether you really think people

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pay sufficient?—We always think that they do not pay enough.

929. That is your considered view, is it?—Yes, it is. We have considered this from time to time. We sent out a circular, perhaps eighteen months ago, on the subject of parental contributions. That did a number of things. Previously there had been an arrangement of long standing under which the cancellation of a pension for a child while that child was in public care was accepted in lieu of parental contributions. We said that should no longer be the case and that the parents' means should be considered. We also made the point that it was in the child's interests that he should not come into public care if that could be avoided, and one method—and we think a legitimate method—of discouraging people putting their children too lightly into public care is to make them pay a reasonable sum while the children are there. We intend shortly to send out a further circular—it is in preparation now—on this subject of parental contributions. We do not know in detail whether contributions are too low, but our general impression is that parents could pay more. We are certainly of opinion that they should be required to pay as much as they can reasonably afford.

Chairman.

930. What class of parents and in what circumstances can parents be required to repay?—In respect of any child in care under the Children Act or committed to the care of a local authority as a fit person. A court can make an order requiring a parent to pay according to his means. Those are the words of the Act. An arrangement is made commonly by a local authority without a court order and they agree with the parents the amount to be paid according to the parents' means.

Miss Ward.

931. It has been represented to me by people who have a knowledge of these matters that it is customary for parents to go to the Committee and ask for the charges which have been imposed upon them to be remitted, and that quite often, without perhaps due regard to the means of the parents, local committees are inclined to wipe off the parents' payment. Do you think that that is a legitimate criticism?—I should not have thought so. Our information is not comprehensive on this subject, but local authorities know our views, and they will know shortly our further views on this subject. I have not heard that local authorities are lax in the matter of parental contributions. We know, of course, that it is often difficult to collect them and that people get into arrears and reach a situation where they cannot find

the arrears; but I should not have thought that local authorities generally allowed a parent exemption from his obligations lightly.

932. I am slightly worried by the fact—I do not know whether I am right in saying this—that you do not have much say from the point of view of the Home Office on what the proper standard of payment should be, that you are rather feeling your way and making recommendations, rather than being in the position of having looked at it comprehensively to see whether in fact there should be a recommendation—if you see the difference?—Yes. We have considered whether (this was some long time ago now) we could give advice on general standards and we decided that we could not.

Chairman.

933. It is important for this sub-committee to know. The position of this sub-committee is that it cannot make a recommendation about repayments if that would require legislation. To whom is it left to decide the rates?—To the local authority if they proceed by agreement; otherwise, the court.

934. Is there a maximum laid down by law?—No; there was a maximum in the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, by regulation, but in the Children Act the power of the Secretary of State to fix any maximum was removed.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

935. Do local authorities in fact go to the county court to recover payment?—Yes.

Miss Ward.] I think, speaking as a magistrate, there is very rightly a sort of feeling on the part of the courts that they do not want to put too great an administrative obligation on the servants of the court to recover payment, even if you impose them through a court order. The point really is whether further guidance should come from the Home Office from the point of view of national expenditure.

Chairman.] To Benches?

Miss Ward.] Yes. You have such wide powers under the Children Act that it seems rather strange that financial payments from parents should be almost outside your province, if I may say so. That is what really rather worries me.

Chairman.

936. Could we know the amount of repayment over-all; is there a record of that?—I think I have the figure. (Sir Charles Cunningham.) We have been trying to stimulate local authorities for the past few

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years, and the estimated figure for 1952-53 is still only £30,000, which represents a very small average contribution per child. The Sub-Committee may, I think, be interested to know that Glasgow at the end of last year, at the end of December, made a special check on the 2,310 children under sixteen in care, and the rather surprising thing which emerged from that check was that contributions were being made in respect of only about 25 per cent. of the children. The most careful examination into the circumstances of the others shows that in the great majority of cases the parents just did not have the resources to enable them to make a contribution; 36 per cent. were orphans and abandoned children whose parents could not be traced at all; 28 per cent. were illegitimate children whose mothers were unable to contribute; and 11 per cent. were parents who were believed to be genuinely unable through lack of resources to make contributions. The Corporation went a stage further and made extensive inquiries in 80 cases where they thought that there was some ground for believing that contributions could be obtained. They were able to trace only 60 of these parents and 23 of them were shown to be unable to pay. The average amount secured from the remaining 37 parents was only 5s. per week in respect of each child.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

937. That is very interesting?—That suggests that even if you take extreme trouble the addition that you can make to the amount at present contributed is relatively small. (Mr. Ross.) The total figure

is in the Estimates for 1952-53, and that figure is £500,000 for England and Wales, which includes approved schools. It is an average of 2s. 6d. per week per child in care or in schools. It is not an average payment per parent.

Chairman.

938. That is allowing for approved schools. It is a little higher than the Glasgow average, but not very strikingly so?—(Sir Charles Cunningham.) These figures for Scotland do not, of course, cover approved schools.

939. So that, allowing for that, it is about the same. But may I just ask a question which arises from a case which has been brought to my personal notice. About the restoration of children to their parents and parents reclaiming children, is it ever made a condition of a parent getting his or her children back that they should make some back payments?—(Mr. Ross.) Would not that be a case of throwing good money after bad? There is a continuing duty on a local authority under the Children Act to restore a child to the care of his parents, guardian, if the legal guardian, or to that of a relative or friend whenever it is consistent with the welfare of the child.

Mr. A. J. Irvine.

940. Would not it be always wrong to make the return of a child to his parents conditional on the payment by the parents of any back sums of money?—Yes.

Chairman.] Thank you very much.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned till Tuesday, 6th May, at 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 6TH MAY, 1952.

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Mr. Dryden Brook.
Sir Fergus Graham.

Mr. Wade.
Miss Ward.

Mr. G. E. A. GREY, M.C., Assistant Secretary, Treasury, called in and examined.

Chairman

941. Mr. Grey, I do not think we want to keep you very long. We just wanted to ask you a few questions on the basis of the Memorandum that has been given to us on Treasury Control of Child Care Vote. I wonder if you would care to tell us whether this control is in any way real, or do you regard the expenditure as fixed by outside circumstances and bodies, which makes it rather a nominal

control?—Perhaps it is a little early to say yet, I think. We are rather groping in the dark with this service, which is a new and developing one. There is also, of course, the point that we have to recognise that the Home Office have to work within the conception embodied in an Act of Parliament the purpose of which was to stimulate expenditure; one cannot burke that fact—because children were not being looked after properly; and the purpose

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[Continued.]

of the Act was to ensure that more children were taken into care and that they were better looked after, and the raising of standards generally. That, of course, makes it a little bit more difficult for the Treasury, perhaps, to try to keep too tight a rein.

942. Would it be a caricature of your reply to say that the answer is that the Treasury does not exert any effective control, or try to exert any effective control, in the interests of economy in child care work?—No, I would not accept that, because that does not absolve the Treasury from the duty of seeing that an Act of Parliament is carried out with reasonable economy, so far as it is possible to carry it out in that way, and at present, and until we see how the service does develop, and if we have more facts to work on rather than improvisations, which has been my experience so far,—

943. I want something more specific?—What would you like to have?

944. May I ask you this; perhaps this would help you: Would you consider it a part of your duty to find out whether the Home Office were demanding too high a standard in Children's Homes of local authorities, which inflated expenditure?—Yes. That, of course, might arise as a general budgetary question, that it was necessary to make an attack on the Vote in a general way for the purpose of reducing Government expenditure.

945. But up to date you have not looked at that side of it?—No. We have taken Ministerial instructions upon it, of course. I do not know that I ought to say this, or whether an official ought to say what the policy of the Government may or may not be on this matter, but certainly in the various economy exercises of recent years we have not excluded the Child Care Vote from consideration. But, as I said at the start, it is not one which you can very easily attack without making the Act a dead letter or revoking it.

946. Would not you agree that it might be possible to investigate the requirements of the Home Office to see whether they were too high, or it might be possible to encourage the Home Office to encourage local authorities in turn to board out more children than to keep them in Homes?—That has been done. That was amongst the measures which Ministers did agree to take.

947. Is that part of Treasury control?—It was at the instance of the Treasury, in a letter from the Chancellor. As I say, I do not know whether I ought to say this for the purposes of the record in this way, but it is the only way in which I can get at it.

948. Would you like it not to be put down?—It had probably better not be.

Miss Ward.

949. No figure was suggested to the Home Office as a percentage reduction in

the way that some of the Departments have been dealt with?—No.

950. It was merely general guidance and directive?—Yes, it was rather that the Home Secretary agreed to instruct his inspecting officers to take rather a different attitude towards their job and scrutinise things very much more closely from the point of view of economy rather than from the point of view of improving standards.

Chairman.

951. Where does the Treasury come into the picture?—Merely that the Home Office took that line in response to the Treasury's call for economy.

952. I think it is my fault in that I have not asked the questions in the right way. All I want to get clear is whether the Treasury consider it part of their duty to go into the details of demands made by the Home Office or to make the Home Office transmit to local authorities a greater urge for boarding out—those are two examples—or does the Treasury really sign on the dotted line?—It is a combination of several practices. The Act does require Treasury consent in a number of cases where we do argue out with the Home Office their proposal for rates of payment to voluntary Homes and in connection with boarding out to foster-mothers.

Miss Ward.

953. Once you have decided on the amount of money to be allotted, then it really is left to the Home Office to spend the money to the best advantage?—Well, it is a local service; it is for the local authorities to do that.

954. After all, it is a combination, is it not?—No, it is very much a local authority service. The point there was whether it should be a local authority service stimulated by the Home Office or repressed by the Home Office. If local authorities who are under a duty under the Act—

955. Yes; but the original amount of the grant that is available surely is settled by the Treasury?—The Act, of course, says what the proportional grant shall be, and the Act says what the local authorities must do. The expenditure is determined by the number of children who have to be looked after and the standards that local authorities adopt in looking after them, as well as the methods they adopt.

Chairman.

956. But is the Treasury interested at all if they learn that certain Homes cost twice or three times the normal cost, so that an extra burden falls on the taxpayer?—They are interested in seeing that local authorities are encouraged to use—perhaps I ought not to say cheaper methods, but to use what is also recognised as being the best method.

957. If you found a Home which is costing £10 per week per child against an average of £5 per week per child, would

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[Continued.]

the Treasury still consider itself interested?—Yes, if that amount of detail reached us and there appeared to be sufficient money at stake, we should have to consider whether there was any method that could be adopted to deal with it, but we should consider first of all what the reasons for those variations were.

958. Have you in fact ever considered a question like that?—Yes; but I am bound to say that at this stage, again largely, I think, because everything is improvised and because we have not had long enough experience, it is extremely difficult to get any intelligible breakdown of the figures.

959. From the Home Office?—For the Home Office to get it.

960. In fact the Treasury would say that there is no adequate collation of figures?—Yes; I think one is bound to say it would be useful to have a more detailed breakdown by local authorities of their expenditure. Whether it would or would not enable us to do anything would remain to be seen, but the fact that some are rather more expensive than others does not necessarily mean that they are too expensive or that the others are economical.

961. What I have not yet got from you is how detailed the Treasury scrutiny is of expenditure which it makes on behalf of the taxpayer by way of contribution to local expenditure?—One can only say broadly that it is as detailed as they consider it necessary to satisfy themselves that the Home Office are doing their job.

962. Have you ever refused any grant?—Refusal of grant would be a matter for the Home Office. But we have often modified proposals about grant conditions, for example, the amount or scope of the payments which should qualify for grant. There is a great deal of argument between the Treasury and the Home Office on all proposals.

Chairman.] Yes, I am sure there is.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

963. I am not concerned so much about the relations between the Treasury and the Home Office as between the Home Office and local authorities, and, as I understand it, the Act devolves, through the Home Office, the responsibility on local authorities of doing this job?—The Act devolves on the local authorities the responsibility for doing the job.

964. Yes?—Subject to the general supervision of the Minister.

965. To the supervision of the Home Office?—Yes, in the sense at any rate that if they want to get a grant for their expenditure they have got to satisfy the Home Office that that expenditure is proper.

966. Then the Treasury comes in at the second stage?—Yes, in the sense that the Treasury comes in on all Government expenditure except where the actual amount of expenditure is laid down in the Act.

967. What I am anxious to get at is this, that the Treasury has nothing whatever to do with the standards of the job which the local authorities do?—No. If the adoption of certain standards resulted in more money than the Chancellor could afford, then the Treasury would come in at that stage.

Chairman.

968. It has not happened yet?—It has not happened yet; Ministers have been content to keep the Vote within bounds so far by damping down the natural enthusiasm of the inspectorate, and exhorting local authorities to put as many children as possible with foster-parents rather than keeping them in their own Homes, because not only is it very much better for the child, but it is also very much cheaper so far as the taxpayer is concerned.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

969. What I am anxious to do is to separate the two things, what I think are two very important functions, and that is the Treasury as, if you like, the guardian of the public purse has the duty to see that in the achievement of particular standards the money is expended efficiently?—Yes, that is broadly true.

970. But I would say that a different aspect of the problem is if the Treasury try to say to a local authority: "Your standard is too good, and you must lower your standard"?—The Treasury certainly cannot say that.

971. That is the distinction I am trying to draw as to what the rights of the Treasury are in this matter?—It does not mean that the Treasury could not indirectly persuade the Home Secretary to say that; that would not prevent the Treasury if they thought it right trying to persuade the Home Office to take that line with local authorities.

972. I would accept that?—But that is only on broad lines. The Treasury is not in a position to know whether the standards are in fact good or bad nor by intervening too closely to try to run the Home Office's business for it.

973. That is what I was trying to draw out, that it is the Home Office that governs the standards in relation to local authorities?—It is their Minister who is responsible for carrying out the policy of the Act.

Miss Ward.

974. Could I ask one question on the methods of assessment and collection of money, because in a letter that the Committee has had from the Children's Department of the London County Council I note that it is stated that from the 1st October, 1951, "improved arrangements for assessment and collection were introduced during the year concerned." Now, what I want to ask you is: Do you think that we have now achieved a fair method of assessment

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[Continued.]

and a fair method of collection?—I am not quite sure what payments have been referred to.

975. I am referring to parents' contributions?—I did not know there had been any improved methods. I would not probably hear of them at all.

976. That is rather an interesting observation, if I may say so, because there are standards laid down for the amount of money that parents have got to contribute. It is possible for there to be variations in methods of collection by various local authorities, and indeed the London County Council took over a considerable number of arrears under the new Act and they have not been able to deal satisfactorily with all of those, but they do state that in 1951 there were introduced new methods of assessment and collection, and I really wondered whether the Treasury ever looked at whether there is a fair amount of money being asked for from parents, whether in fact the method of assessment is fair and whether in fact the collection is proper and as watertight as possible. That would be, I should think, a proper subject for examination?—As long as it does not go into too much detail, yes. I certainly was aware myself that the Home Office, partly at our instigation, were pitching into local authorities with a view to getting them to go after parents more keenly, and that has been done with some considerable success—witness the increase in the amount of parents' contributions—but I do not know whether as a result of that or otherwise some local authorities have overhauled their system and devised a better system. They have reported this to the Home Office, I suppose?

977. I have no idea; but the Children's Officer on the London County Council somewhat reluctantly when pressed has provided us with the same figures, and this statement is contained in this letter. Now, what I really wondered was whether that aspect of the expenditure would interest the Treasury, and do you think that there is a case to be gone into?—It is very difficult. *Prima facie*, yes, so long as it does not involve too much man-power investigating it. But, as I say, it is difficult for me to say, because the Home Office would have to do it.

978. I know; but some local authorities may be easier with parents than other local authorities?—Yes.

Chairman.

979. May I just get this clear? Is this a proper matter to question you about, or is it a question for the Home Office?—Undoubtedly I think it is rather difficult for me to speak for the Home Office, whether it would be a good thing for them to do this, without knowing what it amounts to.

980. You could say that the Treasury has not up to date investigated this aspect?—But I think I can certainly say the Treasury has no detailed information as to how local authorities go about collecting money from parents.

Chairman.] Then I am afraid that that is all Miss Ward can get out of you. We might ask the Treasury to write us a letter about it.

Miss Ward.] Yes. You did ask the Treasury whether, if they saw a case of one Home costing more than the cost of another Home, they would take action. If they are in a position to answer that I should have thought they would be in a position to answer whether a fair proportion of the money is being asked from parents.

Chairman.] Yes; but you will not get an answer from Mr Grey unless he has had time to look it up.

Miss Ward.] That is all right. If he will look into it and let us have an answer I shall be delighted.

Chairman.

981. Will you do that, Mr. Grey?—I should like to be quite clear what you would like an answer to.

Miss Ward.

982. Whether the amount of money that parents are asked to contribute in respect of their children who are taken over by local authorities, or when they come under local authority care, is fair, and whether you think the system operated by local authorities provides safeguards for really getting hold of the money and that the parents are not allowed to have their responsibilities written off, because that is what I have heard. I do not know a very great deal about it, but I am told that parents do come before local authorities, that is before the Children's Committee, asking for their financial responsibilities to be written off. Of course, different local authorities vary in their methods of treatment?—Yes, I am sure they would.

Miss Ward.] That is, I think, a field that does require some examination from the taxpayers' point of view.

Sir Fergus Graham.] Does that comment bring in the Home Office as well?

Miss Ward.

983. Yes, that is what I am asking. Would you be interested in that aspect?—In so far as it resulted in more money coming from parents who could afford it we should certainly be interested in it, because it would reduce the amount of grant required.

Chairman.

984. I think Mr. Grey is trying to imply that he would have to find out about this,

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[Continued.]

and perhaps he will let us know?—I was wondering whether it would not be better to address the question to the Home Office. I should merely have to ask them for an answer.

985. Yes, clearly; but do you accept any Treasury responsibility for that aspect?—Yes, but on the second stage. I should want to have advice from the Home Office on the policy angle first of all.

986. Has the Treasury all those sorts of facts about different Homes at its disposal? I think you have already indicated that you have not?—No.

987. You would have to ask for them ad hoc?—Yes.

Miss Ward.

988. In other words, if I may put it in this way, if the Home Office answer and say that it is difficult to give guidance to local authorities, it would strengthen the hand of the Home Office if the Treasury was interested?—The Home Office know perfectly well the Treasury is interested, and so are local authorities, of course—they get half of the parental contributions.

Chairman.

989. One last question: What is the status of the Local Government Manpower Committee, and what force have its recommendations?—In regard to its status it is a Committee set up by the Govern-

ment who reported to the Government, and its Report was accepted—that is, by the last Government.

990. Do you regard that as mandatory?—Certainly, unless and until the new Government decides to take a different line.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I want to come back for a moment to this question about the parents and parents' responsibilities, because I feel that this is really a matter for the Home Office and that the Treasury should not come in unless there is evidence of some abuse.

Chairman.] I think, if I may say so, that that is what the Witness has brought out.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] Yes.

Chairman.] I do not think that we can get any further upon that, because that is roughly what he says.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I agree; but I think we had got to that stage, if you will forgive me for saying so, a little while ago. I am a member of a local authority, the Welfare Committee, and I know what the difficulties are in respect to parents.

Chairman.

991. That is a question for discussion between ourselves. Thank you, Mr. Grey. We may be writing to you and asking for detailed answers to certain questions?—Thank you.

The witness withdrew.

ALDERMAN F. HOLMES (Kingston-upon-Hull), Chairman of the Children Committee of the Association, Mr. P. D. DINGLE, LL.M., Town Clerk of Manchester, Mr. C. H. POLLARD, O.B.E., City Treasurer of Kingston-upon-Hull, and Mr. E. J. HOLMES, M.A., B.Sc., Children's Officer of Birmingham, Association of Municipal Corporations; Miss M. O'CONNOR, O.B.E., Chairman of the Children and Welfare Committee of the Association, Miss D. E. HARVIE, Children's Officer, Kent County Council, Mr. H. S. MARTIN, C.B.E., LL.B., Clerk, East Sussex County Council, Mr. W. F. SERBY, County Treasurer, Buckinghamshire County Council, and Mr. W. L. DACEY, LL.B., Secretary of the Association, County Councils Association, called in and examined.

Chairman.

992. We have a big subject to cover in a very short time, and I should like to start by thanking you for these two most excellent Memoranda you have submitted. I think I had better begin by saying that there are two points that I personally want your opinions upon: first, whether there is not room for a greater exchange of information, facts and figures as between the Home Office and the local authorities and vice versa; and the second is whether more cannot be done to encourage boarding out. We fully recognise the force of what the County Councils Association say as to the undesirability of extending rigid control over local authorities from the centre. We quite accept that, and that can be taken as read—I know all my colleagues accept that—but I would like to ask first of all,

Alderman Holmes, whether you think there is room for some greater exchange of information as between local authorities and the Home Office and between the different local authorities themselves on the way to run Children's Homes and Children's Departments?—(Alderman Holmes.) I think there is a great deal of information exchanged, and as far as my experience goes the Home Office has a lot to say in this. I do not know exactly what you mean by "exchange of information". Is it on the control or on the administrative side?

993. You have from the Home Office an account of expenditure on Homes by different authorities?—Yes.

994. They vary very widely, more widely than you would expect, and it seemed to me that it should be possible for advice and information to be interchanged with a

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view to bringing down the figures, or bringing them up if they were thought to be too low?—In any event, I think a service of this character is bound to be expensive.

995. Yes; that is another question.—If you mean that as far as the Home Office is concerned we should say to them: “Look here, we would like to do certain things in respect of our Homes: will you agree?”—

996. No, I do not mean that. What I mean is that the service is a very expensive service, and bound to be?—Yes.

997. What I am suggesting is—I am not trying to put words into your mouth—that there should be some greater degree of collation of experience and co-ordination of experience?—I do not think anyone would object to that. We are trying to run the service as best we can, and if there is any other way whereby we can reduce it without impairing efficiency I do not think any authority wants to spend money unwisely or excessively. (Mr. E. J. Holmes.) I think I can say that the exchange of information such as you envisaged happens between the Home Office inspectorate and the children's officers, and to a lesser extent between the Home Office inspectorate and the Children's Committees. Some of us as children's officers also make a point of going up to Whitehall periodically, and speaking for myself I usually hope to get in to see some of the Home Office staff once a month. On those occasions there is an exchange of information, in which all sorts of things, including those things that you have in mind, are discussed. Two years ago the Home Office held a Conference of Chairmen of Children's Committees and Children's Officers which I think was extremely valuable from the point of view that I think you have in mind, and I think probably that is the sort of thing that might at least be repeated on a regional basis. I know that generally speaking Conferences are suspected of being a waste of money and a waste of time, but I think that if they are well conducted—and that one was outstandingly well conducted—then they are very well worth while. (Mr. Dingle.) On the point of Conferences, the A.M.C. and, I think, the C.C.A. were going to hold a Conference themselves this year, but they have deferred it from this year to next year on the ground of economy. I think they felt that that might be even more useful than the Home Office Conferences, where there was obviously always drive on the part of the Home Office as far as the Children's Committees were concerned; but that, as I say, is deferred till next year. (Miss O'Connor.) I think any exchange of views must be valuable. As you probably know, the C.C.A. are very opposed to any-

thing that might savour of a tightening of departmental supervision over local authorities, and are anxious really for more delegation of responsibility. But perhaps on the actual question you have asked I might ask Mr. Serby, who is the Treasurer for the county of Buckingham, to answer this question or to take it up. (Mr. Serby.) On the question of costs, facts and figures, you may know that there is a very full and general exchange between all the authorities as far as costs go. Recently there has been introduced a new form of these statistics which I think can be said to give in greater detail figures of expenditure on the children service in a way which enables comparisons to be made.

998. Who produced that?—It was produced by the Society of County Treasurers and the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants. In this form it was produced for the first time last year, and whilst many statistics of costs comparisons, without inquiry, are misleading, I think it does prove valuable to the Children's Committees in putting them on inquiry as to the reasons for big divergences in costs between their own authority and others.

999. This is an unofficial publication, not a Home Office publication?—No, it is published by these local authorities' financial officers. I should have thought, too, that through the children's officers, so to speak, there would have been a good deal of exchange of experience. (Mr. E. J. Holmes.) That is true. The Association of Children's Officers hold an Annual Conference and in most areas a Regional Conference is held quarterly, and there is a very considerable exchange of views and information. The Association does exist for that purpose. (Miss Harvie.) I think your suggestion is extremely valuable, and I think a further exchange of information, particularly between the Home Office and children's officers and Children's Committees would be helpful on purely practical things, for instance, new equipment that is found valuable in Children's Homes.

1000. I think we all have in mind that this might lead to central interference, and I have in mind that it would provide you with a forum on which you could tackle the Home Office if you found they were demanding too high a standard or were interfering too much. It would be a two-way traffic?—(Miss O'Connor.) That is just what it is not. They do tell us the standards we are to have, and they do tell us what they demand in the way of premises, such as lavatory accommodation and so on. It is a one-way traffic.

1001. It will not be a two-way traffic, surely, so long as you have all these hundreds of local authorities scattered

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around with no common forum?—I see. You are visualising it as a common forum, not with the authorities out in the wings?

1002. No?—I see.

Miss Ward.

1003. It is accentuated by this admirable digest, the very wide variety of expenditure or costs per child—and I think it is important to try to get at why there is this wide variety, and what could, if anything, be done to bring it into a more sort of general level of costs?—I do think that there is room for that, but I think on the other side my Association feel very strongly that this is a very young scheme, that it is in the nature of being experimental still, and that undoubtedly there are varying conditions in different authorities. We also feel that within the Counties.

1004. Could you indicate some of the conditions which you consider are varying conditions?—We have set them out, I think, very fully in our Memorandum, if I might just deal with that and enumerate them. You will find them dealt with on page 13, and the variations we give here in percentage figures we think are very apt to be misleading, and we "feel it is necessary to draw attention to the following factors (inter alia) influencing, and sometimes cumulatively, the degree to which boarding out is feasible in any county".

Chairman.

1005. Are not we just jumping ahead, going to boarding out already?—This is part of the variation, and it all comes in. Perhaps it is running ahead a bit, but I think we do very definitely want to make safeguards against uniformity and the possibility of it.

Chairman.] I think we might leave that.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1006. There is one point I should like to clear up. I think the idea of a Conference is very useful, especially if the Home Office is represented at those Conferences?—(Mr. Pollard.) We have only had one, which was called by the Home Office. (Mr. E. J. Holmes.) Committee members attend the annual conference of the Association of Children's Officers but the Home Office has not attended them. (Mr. Dacey.) Before the war both the C.C.A. and the A.M.C. had Annual Conferences as public assistance authorities.

Chairman.

1007. For children?—It was related to the subject of children, or it could have been brought within it.

1008. It was public assistance?—Yes, and boarding out was part of public assistance

in those days. Since the war there has been, shall I say, a frown, if not an embargo, upon Conferences, and as far as the C.C.A. and the A.M.C. are concerned, although they had made arrangements with the children's and welfare authorities for the holding of a Conference this year, they decided that having regard to the appeal for less Conferences and economy one should not be held. It was intended that this Conference should take the place, and be held annually, of the one initiated by the Home Office two years ago, to which reference was made earlier by the Town Clerk of Manchester. So that both Associations have in mind an Annual Conference as children and welfare authorities.

1009. It would be as well a Conference that would employ a certain permanent secretariat and some central body for collating experience, or perhaps make general representations to the Home Office should the Home Office couch their demands too high, or something like that?—That, I think, is a considerable development that had not been foreseen, because the secretariat of the Conference is in fact the secretariat of the C.C.A. and the A.M.C.

1010. Would you accept my personal view, that the care of children has its technique, and that it is a pity that hundreds of authorities should do it in isolation from each other, and that you want to have a lot of pooling of experience, and, if necessary, pooled representation to the Home Office, rather than having it done piecemeal? Would that meet with your agreement?—(Alderman Holmes.) On the question of Conferences, though on another subject which is still within those limits, the Home Office did call a Conference in fact on Remand Homes and on costs in Remand Homes on a regional basis. My authority was represented; I was not present myself. We ourselves as a Committee had been complaining about the cost of our Remand Homes, and we wanted to find out what we could do about it. There was a Regional Conference held at Leeds, I think, where certain recommendations were made, and the fact that a Conference between local authorities was called by the Home Office is some indication that both of us at least were keen to find out what could be done, so that there is a basis for a Conference there. As to the Annual Conference, that has already been explained, but that does prove that at least the success of the Conference from that point of view was that there would probably be one or two of them, though we do not know. But I want to emphasise the point that both sides were concerned and that a Conference was called, and if that can be extended over a wider field I think some good might come from that too. (Miss O'Connor.) We were

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definitely not thinking quite in those terms at the moment. We were thinking that the two associations could meet and pool their information; we are still all feeling our way.

1011. While you are feeling your way many millions of pounds are being spent?—Yes.

1012. I mean that both ratepayers' and taxpayers' money is being spent. It might not seem so much to each several local authority, but in the aggregate it is an enormous sum; the average cost per child is very high indeed, and it might be that that would be harming the interests of the children in the long run if the idea got abroad at all that they were run extravagantly or that no effort was being made to secure the necessary economies?—I think we are very well aware of that. (Mr. Dingle.) Might I add one point? These Conferences, of course, will be Conferences between the Children's Department of the Home Office, the Children's Committee and the children's officers. It is to a large extent a fact that both those bodies are responsible for improving standards all the time, but in local government it is the Finance Committees and the Treasurers who are checking on expenditure, and I do not think that much will come out of these Conferences in the way of economies unless Finance Committees and Treasurers are also at the Conferences. They would be inclined to scratch each other's backs otherwise.

1013. We have the City Treasurer of Hull and the Town Clerk of Manchester here. Those are details for later, really?—Yes.

Sir Fergus Graham.] I am afraid it is fundamental. I think that a technical advantage discovered in one area might well be tried in another, and it would not suggest or connote that that other area should drop what it was already doing, for technical Conferences are not really the same thing as an urge towards economy.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] That is a point that I was wanting to pursue, that the objection to Conferences now growing up, that is, to the generality of Conferences, is that they are about nothing in particular; they have to do with general discussion over a wide field, and do not really get down to the problem, in hand.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1014. What we want is a collation of information on the different problems in order that, without reducing standards, we could get efficiency and economy of administration, and then at the same time see that the Conference must be on specific

issues?—(Alderman Holmes.) I agree with you.

1015. What you have said gives, I think, a ray of hope on that?—That is why I mentioned it.

1016. The point is that a Conference should deal with particular issues. The result cannot, of course, be binding on any particular authority?—That was the reason why I mentioned that one. I agree with what the Honourable Member has said. That is why I think they should have specific terms of reference if they are going to get anywhere with it. Then the question is: What should those terms of reference be, and by whom would they be made?

Chairman.

1017. As an example I shall answer that. If you had a Conference on how to run Children's Homes more economically, it might emerge from it that the local authorities thought that the Home Office demands as to staffing and accommodation were too high, and so on?—(Mr. Pollard.) It might be a Conference where they were looking at the question of how they could improve that standard.

1018. Yes, but you would have to give that Conference its terms of reference?—It is a question of enthusiasm running away with economy. (Mr. E. J. Holmes.) You are asking if more information could be exchanged. The Home Office collect a mass of information from every local authority on the 30th November each year, but they never publish it.

1019. No. They are very cagey, I know?—I feel from that that there is information which could be helpful even in the direction you have in mind if it were published and made available to the various local authorities.

Chairman.] Yes, I think that is very true.

Miss Ward.

1020. Do they ever send any portion of that information?—A Home Office inspector will call, perhaps, on a local authority with papers in front of him and will say: "The average for the country is so-and-so. I notice you are so-and-so." The information is used in that way.

Chairman.

1021. You do not get it?—No. We could not get it officially.

Miss Ward.

1022. But there have been suggestions arising out of information collected on some valuable aspect of the situation, but that has never really been handed on?—The whole of the information is not handed

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on. We may get a Home Office inspector discussing point which arise from it. As a matter of fact, on Saturday there was a meeting of the Midland Branch of the Association of Children's Officers, and the senior Home Office inspector came along with this information and discussed it fairly fully with us, with the result that there was an exchange of technical information which I think the Honourable Member here has in mind. (Mr. Pollard.) One of the reasons for this particular publication was that there were no financial statistics available of the Children's Service, it being a new service, and it was thought that those financial statistics would be of value, not only to the officers and associations that had compiled them, namely, the Treasurers of local authorities, but to members of Children's Committees, and in many cases those are circulated and placed before each member.

1023. What is your local authority?—Hull. I am the City Treasurer of Hull. Mr. Dingle is the Town Clerk of Manchester.

1024. I am not trying to make an attack on Manchester, but Manchester has the distinction of running the most expensive Nursery in the country. Do not you think you would benefit from other people's experience with a view to bringing that figure down?—(Mr. Dingle.) I think we could bring costs down very quickly if we could build new and smaller homes. It is unfortunate that that Nursery is a legacy from the old days; when we took over it was housing 120 infants. Because there was danger arising from an epidemic of enteritis, it was brought home to us that a large establishment had to be reduced in numbers and divided so as to have four streams of children, in order to avoid cross infection. As a result this is now an expensive Children's Nursery and it will remain so until we can build an alternative Children's Nursery or Nurseries, and then use this building for some other purpose.

Mr. Wade.

1025. Do you mean that it is too large?—The policy is not to have very big Children's Nurseries because of the risk of infection.

1026. But this particular one is too large?—Yes.

1027. That is the reason for the high cost?—Yes.

Miss Ward.

1028. Would it be fair to say that your opinion is that the Home Office could make better use of the information that they do acquire, and that if they made better use of that information it would be

of value to local authorities in reducing their costs? Is that a fair summing-up?—Yes. I would also add that the information should be made available to the whole of local government. Coming back to my first point, I think that Children's Committees tend to be pressure groups in favour of raising standards. It is quite natural, and I do not blame them. It is the Finance Committees that have to act as devil's advocates. But this scheme has never been approved in detail by the Home Office. They have to tell you, for instance, how many lavatories and how many wash bowls you should put in, and the Home Office have to approve that and you have to do it. That is all tending to become general practice as a result of the deliberate statutory provisions in the Act, that you must have a separate Children's Committee and a separate children's officer.

Chairman.

1029. Would your point be met if the Home Office were induced to publish an annual return?—In general form?

1030. Yes, and generally available?—Yes.

1031. Your point would be met by that?—I think so, partly.

1032. May I go on to another point? In your Memorandum the County Councils Association give interesting examples of excessive or apparently excessive Home Office demands on capital equipment. Would both Associations say they thought that the Home Office demands as far as general running goes are too high to start with?—(Miss O'Connor.) I think that their standards are rather high and are too rigid, and if there are premises that would do they refuse to reduce these standards.

1033. That is capital expenditure. I am asking about the daily running expenditure, the weekly cost per child. That is what I am touching on now?—I thought you meant capital cost, premises and so on.

1034. No?—Miss Harvie could answer the question about general running costs. (Miss Harvie.) The question is whether running costs could be reduced?

1035. Or whether they are unduly inflated by unnecessary Home Office demands?—I think not. There are all sorts of running costs; for instance, the very high costs that are given for Nurseries, which are largely accounted for by the high staffing ratios, which I think myself are very important in Nurseries in order to prevent infection and to give the children adequate care. I do not think that the staffing demands in Children's Homes are too high as laid down by the Home Office. The only place where I think the demands are slightly high are in such cases as we have quoted in the actual setting up of Homes.

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Miss Ward.] It is the actual Homes, the layout and that aspect of it?

Sir Fergus Graham.

1036. Yes. That is the point I had in mind. (Miss O'Connor.) We have cited a case here—I think this is Mr. Martin's authority, so that perhaps he could tell you about that. (Mr. Martin.) That is Kent. (Miss O'Connor.) Miss Harvie would know about that. We do speak about it in our Memorandum. (Miss Harvie.) Yes. It is on page 11 of the Memorandum, Sir. We quote the case of a house that was owned by the Committee. I would rather like to make it clear that this house was inherited by the Children's Committee; it had been bought previously by the Education Committee, but it was not needed by them, and so the Children's Committee inherited this property for them to see what use they could make of it. They planned it first of all, as we describe in our Memorandum, as a Home for 23 children, and then we thought that we could make more use of this Home, and we said to ourselves: "Let us make the fullest possible use of it"; but because the Home Office were setting high standards with regard to small Children's Homes, they did object very strongly to this proposal, so that finally it had to be abandoned. That did seem to our authority very extravagant, because it meant that we just had to abandon the house and the scheme. No doubt if we had had the house we could have made good use of it, although perhaps small Children's Homes would have been a more ideal method of dealing with the children. I myself would not have recommended the Committee acquiring this house in the first place, but as we had got it we would have liked to have made use of it.

Miss Ward.

1037. That emphasises your statement about the lack of flexibility?—(Miss O'Connor.) Yes, that is the point. We have great difficulties. Sometimes they have agreed to a house, and then they have suddenly found it wants a few more bathrooms. We feel that is quite unnecessary. We are joggled about over little things, such as the lavatory accommodation, bathrooms and so on. We all want to look after the children well, but these details are not essential to real care.

Chairman.

1038. Is there a general feeling amongst the witnesses that the Home Office requirements should be reviewed?—That they should be related to possibilities in the different Counties and that they should not be so rigid.

Miss Ward.

1039. It is all bound up with flexibility?—Yes. The Ministry of Education have amended their regulations, and we feel that it would be a very good idea if the Home Office would do the same, and if they did it in some sort of consultation with local authorities.

Chairman.

1040. Have you mentioned that?—Yes; that is what the Ministry of Education did.

1041. You refer to that on page 6 of your Memorandum?—Yes.

Miss Ward.

1042. Would it be an indiscreet question to ask as to whether you have found the Ministry of Education more co-operative than the Home Office, or is that going a little too far?—(Mr. Dacey.) I think the answer might be indiscreet. I can say as far as I know the general opinion is that the Ministry of Education are more co-operative than the Home Office. (Miss O'Connor.) It is a much more firmly established and an older relationship. We have learned to work together over a period.

Chairman.

1043. But it rather reinforces the argument that there is room for greater consultation?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) I think that is probably true. Although a Committee's plans go to the Home Office, the latter have never published any standards for children's homes. Their inspectors have had documents in their pockets, and their headquarters officials presumably have had some document or other on their desks, but there has never been any published standard. Individual projects have been considered and individual recommendations have been made, and out of those individual recommendations this feeling of, perhaps, a rather high standard has come.

Sir Fergus Graham.

1044. Are not there definite standards, such as the cubic capacity of a room for so many children under the age of 12?—Nothing has ever been published. (Miss Harvie.) They have been published in connection with Nurseries, but they have never been indicated in connection with Children's Homes; that is to say, we learn by experience on each new project we put up.

Chairman.

1045. That is very important. Then you have a heading at the bottom of page 11 of your Memorandum, "Sanitary Accommodation", and you say: "Washbasins: 1 for every 3 children aged two years and over"?—That is for Nurseries. (Mr. Dacey.) Residential Nurseries.

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Mr. *Dryden Brook*.

1046. One reason for the difference in the attitude of the two Ministries may be that we are too near, as it were, the Curtis Committee Report yet for the Home Office to have adapted itself?—(Miss *O'Connor*.) Yes, probably.

1047. The Curtis Committee Report was rather a bleak document, to put it mildly, in relation to some of the bodies that were responsible for Children's Homes at that time. There is time for the Home Office to get over that. But what I think we are after now is that after a lapse of time there should be rather more co-operation and that local authorities should be taken into consultation?—(Alderman *Holmes*.) I would not like it to go on record that a local authority has no opportunity of discussing these matters with the Home Office, because that is not correct. When we started out with our scheme in my own city, we took it over from the old Poor Law. The welfare services, of course, are now administered under the Children Act. But we wanted certain alterations made and we submitted plans. That is where difficulty seemed to come in. What we actually wanted was a new home altogether. We are now under notice to quit, to get out of this place, but there is no possible hope of getting any money on this one. But when we sent this plan up we were given opportunities of discussing it with them. I want that clearly understood.

1048. But take the case of a local authority discussing a specific plan—not of local authorities discussing general plans?—If all local authorities do not work on the same lines there are differences between local authorities; the standards may be higher in some local authorities than in others, quite apart from what the Home Office may say. I want that to be clearly understood, too.

Sir *Fergus Graham*.

1049. Is not there also a very great difference in the psychology of the particular area that may be being dealt with?—What I am trying to deal with—

Mr. *Dryden Brook*.] What Alderman Holmes has just said brings us to the central problem we have to face. There may be this consultation between individual local authorities and the Home Office, but what we are wanting to find is some general means of consultation whereby the experience of one local authority may be placed at the disposal of other local authorities, under the guidance of the Home Office.

Chairman.

1050. Or the complaints of one local authority?—Yes. (Mr. *E. J. Holmes*.)

Might I say that I think there is something that has not been mentioned this morning, and that is that the A.M.C. and the C.C.A. both have Children's Committees to which representatives from various parts of the country come? General questions are dealt with by those, and the Chairmen and Secretaries of those Children's Committees go to the Home Office to discuss specific points. They have the sort of permanent secretariat that you spoke of as being necessary to that consultation.

1051. And yet there seems to be a general feeling that the Home Office act in a rather arbitrary way in setting high standards and thus raising costs?—(Mr. *Dacey*.) But is not that to be inferred from the two cases given at the bottom of page 10 and the top of page 11? Quite obviously the Home Office must have a standard. If they say to a local authority: "Nine lavatory basins for sixteen children are not enough; you must have one more," then they must be very precise in their standards to say, "you must have one more."

1052. But I think it is also inferred that the machinery of which the last witness spoke of your two associations does not seem to work in so far as making joint representations and protests to the Home Office are concerned?—It is not designed for making protests about what I call the running of a home. The associations are here for broad questions of administrative policy; they are not here to discuss what I might call the actual operation or the mechanics of children's homes. Those are technical questions which we would not dream of touching. But on broad questions of policy or administration we do get representations from local authorities and we make representations to the Home Office. Unless we were particularly to ask for children's officers and members of committees to be associated in the reports on what the standards for the homes are to be, that would not come in; that is not within our province.

1053. Why have you not asked for it?—I think merely because it has not occurred to the representatives concerned, but obviously it has now, or will now, occur to them. (Miss *O'Connor*.) I think what one Hon. Member said about the Curtis Report and its emotional repercussions did mean that when these children's committees were set up, members of the council themselves behind them were most anxious to provide everything possible for the children and they did not count the cost at all. Now they are beginning to realize that it is a very expensive service and they are now, like all of us, very interested in coming here and giving evidence and seeing what can be done to make this service run more

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economically. But still there are various factors that perhaps cannot be brought out into the light.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1054. One more question on this point. The Home Office now I take it lays down minimum standards. What would be the reaction of the witnesses here if the Home Office attempted to lay down maximum standards?—(Mr. Serby.) I think the general opinion, which is very widely held, is that the difficulty about those standards is that everybody agrees they are both desirable and necessary. In the local authority sphere many people do think that, instead of treating them as standards to be aimed at and achieved as and when possible, the Home Office, through their inspectors, tend to insist on being treated as minimum standards, regardless rather of the conditions of the times and of the country in general. I think that that is a view that is very largely held by members of local authorities and by their officers. That is the crux of the difficulty. (Miss Harvie.) I think that if maximum standards were laid down it would be extraordinarily unhelpful really; we just would not know quite where we were. What we want is a general standard of guidance.

Chairman.

1055. Do you think that the Home Office should be encouraged to ask for their inspectors to be allowed to see the accounts of various homes?—(Miss O'Connor.) No; I think that is one of the things we are very much against on principle. (Mr. Serby.) I would venture to suggest that would be hardly practicable. Inspectors are not accountants or even used to dealing with figures.

Chairman.] Quite. It would mean specially trained people.

Sir Fergus Graham.] But you are still faced with the fact that some people are quartermasters by nature, as it were, and some are wonderful housekeepers.

Chairman.

1056. Yes; but I imagine people like Mr. Serby and Mr. Pollard would tackle them. They are treasurers and accountants?—I think that we should always be very happy indeed to meet representatives of the Home Office in that field if it was likely to result in benefit to our authorities. (Mr. Pollard.) I have no doubt at all about this. The Home Office do, after all, get returns, and so on, on which they have to base their grant in connection with this service. Therefore, they have quite a considerable body of information, which might not always be in complete detail, available to them. If

they want further details, my experience of the Home Office or of any other Government Department is that they are not backward in asking for it.

1057. Do you think it would have a healthy effect on local authorities if they could see that, for example, in the case of one of them their expenditures were twice anybody's else's, and that it would stimulate them to reduce? In short, do you think that more publication is the answer?—Yes, I think that was the purpose of those returns.

1058. Which ought of course to be a Government return, not a voluntary one?—(Mr. Serby.) May I suggest this provides the very thing you have in mind? This has the widest possible circulation throughout the country, going to all local authorities and all their children's committees.

1059. Why did it have to be a voluntary or unofficial publication?—(Mr. Pollard.) These two organisations that are mentioned there produce quite a number of these statistical publications for this very purpose of enabling local authorities to keep an eye on comparative costs. (Mr. Dacey.) And every other local authority service. (Miss O'Connor.) Yes—Police, Health Services, Weights and Measures—all of them. (Alderman Holmes.) And rates, too.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1060. Might we ask if the witnesses would supply each member of the Sub-Committee with a copy?—(Mr. Dacey.) I understood that it had been already supplied. I am sorry. (Copies handed in.) The memorandum of the Association specifically refers to the accompanying printed return; it was certainly intended that you should have it.

Chairman.

1061. Thank you very much?—It is on the top of page 14. (Miss O'Connor.) We do have annual audits; the thing is watched very carefully.

1062. Yes, but it is no good explaining to this Sub-Committee that everything in the garden is lovely?—I am not trying to.

1063. You see, we do get these serious discrepancies in this very expensive service? (Mr. E. J. Holmes.) You have spoken of Home Office standards. I think you should know that the Home Office have been very much easier to deal with on that matter—at least, this is my view—in the last twelve months than previously. I very much doubt whether any of the letters which the County Councils Association have quoted have arisen in the last twelve months. My own experience is that recently there has been a much easier standard. In Birmingham, when we have

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sent our plans, we have had letters offering suggestions, and not requiring any answer as to whether the local authority decided to adopt those suggestions or not.

1064. From which you infer that there has been an economy drive in the Home Office?—From which I infer that they have rather departed from any rigid application of standards such as they may have had over twelve months ago. They are more prepared now to consider each case on its merits, and they do consider each case on its merits. (Mr. Martin.) There is a small case which rather suggests the contrary which I should like to quote. We have recently bought a home for twelve children, and there has to be a sick room in that home; the room we have is 61 square feet, but the regulation says it must be 70 square feet. We are told at the moment that we ought to divide up another room to provide one of the proper size. I understand that there is nothing in housing law to prevent a room of that size being used for that purpose. That is merely an example which I had brought to my notice the other day.

1065. But, granted all that, what is the right remedy for this Sub-Committee to recommend? Surely it can only be some form of joint representation or a joint review of the Home Office requirements?—(Miss O'Connor.) More flexibility in the minds of the Home Office, more adaptability: that is the chief thing.

1066. You just cannot recommend that people's natures should change?—No, it is rather absurd to say that their natures should change; their whole approach could be altered; they could be asked to be more adaptable and more flexible.

Miss Ward.

1067. It is a question of placing greater confidence in the ability of Children's Committees of local authorities to care for those children who come within their purview?—That is just what we want.

1068. That is the simple answer?—(Mr. Dacey.) The great difficulty is that the Home Office can say, "Unless your room is ten by eight instead of ten by seven you will get no grant." That is the difficulty. Therefore, flexibility in connection with this matter is taken away by the fact that the Government can insist, through the Home Office, on your providing one extra foot of cubic space.

Chairman.

1069. Have any of the witnesses examples of any cases where the Home Office has actually refused a grant?—(Miss Harvie.) In connection with this case of

the house which we were not allowed to use they indicated that a grant would not be given.

Miss Ward.] What date was that?

Chairman.

1070. My personal view is that that kind of thing is largely bluff?—(Mr. Dacey.) With great respect, Sir, from experience we have had of the Department, we would be very loth to say that. We would be very glad to act upon it if it were so.

Miss Ward.

1071. It would be a bad principle if a Government Department really did go in for bluff, would it not?—Yes.

Chairman.

1072. It would be interesting to hear if anybody does know of a single case in which a grant has been refused?—(Mr. Dingle.) A Children's Committee will not go on with a particular kind of expenditure if they are told that grant will be refused; the Finance Committee will not allow them. (Miss O'Connor.) We are not looking for bluff on the part of Ministries. Perhaps we ought to be. We will take your hint.

Miss Ward.

1073. No, I do not think it is a good principle?—(Alderman Holmes.) I think the point of view of the A.M.C. is as set out on page 8 of our Memorandum: "In our view, one of the most effective contributions that could be made to the reduction of expenditure would be for local authorities to be given greater freedom to fix their own detailed standards within a broad national policy. . . ." That coincides with what has been said by Miss O'Connor.

Chairman.

1074. But there is also the interest of the taxpayer to consider, who provides half the cost, and the problem is to marry his interests in with the interests of local authorities?—We go on further to say, if you notice, still on page 8: "The laying down of national standards, coupled with a rigid control, is not, in our opinion, conducive to economy, but quite the reverse, and economies are much more likely to come from the exercise by the local authority of a freedom to experiment". I wanted to make that point earlier, that there are differences in local authorities, and the approach by different authorities to the problem is also quite different. If one local authority can experiment and ultimately reduce costs, surely particulars of their methods should be sent to the Home Office and shared by others. We have no chance of doing that in these circumstances.

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Miss Ward.

1075. Could I ask the treasurers here whether they feel that if greater responsibility were given to local authorities that would help them in their problems in connection with the children's committees?—(Mr. Pollard.) I think that the finance committees should have greater opportunities for discussion with children's committees as to what expenditure can reasonably be afforded on a particular service such as this one. The answer is I think Yes, because at the moment, as the Town Clerk of Manchester said earlier, the tendency is for finance committees to be informed that the children's committee have taken this up with the Home Office and that the Home Office require so-and-so. Thus the finance committee feel that their chance is killed at the start.

Chairman.

1076. They feel that they have been by-passed?—Yes.

Miss Ward.

1077. Their authority is really undermined?—Yes. I should like to make this point, too, that the mere fact that a Government grant is payable towards a service does not make a local authority, shall I say, more extravagant. A local authority looks at the whole of the expenditure, in my experience. They do not just say, "Oh, well, that will only cost us half of that; therefore, we will spend so much more." They do not do that at all. I should like that to be quite clear.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] We seem to have got into an extraordinary position. We started off this discussion by trying to find some means of putting the experience of those local authorities which had low costs at the disposal of those with high costs. Now we have reached an extraordinary position, that, in order to achieve that, we must give local authorities more freedom. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that we have got into a contradictory position.

Chairman.] Yes.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I am all for giving local authorities more freedom, but the particular problem we have to face is, how are we going to put those local authorities which have high costs in relation to those local authorities which have low costs, and at the same time give them more freedom? There has got to be some body which is, if you like, able to bring the two sides of that equation together, and what I am looking for from our friends here this morning is their reaction to that problem.

Chairman.] I agree.

Miss Ward.] Could I add to that, that perhaps the finance people and the

treasurers would say that some finance committees have got greater control over their children's committees?

Mr. Dryden Brook.] That does not get us a step further.

Chairman.

1078. It seems to me that Mr. Brook has stated the problem absolutely?—(Mr. Dingle.) I should like to emphasise something about this control. We had it in the Ministry of Education when we had to submit every school plan to the architects of the Ministry, and what happened was that the architects of the Ministry became a leaning post for every architect building a school in the provinces, and you found that the second or the third tier architect in the City Architect's office, or in private practice, was drawing up plans and taking them up to the Ministry's Architect, instead of the senior architect devoting his mind to trying to evolve new methods and building possibly better and more cheaply. The Ministry of Education have now withdrawn the leaning post and they have said: "We will not ask you to submit your detailed plans any longer." And they have added: "Provided you can certify that you are complying with the minimum standards as to light and air, we will approve without seeing your plans." That result was produced by the Manpower Committee. But unfortunately the Home Office on all their services refused to give away as much as other Ministries did, and that is why we still have to send an architect up to the Home Office to ask the Home Office architect to tell us what we ought to do. Once that has been done, I think you will understand that members of children's committees do not feel very safe in standing up and saying, "Well, I advocate lower standards than the Home Office would accept". The treasurers and the finance committees here have no answer. I am only saying that in regard to buildings and equipment.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1079. I agree with all that; but it does not touch the problem we are up against. The plain fact is—on the evidence we have got already—that we do find very wide variations in costs of children's homes and all kinds of institutions of that kind, and what we are wanting to get at is, what kind of machinery can be devised which may help to even them out, without lowering standards, because we want to have maximum standards. We want to see if we can find some machinery whereby, through an exchange of information, there may be some approximation of economy and efficiency achieved?—(Miss O'Connor.) Have we not been discussing that matter on the

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general lines of the cost of the Children's Service as a whole up to now? On your question now there is no room for more exchange. We are still discussing that, are we not?

Chairman.

1080. Yes?—The County Councils Association on page 6, paragraph 7, have stated the position quite neatly, I think: "The relatively high cost of certain parts of the Children Service is to a large extent the result of the standards maintained by local authorities in respect of accommodation and child care and also those recommended by the Home Office." I think that is the point we are really discussing now.

1081. We are really rather discussing—I think Mr. Brook put it very clearly—what sort of machinery your organisations can set up which will conduce to economy by the pooling of information or joint representations to the Home Office about standards or anything else?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) I think part of the answer is that children's committees and children's officers visit other areas and see what is being done there. The Treasurers' Association's figures came out a month ago and I have extracted the figures for London and the ten largest cities, because coming from Birmingham that is the most comparable thing. I have seen all their costs and I am going to see one or two other cities to see where they are cheaper than we are.

1082. I think we have thrashed this out. We shall have to think about it. May we now turn to this question of boarding out? The Sub-Committee do feel very strongly that this is almost a unique occasion in history where the interests of a service and the interests of economy coincide. We are very much impressed by the fact that in Scotland something over 70 per cent. of their children in care are boarded out. We quite realize that you cannot fix a minimum percentage for each local authority, but you can pay—and should pay—attention to percentage figures taken as an average for the whole country, and England comes out rather badly with 39 per cent. in the current year. That is the estimate. As I say, we quite see the difficulties; we fully recognise that there is a different tradition in England; but we are left with an uneasy feeling that there is a lack of urge on the part of some local authorities. I was wondering whether local authorities should not demand a list of children unsuitable for boarding out, and why, and then see that all the others had boarding out put down as a primary objective.

Sir Fergus Graham.] May I draw attention to paragraph 20 of the memorandum furnished to us by the County Councils Association, where it is brought to the

notice of the Sub-Committee that in one county 85 per cent. of the children in children's homes were not fit? I should like to hear about that.

Chairman.

1083. Yes. (Miss O'Connor.) We understood this was from Staffordshire. Nobody present has experience of this. Miss Harvie was present when this memorandum was written. (Miss Harvie.) I think that is perhaps true of many authorities' homes.

Miss Ward.

1084. A very high percentage are not suitable for boarding out?—Yes.

Chairman.

1085. They are already boarding out 49 per cent. of their children, so that it means that 85 per cent. of 51 per cent. will never be suitable for boarding out?—(Mr. Dingle.) I presume that included all the short stay cases.

1086. We have already had it in evidence from the Home Office and from other people that they regard short stay cases as just as suitable for boarding out as long stay cases—much to my surprise?—The people to whom you send the children to be boarded out do not.

1087. They do in Scotland?—(Miss Harvie.) It is done in England also. It is done in my authority and in a number of other authorities I know. We concentrate very much on boarding out short stay cases and it is very successful. Of course, you cannot expect to get 100 per cent. success or 100 per cent. of them boarded out, but we consider boarding out first of all for short stay cases.

1088. Would you say that a person running any children's home regards it as his primary objective to get his children boarded out? Is there not some clinging on to children on the part of children's homes?—It is not generally the responsibility of the people who are running them to get the children boarded out, but they do have a say in it.

1089. I quite accept that?—I think that attitude is disappearing very quickly; in my own county I do not find very much of it, though I have come across it occasionally. However, my staff of Welfare Officers know quite well how to deal with it. So that I would not say that it seriously holds up our boarding out.

Mr. Wade.] One question on this paragraph. The assumption appears to be that the position of this particular county is—I do not know whether you say abnormal, but at any rate different from other counties, and then there is a reference to "the unreliability of any inference drawn from

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mere comparative percentage figures." Does that mean that in this particular county, where 85 per cent. of those at present in children's homes are not and never will be suitable for boarding out, that is because of the peculiar nature or of the factors in the particular county, and are not we to draw any inference in regard to other counties from it?

Sir Fergus Graham.] Is not it partly because there are also so many children boarded out in that particular county that, consequently, you are left with the dregs, and it is 85 per cent. of the dregs?

Chairman.

1090. If you take 85 cent. of 51 per cent., that makes about 43 per cent. of the total, does it not?—(Mr. Dacey.) Yes.

Chairman.] There must surely be something wrong if any county seriously says that 43 per cent. of the children coming into care are not and never will be suitable for boarding out.

Sir Fergus Graham.] Surely those are children who are there and who have already done their active boarding out.

Chairman.

1091. Yes, 43 per cent. of the children who came into care. (Miss O'Connor.) I do not think we know the details about this. (Mr. Dacey.) The Chairman is right: it is 85 per cent. of the children in homes—in other words, as there are 50 per cent. already boarded out, it follows that the figure of 43 per cent. is the total number of children in care.

1092. Surely that is a statement that will not bear examination; 43 per cent. of the children coming into care are not and never will be suitable for living in private houses? That cannot be right. (Miss Harvie.) I would agree with that wholeheartedly—in fact, I myself would have put the percentage as high as possibly 50 per cent.

1093. But that is a terrible confession of failure on the part of the Children's Department?—No, Sir, I do not agree it is a confession of failure.

Miss Ward.

1094. It is the parents.—As we have indicated in our memorandum, it is a very serious thing to board out a child who is unsuitable for boarding out.

Chairman.

1095. Then ought not all your attention to be directed to making them suitable?—You cannot change human nature completely. If you have a child of ten or eleven who has already had some pretty disturbing experiences he may be completely

unsuitable for boarding out and he might never settle in a private home. You will give him the best opportunities of becoming a decent citizen by keeping him in a small children's home. That is much better than attempting to board him out, one place breaking down, then putting him into another foster home and that breaking down, so that you have the ghastly record of people being moved thirteen times in twelve years. I know of one case like that. The result of all that is that they end up as candidates for mental hospitals or for prison when they reach adult age. (Miss O'Connor.) Children remain immensely fond of their mother, whatever sort of mother she is. It is one of the most difficult problems, is it not? (Miss Harvie.) It is a tremendously interesting and important problem. I think that all children's officers are anxious to board out because it is good for the children and it also makes for economy. But we are facing the problem now by examining all children who come into care for long periods very carefully with the object of finding out or of assessing which are suitable for boarding out.

Chairman.] Ought not your primary object be to see to the boarding out of every child in care and that every child must first of all be looked at?

Miss Ward.

1096. The advice is not to over-emphasize boarding out?—(Miss O'Connor.) Can we not say that the purpose is to board out every child who is suitable for boarding out?

Miss Ward.] It is a failure of parenthood.

Chairman.

1097. Children who come into care are a cross-section of the population on which misfortune has fallen.—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) No.

1098. If you regard them as isolated specimens of human nature, they are not very different from other children.—Yes, quite considerably. (Mr. Dingle.) A lot of them come into care because they are not properly equipped to face the world.

1099. What proportion, do you think?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) I should say that 30 or 40 per cent. come into care because family life has broken down. It does not break down suddenly; there is usually a considerable period of difficulty, perhaps lasting for years, before that happens. I would go the whole way with Miss Harvie, that there are considerable numbers of children who are really difficult problems. I think it may be a gradually diminishing factor in our work. In Birmingham the number of children in residential care has decreased

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by something like 10 per cent. in two years and the number of children under five in residential care has decreased by 40 per cent.

1100. How do you account for the Scottish figures?—I am wondering whether you have taken into account the fact that there may be a very big difference in the type of child taken into care and the number taken into care. Glasgow and Birmingham have almost exactly the same size population. I know that Glasgow has a far higher percentage of children boarded out than Birmingham, but Glasgow has well over twice as many children in care as Birmingham. Birmingham has concentrated on getting its children back to their own parents, and in the last eighteen months, even in the case of children abandoned, we have got 60 per cent. back to their parents.

1101. But it still does not alter the fact that 70 per cent. of Glasgow children are boarded out?—I quite agree.

1102. I am speaking from memory now, but I think that there are only 1,700 children in local authority homes in the whole of Scotland?—I would not know that figure. (Miss O'Connor.) On page 13 of our memorandum, paragraph 17 (d), we draw attention to a factor influencing boarding out: "(d) the ratio which the number of children taken into care by the county council bears to the total population of the county." That varies very much. We cite the case of Cambridgeshire, for instance, with a smaller number of children in care than the Isle of Ely which has a much smaller population. We also quote the cases of Lancashire and Middlesex.

1103. When you get small counties you get these wide variations, but in another year's time they may have their positions reversed?—Middlesex and Lancashire are big counties, but there again there are wide variations.

1104. Yes.—That is a very important thing, I think. (Alderman Holmes.) On behalf of the A.M.C., I should like to make this point, that boarding out is the ideal solution if it can be accomplished all the way through. But I do not want this Sub-Committee to think that no effort is made in regard to boarding out. We do make a very great effort to board out; but if you do not get offers of homes you cannot do it. Consequently, there will always be, I feel sure, a certain number of children's homes where it will be found impossible to board out. There have been some cases where we have had to change children from home to home and then have had to bring them back.

1105. Boarding out is a relatively new idea in England; it has not got a tradition

behind it; and there is a residue of children who have been so long in children's homes that they are not very suitable for boarding out, but as they grow up the proportion that is suitable will become higher?—Yes.

1106. The point on which I should like an answer from all of you is this. Do you for one moment think that there is a keen realisation all over the country of the need for suitable foster homes?—(Mr. Dingle.) There is in the minds of children's officers and children's committees, but not in the mind of the public sufficiently; I do not think the public have got up to that yet. In Manchester we have far more than doubled the number of boarded out children in the last three years, but there is more resistance I think among people who live in large cities than among people living in the counties. But gradually we have got to educate the public to realise what good social work they can do by accepting these children.

1107. I was wondering myself whether it is right that education of the public should be left to local sporadic efforts or whether some national effort should not be made. After all, even if you got 5,000 homes for two children each you would save the Treasury £1,000,000 and the local authorities £1,000,000 a year. Those are very big sums. There must be, I should have thought, many tens of thousands of suitable homes longing for children on whom to lavish their affection?—(Mr. Pollard.) There is a reference to that in the A.M.C. memorandum on page 9, paragraph (1).

1108. My point was that you really need a national campaign, and that it is no good just advertising in local newspapers?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) I think it would help, at least as to "background". After all, I do not think that Beecham's Pills are successful because there is one advertisement, but because there has been an advertisement of them for fifty years. (Mr. Pollard.) That was the purpose of this paragraph as far as the A.M.C. were concerned.

1109. I believe that if I went down into the street and stopped the first twenty people I met and said to them, "Do you realise there is a need for foster homes and parents who will take one or two children for long or short stays," their first reaction would be, "No."?—(Miss Harvie.) I think myself that there is very great danger in this idea of a mass appeal. We have had some experience in our own authority through the films and local advertisements. One does get an enormous number of applications as a result, but after you have investigated them all the percentage of successes is really very small, so that one often wonders whether it is worth a welfare officer's time investigating them.

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1110. I wonder, Miss Harvie, if you realise the tremendous financial implications of all this?—I think I do, Sir.

1111. Or if you realise that there is a difference in the cost per child of something like £150 or £160 a year?—(Miss O'Connor.) I am sure all the committees realise it. But you know we have got to go beyond that. The Curtis Report was a sort of focal point of it, and we have got to get away from the bad old days when people would take children simply for commercial reasons. That is why a national campaign or appeal might result in causing very great difficulties for local authorities, because all sorts of people who are utterly unsuited may apply and be angry if they are not accepted. The child, too, has to be fitted for boarding out.

1112. We are not for one moment underestimating the great difficulties and the great dangers?—I think you are underestimating the efforts made by local authorities, are you not?

1113. No. What I am saying is that for once the interests of the child and the interests of economy coincide, and I doubt whether there is sufficient realisation of the percentage that can be boarded out, judging by the Scottish figures, and also sufficient effort to deal with a different tradition in England?—(Alderman Holmes.) I think every Children's Committee appreciates this is a service where the heart can run away with the head if you are not careful. We are always on our toes to find out what we can do. Our experience in Hull has been fairly good; we have got a fair number of applications as a result of our propaganda which has been put over. We have had meetings with the Townswomen's Guild, the Co-operative Women's Guild, with teachers and with parents' associations; we have sent our welfare officers there to give lectures and talks and we have had advertisements in the Press. As I say, we have had a fairly good response.

1114. I see you have got a figure of 50 per cent?—We have a fairly good response; but there is always this danger that has been pointed out, and that is that you may get the wrong type. Therefore, they have all got to be vetted. In one or two instances you may find, as we have found, that you have to take a child from one foster parent. But I do think that from the point of view of good sound propaganda, carried out logically and systematically and with proper safeguards, the result which you get after vetting them by the children's officer is very encouraging. I think that a great deal of good can come out of a campaign of that sort.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1115. In the light of what you know about Scotland, may I put this question to Mr. Holmes? In the case of Hull, what kind of area do you draw upon for these foster homes?—Both inside and outside the city.

1116. Because in Scotland, if I remember aright, we had the case of Glasgow quoted, covering practically the whole of Scotland?—We have some boarded outside.

1117. If you take an area like the West Riding of Yorkshire, you are met with a completely different problem in regard to boarding out if you go outside the cities, and that is especially true of the East Riding, which is comparatively sparsely populated, there being no large industrial towns. Is there any difference or any more difficulty in industrial centres than there is in the country districts in finding boarding out accommodation?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) There is very much greater difficulty as far as large towns are concerned; generally speaking, in England, it is not easy to get, in town or country districts, the sort of homes which we want. Birmingham has a waiting list of foster homes, but each of those homes wants a specific type of child (usually a young girl), which I have not got available. I want homes for boys and for short stay children. The county areas are just as hard up for those specific homes as we are.

Chairman.

1118. But you do not insist on boarding out in rural districts?—No; if we are offered a home in a rural district we take it.

1119. If you were offered one in Erdington, for instance, you would take it just the same?—Yes; the majority of our boarded out children are in Birmingham, something like 85 per cent. If I could refer to this question of urgency, I myself have addressed 200 meetings in Birmingham on this specific question of boarding out—I know my talk off by heart now! I do think we regard it as important, even if our percentage is 28, which is lower than the average.

1120. You are given as 31 per cent. on this list?—I am quite willing to accept that.

1121. That is at the 30th November last?—I am prepared to accept a higher figure. That would represent an improvement over 28 per cent. in the previous year. We have pushed adoption very considerably. Had we not pushed adoption and had many of these children who are now adopted still boarded out, we should have probably been up to 40 per cent. We did that in the best interests of the children.

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1122. You have a follow-up service for adoption?—No; once they have been adopted, it is finished, because we have no legal power to follow up adopted children. We would never advise adoption unless we felt about 99 per cent. certain of success.

Miss Ward.

1123. The safeguards in regard to adoption in this country have been very much tightened up?—I think so.

1124. And they are really satisfactory now, are they not?—Yes. (Miss O'Connor.) At seaside places and towns on the coast, or even in country areas, it is very hard to get children boarded out, because they will keep them for eight or nine months when they are empty and then for the rest of the year they do not want them. It is a small point, but it is another factor in the situation.

1125. I wanted to ask if the Treasurers could say whether they think that the assessment and collection of money from parents is satisfactory?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) I can only say two things: first, that in Birmingham it has risen by 50 per cent. in the last three years; and, secondly, that throughout the Midlands I know that the amount varies from about 1s. per head to 4s. 2d. per head per week.

1126. What I really meant was this: is the collection of money from parents satisfactory or do many parents with financial responsibilities have to be written off?—We write off about 30 per cent. of ours. There are many parents who, quite frankly, just disappear. Men get their children taken into care by the local authority; they desert them or just disappear, and we have to write off quite large amounts. Then there is a very large percentage of parents who pay up most loyally and willingly, and we have now got something like 65 to 70 per cent. of our money coming in. Assessments vary very much from one local authority area to another.

1127. There is no general scale of assessments?—No.

1128. Do you assess on means?—Each local authority makes its own scale. Some have no scale, or it may be a committee sitting round the table will say, "We think that man could pay 10s. and that man 7s. 6d." They arrange it in that way. Other local authorities have scales which are deliberately made stiff. In some cases in Birmingham we ask for as much as £2 7s. 6d. and we get it.

1129. Do you think that there is room for looking at it from the taxpayers' point of view, for an investigation into the various local authority systems?—I have always been a little surprised that there has been no such inquiry.

Chairman.] You have won your point, Miss Ward!

Miss Ward.

1130. I have been hammering away at this because of information that has come my way. I am told, for instance, that some local authorities will more readily write off a parent's responsibilities than other local authorities, and, of course, that is one aspect of the situation that could be looked at from the taxpayer's point of view, because there really is no reason, when national finance is involved, why one parent should be called upon to pay a greater proportion of his income into the coffers of his local authority than another, and I have always wondered whether there was not room for a thorough investigation into that aspect of it?—(Miss Harvie.) I agree that there is room for that, but I think that one wants also to compare the amount of money collected with the expense of collecting it, because it takes up a lot of time, and sometimes one wonders whether it is financially worth while. (Mr. Dacey.) Do I understand the suggestion is that local authorities should have some national recommendation as to the scale or the basis of the assessment of parents' contributions?

Miss Ward.] No. I am not making any suggestion. All I am asking is whether, out of your experience, because it is very valuable experience, you feel that there is room, in consultation with the appropriate authorities, for an inquiry into whether we are being fair to the taxpayer and to parents if there is such a wide variation, and, of course, the ratepayers, too, come into this. That is all I am asking about. I am given information that some children's committees will write off, without very much consideration, merely on the application of a parent, that parent's commitments, whereas, as I think you indicate, some children's committees are much more severe. It does seem to me that when you are spending national money there should not be too much room for variations, and all I am asking is whether that aspect of it could be looked at and whether, as a result, it might not be profitable to the country as a whole?

Chairman.] I think we are in general agreement.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] May I just ask one more question?

Miss Ward.] Could I have an answer?

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1131. Before the answer, because I should like to ask my question. In writing off parents' contributions has any consent to be got from the Home Office?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) In the case of court orders, yes; but in cases where there is a voluntary

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agreement, no. (Mr. Dingle.) I think the whole procedure wants to be thoroughly altered. When a child comes into care you first of all have to choose either to go for a court order—which usually takes us six weeks to get to the court, so that you have to write off six weeks, because it cannot be retrospective—or to have an agreement. If you have an agreement, which is the procedure usually adopted, it is difficult to enforce, because you cannot enforce it before the justices, though of course you can sue in the county court. But if you have neither, and you go for contributions and you make an assessment and the parents do not pay up, you have to take them before the justices. When you talk of a national scale, at the moment you have not only got a local authority scale, but you have got a different scale according to whichever magistrates happen to be

sitting on the bench, and some magistrates have no regard to the decreased value of money.

Chairman.

1132. Do you not think this Sub-Committee could recommend that the question should be looked into, or do you think that would be going too far?—(Mr. E. J. Holmes.) Yes. (Miss O'Connor.) You want more co-ordination. (Alderman Holmes.) Those people who deliberately get rid of their children, who will not shoulder their responsibilities, and make the taxpayer pay for them, should certainly be looked at. (Mr. Dingle.) It is not so much a question of co-ordination; it is an unsatisfactory system. I do not think we necessarily want co-ordination because circumstances vary.

Chairman.] We have had a most valuable morning. Thank you all very much indeed for coming.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned till Tuesday, 20th May, at 11 o'clock.

TUESDAY, 20TH MAY, 1952.

Members present:

MR. NICHOLSON in the Chair.

Mr. Dryden Brook.
Sir Fergus Graham.
Mr. A. J. Irvine.

Major Markham.
Miss Ward.

Miss D. M. D. ROSLING, Assistant Secretary, Mr. S. A. GWYNN, Superintending Inspector, London South Division, and Mr. W. H. BALLARD, Chief Executive Officer, Finance Division, Home Office, called in and further examined.

Chairman.

1133. Miss Rosling and gentlemen, we have drafted our draft report, and we find that there are certain gaps in our information and points on which we want to check up. We have therefore asked you all to come here this morning to help us, if you will be so good, to fill in those gaps?—(Miss Rosling.) We will certainly try.

1134. The first question is this. We have had evidence from the local authority associations, and they complain that the Home Office standards of housing and equipment are applied too rigidly. They also say that the Home Office do not always disclose what those standards are, that they are not always known. Would you make any comments you like on that?—We apply, in a sense, two different kinds of standards. The first kind is in connection with new building. The inspectors have been given certain standards which we think

should be applied to new building. These standards were not distributed to every local authority because very few local authorities have been able to do any new building owing to the restrictions on capital investment. We thought it would be rather annoying to them to receive this information if in fact they could not do any building; it would make them feel that it would be possible to build when it could not be authorised. Inspectors were given the standards so that any local authority which was building could have them and the inspectors could freely use them as they went about their work, but we did not, from the Home Office, distribute them broadcast to local authorities.

1135. It has, of course, been said that there have been cases where local authorities have got quite far with their new plans and then they have come up against the Home Office and as a result there has

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[Continued.]

been both loss of time and waste of money because they did not know what the Home Office requirements were before they formulated their plans?—That should not be the case, because we have always suggested to local authorities that they should consult the superintending inspector on the spot, and if they had done that at an early stage authorities would have been advised of the standards.

1136. Have you anything to say in respect of their feeling that standards are applied too rigidly, and that the best very often is the enemy of the good?—This applies only to new building.

Miss Ward.

1137. Not conversions?—No, not conversions; they are quite a different thing. In regard to new building we felt that standards should be applied rigidly because, after all, we are going to see these new buildings for, we hope, a number of years and it would be a great pity to spoil a new provision by a lessening of standards.

Chairman.] They say they are not applied to conversions, of course.

Miss Ward.

1138. That was not my understanding of it?—Where they are improving or adapting premises we tell the superintending inspector that we think there that the standards should not be adhered to too rigidly, that they should be used as a guide, and that inspectors all the time should keep what is practicable before them. For this reason there are two kinds of standards, one for new building and one for adaptations and improvements.

Chairman.

1139. I do not think you have quite got that over to local authorities, if I may say so, but we will not dwell on it?—You would not like to ask Mr. Gwynn what has happened in his area?

1140. Yes, certainly.

Miss Ward.

1141. What is your area?—(Mr. Gwynn.) We are the southern region, which comprises the London County Council, Middlesex, Kent, Surrey and the Sussexes, and the county boroughs within them. The system there, since the formation of that region in February, 1950, has quite definitely been that on all new building and adaptations the local authorities have met us either in their own offices or in the office of the region. We have had our own architects present, and where it was a residential nursery we have had a medical inspector present, and there have also been representatives from the local authority side to discuss plans. It has been at those meetings that agreement has been reached on what are

reasonable standards, having regard to the needs of the local authority concerned; and I am surprised to hear that local authorities find cause for complaint that we have endeavoured to apply too rigidly standards which are beyond their capacity.

1142. I do not know precisely the local authorities from which complaints have come, but they gave us examples?—This is a common practice in all the six regions of the country, Sir.

Chairman.] Thank you very much.

Miss Ward.] I do not think that they made it as what I call a general statement, but they did indicate, if I remember the evidence correctly, that when they were busy carrying out adaptations and considered that certain washing and bathing facilities were sufficient the emphasis from inspectors was, "Well, you are not really doing enough", and that by making comments of that kind you really did put the finance committee in a very difficult position if they wanted to exert any control on the Children's Committee.

Sir Fergus Graham.] We were given examples.

Miss Ward.] Yes.

Chairman.

1143. My impression was that there was an example here and there of what one might call uneasiness about it?—Yes, there may have been those odd examples.

1144. Your short answer is that those are exceptional cases?—Yes, they must be exceptional; and the point made by Miss Ward with regard to the embarrassment of the finance committee is difficult to appreciate, because these negotiations between the local authorities and ourselves have in fact been concluded and agreements reached before a project has gone to the finance committee of a council.

Miss Ward.

1145. That, if I may say so, is just the point; you have just given me the answer. If the finance committee have been saying to the children's committee, "Is not this a rather unduly high standard?" the children's committee naturally, being on the side of doing the right thing by the children, say, "Yes, but this is what was urged upon us by the Home Office"?—I think it has been a joint desire on the part of local authorities and ourselves that the standards in children's homes in the circumstances in which we find ourselves at the present time, including the economic position of the country, should reach as high a pitch as is necessary for the care of children—the day-to-day care of children.

Chairman.

1146. We would like your comments on this. I was rather puzzled about Statutory

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[Continued.]

Instrument No. 2083 of 1946, which requires a local authority to report to the Secretary of State (this is in England, of course), and that if they fail to board out any person within three months of his coming into care they have to obtain the Secretary of State's permission to alternative arrangements. That was dropped from the Act of 1948, was it not, and I am wondering why?—(Miss Rosling.) It was applied during the time when the Home Office was the central department only for children who were the subject of Fit Person Orders. At that time there were about 10,000 children under such Orders and about 6,000 of them were boarded out, so that references were made in about 4,000 cases. But under the Children Act there are 25,000 children not boarded out; in addition the Act puts a duty on the local authorities to board out, in fact, they have to keep on considering all the time a child is in care whether or not he can be boarded out.

1147. But how does the Secretary of State know that a local authority is all along considering whether a child would be suitable for boarding out?—By his inspectors.

1148. Surely the inspectors do not go through a list of every child in every children's home and say, "Now give me adequate reasons why Tommy Snooks is not boarded out"?—They very often do, Sir.

1149. But that is not routine to go through a list and hold a pistol to their heads, saying, "You have got to give me an adequate explanation why Tommy or Susan Snooks is not boarded out"?—They would not do it quite like that. They would say that there were a large number of children in the home and they would ask, "What is the difficulty about these children?" They would discuss the difficulty with the local authority in the hope of suggesting ways in which particular children could be boarded out.

1150. Yes, but under the Statutory Instrument the reason why he was not boarded out had to be reported to the Home Office?—Yes.

1151. This seems to be a much looser form of control?—It is; but then the numbers are very much greater; there are 25,000 children not boarded out, and if all those references had to be made to the Department we would have to double our staff.

1152. But you would save a pretty large sum of money, because every child boarded out, after all, saves the country something like £180 a year?—I think a very great deal of it would be simply rubber-stamping, because full inquiry could not be made in every case. It would simply mean that we would have to take a local authority's word for it that a child could not be boarded out.

1153. You do not place much value on the knowledge that a local authority are bound to have adequate reasons ready to explain why any given child is not boarded out?—They should be in that position with inspectors, Sir.

1154. Yes, but you have just said that an inspector does not take that attitude, that he takes up rather a general attitude and makes rather a general approach and that the Home Office know and that is that. Surely it should be made more specific. Let us take that home, Mr. Gwynn, that we visited with you—Lamorbey?

1155. Have you or your inspectors ever been to the London County Council, or to Mr. Echlin, the superintendent, and said, "Let us take A, B, C, and D as samples. Will you tell us why those children are not boarded out?"—(Mr. Gwynn.) Yes; within the last six weeks we have inquired into the cases of 103 children in that particular home, as to the reasons why those children have not been found suitable for boarding out.

1156. Was that partly because this Sub-Committee visited that home?—No; it was part of the routine job of the inspector. She was not aware that this particular home had been discussed by this Sub-Committee. Having discussed those 103 children on the spot, the inspector went a stage further. She approached the Area Children's Officer of the County Council who has responsibility for boarding out those children and checked up at that end, and then there was a joint meeting between all responsible. It was then discovered that there was a genuine reason why a percentage of those children could not have been boarded out, but it was also discovered—and is being attended to—that more of them could, and should, have been boarded out.

1157. Has that been done at every single home in your area?—No.

1158. How did it happen to be just that one?—Because we felt that in that particular home, as in a number of others, the rate of boarding out children was very small, and where we have reason to believe that children are not being boarded out from children's homes we then pursue a detailed inquiry into the reasons.

1159. Arising out of that, Mr. Ainscow said that the London County Council does not board children out without parents' approval?—That is as I understand the policy of the London County Council.

1160. Am I right in thinking it is somewhat unusual for a local authority to adopt that policy?—It is unusual.

1161. Do they have to obtain the authority of the Home Office before adopting such a policy?—They have not done so as far as I am aware.

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1162. Ought not they to have done so, in view of the great sums of money involved and also the policy laid down by Parliament?—(Miss Rosling.) We do not know of any other authority with a wholesale policy of this kind. There are authorities which do not board out if there is very strong opposition from the parents, but they are not very numerous. As a general rule, they would take the line they thought best in the interests of the child.

1163. But in view of the policy that is specifically laid down by Parliament, surely that is a contravention of that policy?—It is a very difficult matter in connection with particular cases; they have to think of the child and the child's future.

1164. Yes. You used the word "wholesale" which seems to me to be appropriate; but a policy which runs directly counter to what Parliament has laid down surely should be dropped on very heavily?—(Mr. Gwynn.) We have seen no evidence of any resolution of a county council or of a children's committee that this is a declared policy.

1165. You are not in ignorance of it, Mr. Gwynn?—No, Sir, and it is a matter that has been discussed from time to time with children's officers. It is a matter on which we understand the London County Council feel very strongly indeed.

1166. Yes, but surely it is not open to a local authority to feel very strongly indeed, in view of the policy as directly laid down by Parliament, and is it not the duty of the Home Office to see that the policy laid down by Parliament is carried out?—(Miss Rosling.) It is not a practice with which we agree.

1167. Have you done anything?—We have discussed it with them on various occasions.

1168. But without any effect?—Without much effect so far.

1169. It sounds disappointing?—It exists nowhere else in the country, I think.

1170. It is a pity that this should be on your own doorstep so to speak, is it not?—Yes. I know of one authority that goes to the opposite extreme and says to parents, "Very well, you do not want your child to be boarded out. Would you care to make other arrangements for him."

1171. Which one is that?—That is Cornwall. (Mr. Gwynn.) I was recently with a children's officer of one particular local authority where I found that the county council had in fact passed a resolution supporting the children's officer in boarding out children against the wishes of parents and where the children's committee regarded it as being in the interests of the children to be boarded out.

1172. Where was this council?—It was in Surrey.

1173. I think this is probably a question for Mr. Ballard. Could you give me a short description of the process by which the annual estimates of local authorities are examined and approved by the Home Office, and do they examine the whole annual programme of every local authority?—(Mr. Ballard.) The estimates are checked as regards the average rate for boarding out to see whether the approved average is exceeded, and the same for voluntary homes.

1174. You mean payments to voluntary homes for local authority children?—Yes; and if there are any above the flat rate they are referred to the Administrative Division.

1175. That is all the examination that takes place?—On the estimates. There is not very much that can be done executively, because they are total figures; for instance, in the case of children's homes, we take out an average cost for each authority.

1176. You do not take each home and see the average cost per home?—No.

1177. You have not taken any steps about that home in Manchester that is costing nearly £10 per week per head? We cannot. The estimates give only a block figure.

1178. Do you think that it would be desirable to have a little more than a block figure?—The financial statement itself, the claim, is a detailed one; and in view of the report of the Manpower Committee we feel that it would be against all agreed conclusions to go for an estimate that would be more or less equivalent to a detailed claim statement.

1179. Thank you. Now, one more matter. How are local authorities' accounts audited for each individual home?—As far as I know, the details for each home which are given in the claim come under the scrutiny of district auditors.

1180. Would that examination merely be to see that there were vouchers for each item of expenditure, or would they go into the merits and efficiency of the case? Would it be just like the audit of a public company, where the auditors' job is merely to see that everything is accounted for and the books kept properly and not to say, "You are running your business very badly"?—I think they do look into payments because we do have queries raised as to whether certain payments are payments within the Act.

1181. Yes; but it is what I might call a technical audit and not a merit audit, as it were?—Presumably.

Miss Ward.

1182. Just one further question on that. I do appreciate the point about the audit being done by people who are probably not qualified to comment on the running of a home. I want to follow that up with this.

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[Continued.]

Does the Home Office Inspectorate, who are qualified, have to look at accounts from the point of view of efficiency?—(Mr. Gwynn.) We look, for example, at details where there seems to be need to look at details, such as the cost of clothing and food, particularly food. Our dietician frequently goes into children's homes where there is reason to think either that there is extravagance in the purchase and use of goods or where the children's feeding falls below a reasonable standard, and that has provided the means of reducing costs appreciably in some cases, and in others of bringing the children's feeding up to what we should regard as a reasonable standard.

Miss Ward.] Could you by any chance put a percentage on the number of local authority accounts that are looked at from that point of view, arising out of a need for moving either upwards or downwards?

Chairman.

1183. Would you say that the actual books of account are looked at?—No, Sir, we do not do that.

Miss Ward.

1184. Could I have an answer to my question? I suppose it is the final result in comparison with the rest of the accounts really that draws your attention to the position of certain authorities?—It is more our observance, I think, what the inspectors see at the time of their visits, in regard to the day by day running of homes. You may see signs of extravagance in clothing or in food or you may see the reverse.

Chairman.

1185. You just happen to notice it; you do not find it in the course of scrutiny?—No, Sir.

Miss Ward.

1186. Could you tell me roughly the percentage of accounts that you do examine every year from the point of view of what appears to be either over- or under-expenditure, which, of course, is equally important, I agree?—I could not give you the exact number of homes to which they would give attention but food and clothing are looked at. It is quite a large number. In a considerable number of cases that does not involve a detailed scrutiny of all the accounts of a particular home. (Miss Rosling.) Could I amplify that by saying that the dietician would see what the children were having to eat during the year, and she would see what was in the larder and what sort of stores were ordered. She would look at the diet book and see what they had had before and what they were expecting to have after she left. She would also know the average cost of food per child. From all that one would be able to know pretty well whether the cost was reasonable or not.

1187. It is a snoop rather than a scrutiny?—No, it is not a snoop; it is much more an examination of the situation as she finds it.

Miss Ward.

1188. When you say a "considerable number of homes", I do not really know whether I disagree with the Chairman on this, but I do not see any particular advantage in scrutinising every detail of every home or of saying that the expenditure of every home should be examined outside of what I call the practical, technical audit. What I am concerned about is this. When a figure showing variations in the homes is placed before the Home Office, at what stage would you decide what what I would call an expert examination of costs should be carried out? You did say that a considerable number of homes were examined, Mr. Gwynn. I would rather like if I could to get a figure of the number that it is considered necessary to look at from an expert point of view?—It is impossible to give that, I am afraid, because it depends on the number which seem to be having particularly high costs and the number which appear to be having low costs.

1189. Could you not say, for instance, last year how many you examined from that point of view?—(Mr. Gwynn.) From the point of view of specialist visits by the dietician and others in the South London region last year I should estimate that they paid not less than 100 visits to children's homes.

1190. What I want to get at is this. Was that arising out of the accounts?—No, it was not arising out of the accounts, because normally we would not see the accounts of homes.

Chairman.] I think it is quite clear. We are not urging any particular course. We are merely wanting to get at the facts.

Miss Ward.

1191. You do not look at the accounts and decide that there seem to be some peculiar circumstances arising which would call for specialist visits?—No.

1192. They are done under your general supervision?—(Miss Rosling.) Yes. We got out recently the cost per child for food, clothing and other items and gave the superintending inspectors lists of homes in their areas where the costs were particularly high or particularly low, but I cannot say what proportion of all homes it was. They were asked to look particularly into the arrangements made in those homes.

Chairman.

1193. The best of the voluntary homes are equal to the best local authority homes. Do you remember who said that?—Mr. Ross said that.

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[Continued.]

1194. Yes. I wanted to be clear in my own mind. Would you by and large, be prepared to say that the best children's society, like the Church of England, Barnardo's, and so on, run their homes as well as a good average of the local authorities?—The best of the homes?

1195. I do not mean the best individual homes, not the best home as against another best home, but the best average?—No, Sir, I do not think I could, because if you take local authority homes the standard within one local authority varies so much. The same applies to the voluntary societies.

1196. I see. I am perhaps aiming at an impossible generalisation?—I could not truthfully say that all their homes reach the same high standard. They vary considerably.

1197. Now, the question of administration expenses. You remember the table you gave us in the memorandum?—Yes.

1198. Where it says that a sum of £1,426,000 for England and Wales is put down for direct administration expenses and £705,000 for apportioned; apportioned, I take it, theoretically includes a proportion of the town clerk's salary, the mayor's expenses, and so on?—Yes, it includes apportioned costs of staff except chief officers—of the architect's department, for example.

1199.-1200. When it comes to direct administrative expenses, that is, the expenses of the Children's Department in each local authority and in the Home Office—?—Not the Home Office, Sir—the children's department of each local authority.

1201. It is quite fair to charge that to the cost of the children?—Yes.

1202. So that if you take the total number of children in care and you divide that figure into £1,426,000 (which I cannot do in my head) it would be fair to add the result to the figure of £3 18s. 8d., which is the average cost per child per week in care?

—(Mr. Gwynn.) Except that there is a turnover of children during the course of a year.

1203. Yes, but that applies to all these figures?—(Miss Rosling.) The £3 18s. 8d. includes administrative expenses.

1204. I do not think it does, because the average figure is not brought out?—(Mr. Ballard.) Yes, that is right, Sir; it works out at £3 18s. 8d.

1205. It does include it? Thank you. All right, Miss Rosling, I have got it quite clear. I fully accept that. But do you think it is quite fair to include apportioned expenses?—(Miss Rosling.) Yes, because we would naturally expect that some

part of the time of the town clerk's or county clerk's department or the architect's department and the medical officer of health's department would be taken up in that connection.

Miss Ward.

1206. That is considered, if I may say so, good, sound local authority finance. What I want to know is this. Do you examine the administrative expenses as a separate item in relation to the children's committees in local authorities?—No, we would expect that to be examined by the district auditor.

1207. But then that does raise the point as to whether some local authorities are more extravagant, or have higher administrative expenses, than others, and whether the district auditors would call attention to that?—I am not sure whether they do or not.

1208. Not necessarily extravagant, but would they examine the variations, if there were variations?—(Mr. Ballard.) It is a little doubtful, I should think. Direct administration would include all officers, including boarding out officers, and I do not think a district auditor would be in a position to judge whether there were too many officers to do the children work.

1209. Then it brings it down to the Home Office exercising some sort of scrutiny, because it surely would be of interest to you, in regard to the question of boarding out children, to know whether there were too many officers or too few?—(Miss Rosling.) The inspectors would be going into the work of all these officers.

1210. That takes another line. Inspectors would report to the Home Office where they thought that administrative expenses or administrative costs were unduly high or unduly low—I put both because I think that is important?—But our experience so far has been on the whole that they are too low, that staffing needs improving rather than cutting down.

1211. That is your general view?—“Administrative costs” is not a really good name for it, because it includes all the staff of a Children's Department who are not working in children's homes.

1212. I see. It can be misleading to the public?—Yes.

Chairman.

1213. I have just done my calculation. It is over 8s. per week per child for administrative expenses?—Yes, it is about that, Sir.

1214. It would be worth bringing out in this table?—Yes. (Mr. Gwynn.) May I re-emphasise the point made by Miss Rosling, that the field staff are now included in these administrative costs?

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[Continued.]

1215. By "field staff" do you mean inspectors?—No, boarding out officers.

Miss Ward.

1216. The field staff of local authorities?—Yes; and it has been quite clearly the practice of local authorities, assisted and encouraged by us, to build up their field staff, which was at the beginning of things, in many instances, deficient, to a pitch where they could in fact, for example, deal with boarding out effectively. We have considered it not an uneconomical view but rather an economical one, that if you have a sufficiency of trained boarding out officers the result should be that more children are boarded out to their greater happiness and to a reduction in the over-all costs of the Children's Committees.

1217. One final question. Where you have a different practice in relation to apportionment of charges because there is a variety of practices in fact from other angles—various local authorities follow various practices—do you think that that might account for some of the variety in the costs per child?—My answer to that would certainly be yes; and the apportionment charges, I think Miss Rosling might agree, are charges into which we have not inquired or in regard to which we have not taken any active part, as we have considered that to be entirely a function of the local authority.

1218. That may well be, but what I am anxious to ascertain is this. Do you think that that might account for the sometimes very great variations in local authorities' costs per child?—(Miss Rosling.) The charges would affect them in some cases.

Chairman.] Have we got the over-all figures of local authority costs per child on the last of these tables? Is that quite clear?

Miss Ward.

1219. I do not know whether it is quite clear or not, but I think it is a fascinating new approach to the question that has been puzzling us?—The charges must affect it in some cases, but I do not think they will affect it very much. It is such things as food and staff that really make up the bulk of the expense.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that we are pursuing a will o' the wisp and we must define the terms we are discussing. It also seems to me that the Home Office has two kinds of responsibilities: the first has to do with standards. I take it that inspectors who are going round on their jobs would see that the standards of every local authority approximate to what the Home Office standard is supposed to be, and I think that is quite clearly the duty of the Home Office. The difficulty, it seems to me, comes in as to

the variation in the expenditure undertaken by local authorities in relation to the achievement of that standard. Now what authority has the Home Office in that direction? I agree that it can make very little difference to the total because of the variations that there might be in different local authorities as regards the apportionment of what are the indirect expenses, and it obviously cannot have very much influence on the total cost per child in individual homes. But what powers have the Home Office or their inspectors to inspect the accounts of local authorities in relation to the direct costs of the homes?

Chairman.] I think, Mr. Brook, we have already had that answer.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] If we have, then I would respectfully say that we have been pursuing a will o' the wisp ever since I came in, because Miss Ward has been trying to get at this question by going round in circles.

Chairman.] I think it would be quite fair to say that the answer we have had is that the Home Office do not exercise a precise financial scrutiny.

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1220. My question, with respect, is rather different. It is not whether they do, but what powers have they? You see, I am a member of a local authority and, quite frankly, I am very jealous of the powers of local authorities and the infringement by government departments of the powers of local authorities. I want to know, not what the Home Office do, but what powers have they actually got in that direction, apart altogether from the district auditor?—(Miss Rosling.) Local authorities are required by the Children Act to carry out their functions under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State, of course, also, is empowered to pay grant towards the expenses of local authorities or to withhold it either in whole or in part; but I cannot answer and say that there is any specific power to examine accounts.

Chairman.

1221. Would not it be right to answer Mr. Brook, that there is no residual power in the Home Office that would permit that?—Yes.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I should like to ask this further question then. Supposing that there is a wide variation in the costs of two different authorities which in the view of the Home Office give an equal standard of achievement—

Chairman.] May I interrupt. Do you mean a particular home or a whole authority's homes?

Mr. Dryden Brook.

1222. The particular homes in two different authorities. In one case the costs

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[Continued.]

may be higher than in the other. What steps should the Home Office take under the powers they have got to try to even things up or to get at the root of the trouble as to why that difference should exist?—They could not take any steps to require the production of information by a local authority; they could only look into it with the local authority and if they thought that there was something which could be done to improve matters, they could make suggestions as to what that improvement could be.

Chairman.] I think all the evidence up to now has made the position of the Home Office practice and powers quite clear. I do not know that we want to pursue this any further. I think a perusal of the evidence does show that there is no doubt about that.

Mr. Dryden Brook.] I am quite clear and have been clear all along, but it seems to me that we have not been clear for the last half-hour.

Chairman.] I think we should get on.

Miss Ward.

1223. One other question. I should like to ask: where you find that there is a shortage of field officers—because this is all linked up with the great emphasis that is laid on it in the draft report on boarding out—have you power to recommend to local authorities an increase of staff?—We should certainly do it, because we would feel that it affected the interests of the work; we would discuss the matter with them, and we might even suggest that they appointed more clerical staff to relieve the boarding out officers so that they would not have to spend too much time in writing up cases where the work could be done by a clerk or typist. We would make suggestions of that kind, with the object of improving the Department.

Chairman.

1224. You would not go as far as refusing a grant unless they increased their staff?—No. (*Mr. Gwynn.*) Our experience has been this. I have met a good many Children's Committees and particularly Children's Officers on this point on a friendly basis and I have put before them our suggestions as to how their staff could be strengthened in the interests of the children, and my personal experience has been that the local authorities have regarded that as a suggestion from a partner in the job, which is the happiness of the children, and they have not resented that suggestion.

1225. We are not suggesting that, but we are asking whether the Home Office would ever refuse a grant. However, I think we have thrashed that out. Then a very similar question, which is really susceptible of Yes or No. Do the Home Office actively control the standards of staffing?—(*Miss Rosling.*)

Of children's homes or boarding out officers?

1226. Children's homes?—No, but again we would make suggestions.

1227. My final question is this. We have not heard very much about adoption work. I think it was the Children's Officer of Birmingham who said that their figures were a little difficult to compare with other local authorities because they laid such great stress on adoptions. Is there anything to be said about adoption and is it an important element in these statistics in regard to the care of children, do you think?—It is a possibility which every children's officer and children's committee should have in mind, but it would only be possible in a very small number of cases.

1228. That was my impression—in other words, you think it is a factor which, although I do not say it should be ignored, is not a major factor?—No, it is not a major factor. It is a form of treatment which can only be suggested in cases where it is absolutely suitable. Nobody could say to a local authority: "It would be as well if you could get so many children adopted."

1229. I wanted to know whether that was your idea?—It is only a very small number of children who are available for adoption, a mere handful.

Chairman.] Are there any other questions?

Miss Ward.

1230. I just wanted to return to this answer that has been given to a question that I have been interested in, that in the case of children received into care under Section 1 of the Children Act, the father and mother are liable to contribute towards a child's maintenance as long as he is under the age of sixteen and the amount payable by the parent may be fixed between him and the local authority or an order may be made by a court of summary jurisdiction. Has an examination ever been made into the causes of the variation in the amounts fixed by local authorities? Does that interest the Home Office?—No; we would not in cases of agreement know what amount was fixed.

1231. Supposing too low an amount were fixed, it would involve the taxpayer because of the 50 per cent. grant, which could be quite a material consideration; for instance, if one local authority fixed too low a rate that would put up the national contribution if it was followed to any great extent by other local authorities and might perhaps mean an unfair charge on other parts of the country which took a different point of view?—It is a matter which we would imagine local authorities would feel quite as strongly about. We know that they want to get as much money back as they can, and we would expect them to make an

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[Continued.]

agreement for the largest sum which the parent could reasonably contribute.

1232. But there is a variety of opinions as to what is fair and what is not fair—that is inherent in local authority administration and rightly so; but if you are paying a 50 per cent. grant from the Home Office, quite apart from the ratepayers' contribution, it is important to have some sort of view of it, and indeed I think the evidence given by the County Councils Association and the Association of Municipal Corporations was that it might be wise to evolve a new scheme. I rather wondered whether you had any views on that?—We have always taken the view that local authorities should get as much as they reasonably can from parents. We are in the process at the moment of drafting a letter to local authorities, suggesting that larger contributions should be agreed where parents are able to afford them.

1233. In certain parts of the country wage rates are low and in certain other parts of the country wage rates are high, and it is a very difficult thing for the general body of taxpayers to know what is fair and what is not fair. You might, for example, have a local authority that was extracting an undue contribution from parents, having regard to wage and salary rates, but on the other hand you might have local authorities who might extract more on a fair and proper basis. I should have thought that would be a matter that would interest the Home Office. But you have given me an answer because you say you are in fact writing to them?—Yes—certainly from the financial angle, but also because there is more inducement to take your child back and look after him yourself if you have to pay while he is with a local authority.

Chairman.

1234. At any rate, you do accept Miss Ward's view that that is a proper matter for Home Office interest and examination?—We do consider it generally, but not in detail.

Mr. *Dryden Brook.*] I must join issue there. We are treading on very dangerous ground.

Chairman.] Mr. Brook, do not you think that is a matter we should discuss between ourselves?

Mr. *Dryden Brook.*] I am in this difficulty, that what Miss Ward said just now goes on the record, and if I disagree with Miss Ward's point of view I want that to go on the record. I consider that what she has said contains a very great danger.

Chairman.] This is a discussion between members of the Sub-Committee. If I allowed Miss Ward to go too far, then I am at fault, but I do not think I did. This is your opportunity to cross-examine the witnesses, rather than bring forward our own points of view.

Miss *Ward.*] I was asking questions arising out a statement made by the Home Office in answer to questions which had been addressed to them.

Chairman.] Mr. Brook has quite clearly stated that he disagrees with Miss Ward.

Mr. *Dryden Brook.*] In the process of asking questions Miss Ward quite definitely put her point of view. I want to ask my questions and put my point of view quite definitely as well.

Chairman.

1235. I think any Select Committee should be very careful when putting questions to witnesses—I know I err myself in that very much—not to put them tendentiously. I am sure we all learn that. I think we must concentrate on cross-examining the witnesses. Have any of the witnesses got anything at all they wish to say? This is your last chance. Are there any parts of your previous evidence you wish to correct or do you wish to lay emphasis on anything, or is there anything you wish to bring to the notice of the Sub-Committee?—I cannot think of anything, Sir. But I should like to emphasize, in connection with the last question, that the Home Office interest has two sides. One, of course, is financial, and the other is that it is undesirable that it should be too easy for parents to leave their children in care.

1236. Thank you very much. Whatever criticisms we may seem to have made, may I say we are profoundly impressed by the zeal and the ideals of the Home Office in connection with this great work?—Thank you, Sir.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned till Tuesday, 24th June, at 11 o'clock.

ANNEX 1

CHILD CARE, ENGLAND AND WALES

Memorandum by the Home Office

REMAND HOMES

1. The Children and Young Persons Act, 1933 (section 77) places upon the councils of counties and county boroughs the duty of providing remand homes for their area; a council may themselves establish, or join with another council in establishing, a remand home; or they may arrange with the authority or persons responsible for the management of any institution other than a prison for the use of the institution, or any part of it, as a remand home. Under the Children Act, 1948, a local authority are required to exercise their functions with respect to remand homes through the children's committee. The local authority revised estimates for 1950-51 and 1951-52 showed expenditure of £530,000 in each year, and the preliminary estimates for 1952-53 £527,000. Expenditure on remand homes ranks for direct Exchequer grant of 50 per cent.

2. On 1st January, 1951, there were 69 remand homes provided by local authorities (48 for boys, 20 for girls, and one mixed home), with accommodation for 1,809 (1,457 boys and 352 girls); and 15 voluntary homes used by arrangement as remand homes (2 for boys and 13 for girls), with remand home accommodation for 25 boys and about 50 girls. Since January, 1951, 5 local authority remand homes (2 for boys, 42 places, and 3 for girls, 40 places) have been closed. The closing of 2 further local authority girls' homes, 33 places, and 1 local authority boys' home, 15 places, is under immediate consideration by the local authorities concerned.

3. Remand homes are provided for the safe custody of children and young persons:—

- (a) who are charged with offences and are not released on bail pending their appearance before a court;
- (b) who require to be lodged in a "place of safety"; these are usually children and young persons judged to be in need of care or protection, or beyond control, who are detained pending consideration of their cases by a court;
- (c) between sittings of the court while the case (including a case in which a finding of guilt has been made) is adjourned for enquiries to be completed or reports to be obtained;
- (d) while detained after committal to an approved school and awaiting a vacancy;
- (e) on committal to a remand home, under section 54 of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, for a period of punitive detention not exceeding one month.

4. Local authority remand homes are among the premises in which, under section 13 (6) of the Children Act, 1948, local authorities may, with the authorisation of the Secretary of State, accommodate boys and girls received into their care under the Children Act or committed to their care as a fit person. The Secretary of State's authorisation is given only in exceptional circumstances, when more suitable arrangements cannot be made at the time.

5. The period of stay in a remand home is short—usually not longer than a month; the age range of the boys and girls accommodated is wide (from 8 to 17 years), and the problems they present are varied. This mixed and changing population calls for special personal qualities in the staff. In addition to the separation of the sexes, the aim is now to provide separately for junior and senior boys, either in separate establishments or in separate parts of the same premises. In providing remand homes for girls, most local authorities have not found it practicable to have separate homes for different age groups.

6. The general routine in remand homes is governed by the Remand Home Rules, 1939 (S.R. and O. 1939 No. 12), made by the Secretary of State under the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933; and remand homes are inspected by inspectors of the Children's Department of the Home Office. The Secretary of State is empowered by section 49 of the Criminal Justice Act, 1948 (but has not yet exercised this power) to require his approval of the use of any premises as a remand home, and to apply to remand homes the provisions of the Act of 1933 relating to the approval of schools. By section 49 (3) of the Act of 1948, the appointment of the person to be in charge of a remand home established by a local authority is subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

7. About 75 per cent. of the children in remand homes receive schoolroom instruction. Where there is a qualified teacher on the staff, education is usually given on the premises. Children from a few remand homes attend local schools, but this arrangement is not altogether satisfactory because of the short stay of the children in the remand home. In some of the smaller remand homes with no qualified teacher on the staff, instruction is given often by a visiting teacher. Besides providing for the education of the children of school age, remand homes give the children training in habits of cleanliness and in the give-and-take of living in a small community. Most remand homes have developed craft work and other vocational work not only as daily occupation for the young persons over school age, but also as spare-time evening hobby classes for children of all ages.

8. In recent years there has been a growing tendency on the part of the courts to remand children in custody for examination and report by a psychologist or psychiatrist before deciding on treatment. Such reports are provided in various ways according to local circumstances. Often the Medical Officer of Health arranges for the examination to be carried out by the staff of a child guidance clinic. One local authority with a large remand home have appointed a full-time psychologist to the staff. In other areas, a consultant psychiatrist visits the remand home when required. The Criminal Justice Act, 1948, empowers local authorities to provide facilities in their remand homes for the observation of any person on whose physical and mental condition a report may be desirable for the information of the court. Besides these special reports, it is customary for the superintendents of remand homes to provide factual reports for the courts on the behaviour and character of children while in the home; some who are qualified to do so also carry out intelligence and attainment tests. This side of the work of the remand home has assumed increased importance.

9. Under arrangements introduced recently, the pay and conditions of service of the administrative and supervisory staffs of certain institutions including remand homes (except grades of staff whose pay is related to Burnham scales and for whom separate arrangements are being made) are dealt with by a Standing Joint Advisory Committee of the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Services.

10. Local authority expenditure on remand homes consists mainly of expenditure on the maintenance, education and training of the children and young persons in the homes, the salaries and wages of staff, the purchase, adaptation and maintenance of premises, and overhead and administration charges. Control of the provision of new remand homes is exercised by the procedure specified in Home Office Circular No. 92/1950, of 4th May, 1950, whereby the local authority have to get Home Office approval in principle before buying or renting a property for use as a remand home. The control of building work on local authority remand homes is on lines agreed by the Local Government Manpower Committee in their First Report, and is set out in Home Office Circulars No. 92/1950 of 4th May, 1950, and No. 181/1950 of 5th September, 1950. Broadly, local authorities are free to carry out small works, subject to approval of an annual programme, but larger works have to receive specific Home Office approval. The limitations of the capital investment programme restrict the amount of work that can be done. General oversight of staffing and of standards of education, training, equipment, furnishing, and catering is secured by Home Office inspection; except as indicated above, there is not detailed control by the Home Office of the expenditure incurred in running remand homes.

11. During the past year, some local authorities have been concerned (as have the Home Office) over the high weekly cost per head of remand homes which they provide, or of reserving places in remand homes provided by other local authorities. This high cost per head, which arises when a home is not nearly fully used, influenced the reduction in the number of places referred to in paragraph 2 above. In the year 1949, 12,995 children and young persons were committed on remand, and the average stay was 37 days: in 1950, 13,439 were committed on remand, and the average stay was 31 days. During the first half of 1951, 7,381 were admitted (committed on remand and also "place of safety" cases), and the average stay was 28 days. The 1951 figures are based on a new form of six-monthly return which was introduced in 1951 to give a better picture of the use made of remand homes. The reduced period of stay in 1950, and again in the first half of 1951, is a factor which affects the number of places used.

12. Local authorities who do not provide remand homes of their own usually make arrangements for the use of places in remand homes provided by other local authorities. A common form of arrangement in the past has been to

reserve a certain number of places in a remand home, payment equal to the per capita cost of running the home being made for each place reserved. Under such an arrangement, the cost to the using local authority can be disproportionately high if the reserved places are not fully used. A form of agreement discussed recently by the Home Office with a number of local authorities avoids the reservation of places: it assumes a certain percentage use, on the basis of which the per capita cost is assessed in advance, and provides for any excess of cost over that rate being apportioned annually among the local authorities who are parties to the agreement, in proportion to the population of their areas.

13. Excluding the places, referred to in paragraph 2 above, in remand homes which have been closed since the beginning of 1951, or whose closure is under immediate consideration, the average percentage use of the places in all local authority remand homes during the first half of 1951 was 65. With the need to meet the requirements of the courts and to provide for the fluctuating numbers committed to the remand homes, and allowing for periods of quarantine, it is not to be expected that the homes will always be fully used. The position is kept under review, and the Home Office are now considering the possibility of a further reduction of homes in some areas.

14. While the use of remand home accommodation is kept under review, in consultation with the local authorities concerned, with a view to securing efficient and economic provision, caution is necessary in reducing the number of remand homes. It is not possible to foresee whether there may be at any time a rise in the number of children and young persons sent to remand homes, or an increase in the average period of stay as a result of more boys and girls being sent to approved schools and having to wait longer for vacancies. Moreover, the functions of the remand home make it necessary to have a network of homes throughout the country, situated within reasonable distance of the courts before which the children and young persons appear (so as to avoid overlong journeys by the children and escorting officers), and, wherever possible, to secure that the homes are in areas where facilities for medical and psychiatric examinations are available. These considerations, and the shortage of suitable premises for new remand homes, mean that it is not always easy to close an existing remand home which is not fully used or to replace it by a smaller one. If the catchment area of a remand home is made too wide, inconvenience results because of the long distances which children have to be taken in order to appear before the court, and the cost of travel by the children, their escorts, and the probation officers and others who require to visit them tends to make the arrangement uneconomic.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ; CARE AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Introductory

15. The Home Office has been concerned for many years with the care of children in approved schools, in remand homes, and in some of the voluntary homes; and, since 1933, with children committed by a court to the care of a local authority as a fit person. The decision of the Government in 1947, that one department should have central responsibility in England and Wales for the care of children deprived of normal home life and that that department should be the Home Office, transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Home Office responsibility for the welfare of the children in the care of local authorities, children in those voluntary homes which were formerly the concern of the Ministry of Health, and children supervised by local authorities under the child life protection provisions of the Public Health Act, 1936. The Children Act, 1948, put into effect the main recommendations in the report of the Curtis (Care of Children) Committee published in September, 1946 (Cmd. 6922), and made provision at the same time for the care of children when the Poor Law was brought to an end in July, 1948.

16. The contacts with child care work in the field are made mainly by the Children's Department Inspectorate, which, apart from the Chief Inspector and two deputies and certain specialist inspectors, including medical inspectors, who work from the Home Office in London, is organised in six regions covering England and Wales, with headquarters in London (two regions), Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Cardiff. Visits to children's homes are followed usually by discussion between the inspectors and officers of the local authority. The aim is to reach agreement as far as possible locally, and to keep official correspondence to a minimum.

17. Direct Exchequer grant is payable on the child care expenditure of local authorities. The standard rate of grant is 50 per cent., reduced as necessary to

secure that the local authorities bear half the expenditure incurred by the Secretary of State on training in child care under Section 45 of the Children Act, and in making grants to voluntary organisations under section 46 (1). The deduction in each of the years 1950-51 and 1951-52 was $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; as this will result in the recovery of more than half the Secretary of State's expenditure, no deduction from the 50 per cent. grant will be made in 1952-53. Before 5th July, 1948, when the Children Act came into operation, expenditure on children maintained under the Poor Law did not qualify for direct Exchequer grant, but expenditure on children committed by a court to the care of a local authority as a fit person ranked for 50 per cent. direct grant.

18. An account of progress made since 1948 is contained in the Sixth Report on the Work of the Children's Department, published by H.M. Stationery Office in May, 1951.

The Statutory Duties of Local Authorities

19. Section 1 of the Children Act puts local authorities (in England and Wales, the councils of counties and county boroughs) under a duty to receive into their care, if they consider this to be necessary in the interests of his welfare, any child in their area under the age of seventeen who has no parent or guardian, who is abandoned or lost, or whose parents are unable, for any reason, to provide for his proper upbringing. When a child is in care the local authority have a continuing duty to restore him to the care of his parents or guardian or of a suitable relative or friend as soon as this is consistent with his welfare; otherwise, the local authority remain responsible for the child, so long as his welfare appears to require it, until he is eighteen years of age. They have power in certain cases to give financial assistance towards his maintenance, education or training up to the age of twenty-one years and sometimes beyond this age. The local authority have also a statutory duty, when ordered by a court, to act as a fit person for the care of a child found, under the provisions of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, to be in need of care or protection, or guilty of an offence which is punishable in an adult by imprisonment. The fit person order, which gives the local authority the rights, powers and liabilities of a parent, remains in force until the child reaches the age of eighteen, unless it is revoked by the court (or discharged by the Secretary of State). The two groups of children are provided for in the same ways, according to their needs.

20. The general duty of a local authority towards children in their care is stated in section 12 of the Children Act, which requires the authority to exercise their powers to further the best interests of the children and to afford them opportunity for the proper development of their character and abilities; and in so doing to make such use of the facilities and services available to children in the care of their own parents as appears to the local authority to be reasonable. The conception is that the local authority should bring up the children as a good parent would, and as far as practicable in the same kind of way.

21. At the end of 1951, the latest date for which complete annual returns are available, there were 62,691 children in the care of local authorities, comprising 45,585 under the Children Act and 17,106 committed by a court to the care of a local authority as a fit person. Many children come into care for short periods, commonly because of the mother's temporary incapacity; during the twelve months to 30th November, 1951, nearly 37,000 children were received into care, and nearly 33,000 went out of care. The total of 62,691 children in the care of local authorities at the end of 1951 compares with that of 58,987 at the end of 1950, and with a total of about 48,000, of like categories, in their care in 1946 at the time of the enquiry by the Curtis Committee.

22. The Children Act requires every local authority to appoint a children's committee to which the functions of the authority under the Act, and certain other enactments, stand referred, and a children's officer who acts as chief officer of the committee and whose sole concern is with their work. The Secretary of State has power under section 40 (2) of the Act to dispense with the requirement to have a children's committee, if he is satisfied that an authority's functions can be discharged better without such a committee.

23. The parents of children in care are liable to contribute, according to their means, to the cost of the maintenance of the children until they reach the age of sixteen years. Payment may be made by agreement between the local authority and the parents, or under a contribution order made by a court. Children in care who have reached the age of sixteen are liable to contribute to the cost of their own maintenance, if they are in full-time employment.

Manner of Accommodating the Children

Boarding out

24. Local authorities are under a duty to board out children in care, unless in a particular case this is not practicable or desirable for the time being (because sufficient suitable foster homes are not available or because a child is unsuitable for boarding out). Boarding out (in the right foster home) is regarded as being the form of care—short of adoption—nearest to that enjoyed by a child brought up in his own home by good parents, and expansion of boarding out is urged by the Home Office on the local authorities. At the end of 1951, 24,319 or 39 per cent. (33 per cent. of the boys and 46 per cent. of the girls) of the children in care were boarded out, as compared with 21,710, or 37 per cent. at the end of 1950, and 13,900 or 29 per cent. in 1946. The foster parents are paid a boarding out allowance intended to cover the cost of the child's maintenance, but not to include an element of profit. It happens, fortunately, that the form of care which is regarded as the best is also the least expensive, not only in money but in manpower. Arrangements for the supervision of children boarded out by local authorities are governed by the Children and Young Persons (Boarding Out) Rules, 1946 (S.R.O. 1946 No. 2083).

Local authority children's homes

25. Children who cannot be boarded for the time being are accommodated for the most part in local authority children's homes. There were 25,183 children in children's homes at the end of 1951, as compared with some 19,000 in 1946. In 1947, the Home Office assumed central responsibility for just under 600 local authority children's homes; this number has now risen to about 950. The main development in residential accommodation since 1948 has been the provision of new children's homes and nurseries, mostly in adapted premises, to accommodate the increased numbers of children who have come into care and to replace nurseries in use in National Assistance Act institutions and premises held on requisition. Of the 146 institution nurseries in use in 1948, all but 44 have ceased to be used for children in care; of 80 requisitioned properties, 11 remain in use as children's homes. As yet there has been little replacement of the many old and often unsuitable homes provided under the Poor Law. The new provision has been mainly of small homes, of the family group type taking from 8 to 12 children in long-term care, and of larger homes taking up to about 30 for children likely to be in care for short periods. There has been provision on a small scale of reception centres for the assessment of children when first received into long-term care, and also of hostels to accommodate children over compulsory school age who are not boarded out and cannot suitably be placed in lodgings. The severe restriction on capital investment affecting all services retards necessary improvements in children's homes. The conduct of children's homes is governed in certain respects by the Administration of Children's Homes Regulations, 1951 (S.I. 1951 No. 1217). A memorandum of guidance on the conduct of children's homes was published at the same time.

Voluntary homes

26. Local authorities may place children, by agreement with the voluntary organisation, in voluntary (children's) homes. The rate of payment for a child is fixed by agreement between the local authority and the voluntary organisation. Some 7,000 children in the care of local authorities were in voluntary homes or hostels at the end of 1951, this being about the same number as in 1946. The regulations and memorandum of guidance referred to at the end of the preceding paragraph apply also to voluntary homes.

Other accommodation

27. Some children in care are provided for in children's homes and nurseries run by private persons, boarding schools, residential special schools, vocational training centres, lodgings, residential employment; and, with the consent of the Secretary of State, in National Assistance Act institutions. The number in National Assistance Act institutions has dropped from 6,500 in 1946 to 550 at the end of 1951.

Contributions by local authorities to voluntary organisations

28. Section 46 (2) of the Children Act empowers local authorities, with the consent of the Secretary of State, to make contributions to a voluntary organisation whose object or primary object is to promote the welfare of children. This expenditure ranks for direct Exchequer grant of 50 per cent. (A somewhat similar power to make contributions by way of annual subscriptions, subject to the consent of the Minister of Health, was contained in section 67 of the Poor Law Act, 1930.)

29. Voluntary organisations eligible to receive contributions from local authorities include such bodies as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Family Service Units, which do not run children's homes, as well as bodies which run homes, such as Dr. Barnardo's Homes, the Church of England Children's Society, the National Children's Home, various Roman Catholic Societies, Diocesan Moral Welfare Societies and a number of local bodies usually with some direct association with the local authority concerned. The requirement of the Secretary of State's consent eliminates the risk of duplication of payment (under section 46 (1) and 46 (2)) for the same object.

30. The local authority revised estimates for 1950-51 showed expenditure of £18,000, for 1951-52 £21,000, and the preliminary estimates for 1952-53 show £24,000.

Home Office Control of Local Authority Expenditure

31. The table below gives an analysis of the figures in the local authority revised estimates for 1950-51 and 1951-52, and of the preliminary estimates for 1952-53.

[This table is printed as part (i) of Table 3 in the Report.]

Boarded out children

32. The boarding out rates payable for particular children are fixed by each local authority. The over-all expenditure of each authority on boarding out is controlled by means of arrangements introduced by Home Office Circular No. 15/1950, of 1st February, 1950; under this procedure, local authorities are free to determine the amount spent on any child boarded out, provided that the authority's average expenditure per child in a financial year does not exceed 40s. weekly, exclusive of salaries and other costs of administration. This method gives the local authority wide discretion in the payments for individual boarded out children and for those mentioned in paragraph 38 below, and avoids reference to the Home Office on matters of detail. According to the local authority preliminary estimates for 1952-53, the average boarding out payment is about 28s. a week, a figure which takes account of sums contributed by children in employment towards the cost of their keep. Staff complements do not require the approval of the Home Office; the Children's Department inspectors examine the boarding out organisation of the authority, including the number of boarding out officers employed. Owing to variations in local conditions (for example, in distances to be travelled) and to the fact that most boarding out officers have duties in addition to the placing and visiting of boarded out children (such as investigation into applications for reception or discharge from care, supervision of children under the child life protection provisions and children placed for adoption, and court work) it has not been practicable to specify a standard case load for a boarding out officer.

Children in children's homes and hostels provided by local authorities

33. Control of the provision of new children's homes and hostels is exercised by the procedure specified in Home Office Circular No. 92/1950, of 4th May, 1950, whereby the local authority have to get Home Office approval in principle before buying or renting a property for use as a children's home or hostel.

34. The control of building work on children's homes and hostels is on lines agreed by the Local Government Manpower Committee in their First Report (Cmd. 7870), and is set out in Home Office Circulars No. 92/1950, of 4th May, 1950, and No. 181/1950, of 5th September, 1950. Broadly, local authorities are free to carry out small works, subject to approval of an annual programme, but larger works have to receive specific Home Office approval. The limitations of the capital investment programme necessitate controls more rigid than would otherwise be thought desirable.

35. General oversight of staffing and of standards of equipment, furnishing and catering is secured by Home Office inspection; there is not detailed control of the expenditure incurred in running children's homes.

Children in the care of local authorities placed in voluntary children's homes

36. The individual payments for the children are matters for agreement between the local authority and the persons running the voluntary home. The Home Office exercise over-all control of the expenditure of each local authority by procedure introduced by Home Office Circular No. 16/1950, of 1st February, 1950, whereby this expenditure, including clothing, pocket money and incidentals, ranks for Exchequer grant if, in the aggregate, it does not exceed a sum representing an average payment of £3 a week for a child under five years of age, and £2 10s. a week for a child aged five years or

over.* The payments to voluntary homes do not usually meet the full cost of maintaining these children, as, in general, the voluntary organisations take the view that they should make some contribution towards the maintenance of the children entrusted to their care by local authorities.

Miscellaneous categories

37. Expenditure on children who are not boarded out or placed in a local authority children's home or a voluntary home comes within the terms of the Home Office Circular (see paragraph 33 above) controlling the expenditure on boarded out children. Under this head are children in children's homes and nurseries run by private persons, in boarding schools, in vocational training centres, and in lodgings and residential employment. Expenditure on financial assistance towards the maintenance, education and training of persons aged 18 and over, formerly in care, is controlled in the same way by the provisions of this circular.

38. One of the main factors bearing on costs is staffing. The salaries and wages of the staff of the homes and nurseries are fixed by the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Grades, the Ancillary Staffs Council, or the Nurses and Midwives Whitley Council, depending on the grade concerned. After consultation with the Advisory Council on Child Care (which is appointed under section 43 of the Children Act and is composed of persons with knowledge of child care, many of them with local government experience) general guidance has been given to local authorities by the Home Office that in the smaller children's homes the ratio of child care staff to children should be one to four or five, and in nurseries one to three. The staff has to be adequate not merely for the physical care of the children, but also to enable them to be free to give sufficiently of their time to the individual care and development of each child. Staff complements are fixed by the local authority, and are affected by such factors as the type of home, the number and ages of the children, and whether the children are short-stay or long-stay; the nature of the premises is another factor.

Over-All Cost of the Child Care Service

39. According to the local authority revised estimates for 1950-51 and 1951-52, and preliminary estimates for 1952-53 (see the table in paragraph 32 above), the average weekly cost of maintaining a child in public care was put at £3 10s. 6d. in 1950-51, £3 16s. 0d. in 1951-52 and £3 18s. 8d. for 1952-53. The figures include substantial administrative costs, some of which are not connected directly with the maintenance of children in care; for example, expenditure incurred in supervising children under the child life protection provisions of the Public Health Act, 1936, as amended by the Children Act, (7,000 children in private foster homes and 26,000 in children's homes run by private persons and in independent schools), in supervising children under the Adoption Act, 1950 (7,000 children), and in investigating applications for reception into care of children many of whom, in the result, remain with their parents or are provided for privately in other ways.

VOLUNTARY HOMES

40. Section 46 (1) of the Children Act enables the Secretary of State to make grants towards expenses incurred or to be incurred by voluntary organisations for improving the premises or the equipment of voluntary homes, or for securing that voluntary homes will be better provided with qualified staff. No grant can be made by the Home Office towards other expenses of a voluntary home. In practice, grants are made in respect of voluntary homes which have a good spirit and the right perception of child care, but which lack the funds necessary to reach or maintain a proper standard. It is not the policy to make these grants to the larger organisations which carry on a number of homes.

41. When a grant is paid, the voluntary organisation is required to complete, within a specified period, a certificate that the grant has been applied to the purpose for which it was made. Ordinarily a condition is imposed that the grant is to be repaid if the premises cease to be used as a registered voluntary home within a specified period, usually three to seven years, according to the nature of the improvements. The grants given have been for improvements to premises and equipment, with the

*Since the Home Office last gave evidence to the Sub-Committee, representations have been made to the Department by the National Council of Associated Children's Homes regarding the need for an increase in these maximum rates, in view of the general rise in costs.

exception of one case in which a grant of £225 was given to meet, for one year from August, 1949, the salary of a qualified matron appointed in place of a voluntary worker.

42. In the year 1950-51, £25,000 was provided in the vote; and about £20,000 was paid in grants. In the year 1951-52 £40,000 was provided, and it is expected that about £15,000 will be spent; another £15,000 has been promised, but will not be spent this year because of capital investment restrictions. So far this year the largest grant paid has been £2,500, and the smallest £30; the average amount is £700. £30,000 has been provided for 1952-53. Half of the expenditure is recovered from the local authorities, as explained in paragraph 18 above.

TRAINING IN CHILD CARE

43. Following a recommendation of the Curtis Committee, the Central Training Council in Child Care was appointed by the Secretary of State in 1947 to organise courses in child care and to select candidates for the training; the members are persons with knowledge of child care, and many have experience of local government. The Curtis Committee attached such importance to this question that they published an interim report in March, 1946 (Cmd. 6760) urging the need to secure the services of people with good personal qualities for this work and to provide them with adequate training. The Training Council organises courses lasting about a year for boarding out officers and housemothers (and housefathers) in children's homes, and refresher courses for persons of these and other categories, as mentioned below: the courses are run by universities, local education authorities and voluntary organisations. Students for the long courses are selected by the Council, and, where necessary, receive free tuition and travel and maintenance grants (up to £4 a week for a single person). The cost of the training is met by the Home Office, and, as explained in paragraph 18 above, half the expenditure is recovered from the local authority by means of reduction in the rate of grant payable on expenditure incurred under the Children Act. The total expenditure on child care training in the year 1950-51 was just under £80,000 and is expected to be about the same in 1951-52; £80,000 has been provided for 1952-53. Up to 31st January, 1952, over 2,000 persons had attended, or were attending, one of the courses arranged by the Training Council.

44. The boarding out officer course is designed to qualify persons for work as visiting officers in the work of boarding out, adoption and after-care with local authorities or voluntary organisations. The course is provided by universities and lasts twelve months. So far 285 students have been awarded the Training Council Certificate, and 64 are now in training. The tuition fees are about £50 per student, and the amount of maintenance grants depends on the individual circumstances of the students.

45. The housemother course is designed to qualify persons for work in children's homes provided by local authorities or voluntary organisations. The course is provided by local education authorities and voluntary organisations and lasts fourteen months. 529 students have been awarded the Training Council's Certificate, and 164 are now in training. The cost of tuition per student varies between £50 and £100.

46. Supplementary courses for students possessing certificates granted by certain voluntary organisations are provided. These courses last three months, and have been attended by 51 students. The cost of tuition is £21 per student. The usual maintenance grants are available.

47. Refresher courses, lasting three weeks, are run for boarding out officers by universities. 123 officers of local authorities have attended these courses. The costs vary between £6 10s. 0d. and £8 per student per week, of which between two-thirds and three-quarters is for board and lodging and the remainder for tuition.

48. Refresher courses for staffs of children's homes are provided by local education authorities or voluntary organisations, and last three weeks. 733 have attended them. The costs vary between £5 and £7 per student per week, of which between two-thirds and three-quarters is for board and lodging and the remainder for tuition.

49. Miscellaneous refresher courses, lasting between ten days and three weeks, are provided for matrons of residential nurseries and staffs of approved schools and remand homes. 187 students have attended these courses. The costs of these courses are much the same as the costs mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Children's Department,
Home Office.

25th February, 1952.

APPENDIX I

LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE

Further information for which the Sub-Committee asked at its meeting on 4th March, 1952.

(1) Local authority expenditure in 1952-53. An analysis of estimates submitted by local authorities giving the highest and lowest average cost under each heading.

(2) A note giving further details of expenditure on administration during 1950-51.

(3) Examples of weekly cost per child in local authority homes, nurseries and hostels, during 1950-51, divided into various categories of expenditure.

Children's Department,
Home Office,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

10th March, 1952.

Estimated expenditure by local authorities in 1952/53 on the maintenance of children in homes or boarded out; and other expenses in connection with child care and welfare

Heading	Highest Average Cost per head per week			Lowest Average Cost per head per week		
	No. of Children	£	s. d.	No. of Children	£	s. d.
Boarded out	200	2	- -	45	16	6
Local Authority Homes ...	75	7	3 7	40	2	15 9
Hostels	22	5	7 9	45	2	15 2
Voluntary Homes	65	4	2 10	20	1	2 1
Other Expenditure	2	9	12 4	1	2	4
<i>Administration</i>						
Direct	112	1	- 7	685		
Apportioned... ..	65		11 10	99		2
Acquisition and adaptation of buildings	106	1	9 -	212		1
Contributions to voluntary organisations	1,942		11	Varying		1
Miscellaneous expenditure ...	2,021	4	9	Varying		1
Total Cost	269	6	8 -	74	2	6 9

Administration expenditure

Direct charges relate to the Children Officer's Department.

Apportioned charges relate to other departments of the council, e.g., Town Clerk's, Treasurer's, Architect's, etc.

There is insufficient information to break down the expenditure shown in the statement, but such claims to grant as have been received to date for 1950-51 have been analysed. They give an indication (but no more) of how the direct charge is made up. Of the 145 claims only 47 are available (approximately one-third) and are mainly from the smaller authorities.

	Per cent.
Salaries, wages, national insurance and superannuation	72
Office accommodation	4
Travelling and subsistence	9
Printing, stationery and office equipment	10
Miscellaneous	5
	100

* See Table 3, part (i), in the Report.

With regard to the apportioned charges the 47 claims referred to show in many cases a total figure only and it is not possible to break it down. Broadly, apportionment should be fairly related to user and be on a basis not more favourable than that employed for the calculation of similar apportionment against services not in receipt of grant aid. It is for the local authorities to satisfy the District Auditor that the amounts charged are equitable and reasonable.

Of the total expenditure on administration, 67 per cent. is attributable to direct charges and 33 per cent. to apportioned charges.

Break-down of cost per child per week in local authority homes, nurseries and hostels during 1950-51

It is not possible to break down the 1952-53 figures given in the last column of page 14 of the Home Office memorandum of 25th February and the following figures are extracted from the financial claims submitted by local authorities for the year 1950-51. The claims submitted by local authorities include overall figures for administration and it is not possible to indicate the proportion attributable to homes, nurseries and hostels. Nor is it possible to give detailed information regarding expenditure by local authorities for children maintained in voluntary homes.

DETAILS OF EXPENDITURE RELATING TO CHILDREN'S HOMES PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 15 OF THE CHILDREN ACT, 1948
(ADMINISTERED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES)

Authority	Type of home, e.g. Nursery, Long stay, etc.	Average number of Children	Salaries, Wages, etc.	Provi- sions, Clothing, Laundry, etc.	Furniture, Equip- ment, etc.	Lighting and Heating	Rents, Rates, Taxes, Repairs, etc.	Capital expendi- ture met from revenue	Loan Charges	Other expendi- ture	Gross	Net (after deduction of income)
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Lincs.—Kesteven ...	All homes	141	1 3 4	1 - 2	1 5	2 7	4 3	5 1	3 9	5 5	3 6	£ s. d.
	Nurseries	24	1 12 -	1 1 4	1 10	3 6	2 0	2 11	4 3	4 9	3 12	3 3 5
County of Merioneth ...	Other homes	117	1 1 6	19 11	1 4	2 5	4 9	5 6	3 8	5 7	3 4	3 10 9
	1 home, long stay	38	1 9 9	19 7	2 10	4 0	7 11	-	4 8	3 11	3 12	3 2 -
County of Stafford ...	All homes	295	1 14 5	1 8 7	3 7	4 3	7 7	9 8	4 2	5 6	4 17	4 15 2
	Nurseries	58	2 - 9	1 5 8	3 6	4 1	4 3	15 6	3 3	5 11	4 19	4 17 6
	Other homes	237	1 12 11	1 9 3	3 7	4 4	8 5	8 3	5 1	5 5	4 17	4 13 8
Manchester ...	All homes	553	2 6 9	1 4 1	3 7	6 1	14 3	5	1 2	11 8	5 8	4 19 7
	Nurseries	65	5 4 1	1 11 8	5 7	13 1	1 14 -	-	-	6 3	9 14	9 13 1
	Other homes	488	1 19 3	1 3 -	3 4	5 2	11 8	6	1 4	12 4	4 16	4 6 10
Reading ...	All homes	71	2 - 6	1 12 8	4 3	5 7	16 1	2 9	4 -	5 5	5 11	5 7 2
	Nurseries	11	3 1 2	1 5 3	10 11	11 1	1 5 6	-	4 -	4 -	6 17	(income shown in one total)
	Other homes	60	1 17 -	1 14 -	3 2	4 8	14 8	3 3	4 6	5 5	5 6	5 7 2
York ...	All homes	110	2 - 7	1 7 8	4 1	5 11	7 4	1 1	1 11	3 8	4 12	4 2 9
	Nurseries	42	2 13 1	1 6 3	3 11	9 8	11 8	2 10	4 7	5 6	5 17	5 1 10
	Other homes	68	1 12 10	1 8 6	4 1	3 7	4 9	-	3	2 6	3 16	3 11 4

DETAILS OF EXPENDITURE RELATING TO HOSTELS PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 19 OF THE CHILDREN ACT, 1948
(ADMINISTERED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES)

Authority	(Resi- dents)	Salaries, Wages, etc.	Provi- sions, Clothing, Laundry, etc.	Furniture, Equip- ment, etc.	Lighting and Heating	Rents, Rates, Taxes, Repairs, etc.	Capital expendi- ture met from revenue	Loan Charges	Other expendi- ture	Gross	Net (after deduction of income)
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
County of Stafford ...	13	1 14 -	1 16 10	2 7	4 11	9 2	3 6	-	6 4	4 17	3 6 10
Gateshead ...	16	2 2 6	1 12 9	2 1	6 10	1 3	9	-	6 6	4 12	3 14 5

APPENDIX II

NOTE ON "UNCLE AND AUNT" SCHEMES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1. In their visits to children's homes in 1945 and 1946, members of the Curtis Committee did not find much evidence of schemes for the befriending of children by "uncles and aunts". Schemes of this kind are not mentioned in the Committee's report as having been seen in local authority homes, although other forms of outside contacts, such as clubs, scouts, etc., are referred to. In voluntary homes uncle and aunt schemes are mentioned as "excellent if arranged with care, but unsuccessful if only attractive children are wanted or when some children receive more treats than others". In making suggestions about points to be considered in the running of a children's home, the Curtis Committee said that "close links may sometimes be formed with adults who are willing to act as outside friends to a particular child, and these too should be encouraged, subject to careful selection".

2. The Children Act puts local authorities under a continuing duty to endeavour to secure that, consistent with his welfare, the care of a child is taken over by a parent, guardian, relative or friend. The first consideration must be the maintenance of the family link or, failing that, of contacts between the child and relatives or friends who may be interested in him. The fares of parents, guardians or other persons who cannot afford to pay may be met by the local authority to enable a child in their care to be visited. (In one local authority grouped cottage home taking some 270 children, all but thirty or forty are in regular contact with parents or relatives.)

3. "Uncles and aunts" are not needed for children in care temporarily, or for very young children in nurseries. They are needed for children in children's homes who are in care indefinitely and who, for one reason or another, are not visited, or taken out, by their own people. The need is greatest in the larger homes with inside schools where the children have not the opportunity open to those in the smaller family group homes to take part fully in the life of the local community and to make friends with their school fellows and to visit their homes.

4. The available information shows that uncle and aunt schemes are in operation in one form or another in some 650 children's homes, out of perhaps 850 homes in which there is need for an arrangement of the kind. The scheme is expanding and, all things considered, satisfactory progress is thought to have been made in this field in the few years since the Children Act passed into law.

5. A child's need for one person to whom he can look for the affection and security, which is of vital importance to every child, is coming more and more to be met by a housemother of the children's home in which he lives. The growing tendency is to establish family group homes, taking eight to twelve children preferably of both sexes and of a wide age range, in an ordinary house in a street or in a housing estate, under the charge of a housemother who acts as a mother to the group. Large cottages in grouped homes, and large undivided homes, are being re-organised so as to attach a housemother to each small group of children. Individual care and continuity are achieved in this way.

6. It is of obvious importance that the uncle or aunt should be a person who is acceptable to the housemother and who supplements the care given in the home. If the housemother is opposed to the scheme, it is necessary first to secure her agreement. Persons who have been employed in children's homes for years do not at first always understand the need for outside contacts and allowance must be made for this. The child care training course emphasises the advantages of the uncle and aunt relationship, and these schemes are discussed at refresher courses which are arranged for the serving staff of children's homes.

7. Where uncles and aunts are chosen wisely and work in unison with the staff of the homes, a whole world of new ideas and new experiences can be opened up to a child offering, for some of them for the first time, opportunities of seeing how families live and the simple homely activities of an ordinary household. They can learn, too, about the attitude of parents to children, of husbands and wives to each other, and even of the difficulties of making do on limited means. If the friendship—which may extend to other members of the family—is successful, it will continue into adult life and provide an association of a lasting kind which could not easily be achieved otherwise.

8. There are more particular advantages in the relationship. It should mean someone to remember birthdays and Christmas, and to attend sports days and prize givings. It may provide a place to which a child can go for a day, or for the weekend or for holidays, and may lead sometimes to the offer of a foster home then or later when the child goes to work. The scheme has the advantage also that members of the community go in and out of the children's homes, and can bring to it a friendly attitude and an interest which is to the benefit of all the children.

9. But the scheme has its hazards, the chief of which is the risk that a person who is anxious to act as an uncle or aunt may lose interest and fail to stay the course resulting in severe hurt to the child who is taken up and then dropped. Again, not all well-meaning people are sensible in their dealings with children; some may not have the understanding or the patience to persevere until the child, whose conduct may be trying in the meantime, feels secure in the new relationship, while others may spoil the child by extravagant giving or in other ways make him discontented with his home. There is, too, need to remember the interest of the children, perhaps the least attractive in appearance among those in the home, who do not easily find an uncle or aunt with whom they can form a stable relationship. All this underlines the need for great care in choosing uncles and aunts for children many of whom are disturbed by earlier unhappy experiences that have led to their being in public care.

10. Local authorities generally are in favour of befriending schemes of some suitable kind. Much help is given by W.V.S., Women's Institutes, Rotary, Toc H. Soroptomists, Townswomen's Guilds and similar organisations, and also by private persons.

Home Office,

Children's Department.

22nd March, 1952.

APPENDIX III

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BOARDED OUT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS ON 30TH NOVEMBER, 1951

Authority	Total number of children in care	Number Boarded Out	Per-centage Boarded Out	Authority	Total number of children in care	Number Boarded Out	Per-centage Boarded Out
COUNTIES IN ENGLAND							
Bedfordshire ...	345	129	37	London ...	7,338	1,796	24
Berkshire ...	606	282	47	Middlesex ...	2,875	1,062	37
Buckinghamshire ...	499	219	44	Monmouthshire ...	495	268	54
Cambridgeshire ...	187	78	42	Norfolk ...	503	281	56
Cheshire ...	838	494	59	Northamptonshire ...	309	147	48
Cornwall ...	402	244	61	Northumberland ...	347	140	40
Cumberland ...	289	123	43	Nottinghamshire ...	647	400	62
Derbyshire ...	455	237	52	Oxfordshire ...	400	186	47
Devonshire ...	857	448	52	Rutland ...	33	11	33
Dorsetshire ...	419	226	54	Shropshire ...	446	157	35
Durham ...	868	162	19	Soke of Peterborough	56	18	32
Essex ...	1,459	679	47	Somerset ...	657	263	40
Gloucestershire ...	516	211	41	Staffordshire ...	877	433	49
Hampshire ...	840	280	33	Suffolk, East ...	288	223	77
Herefordshire ...	287	144	50	Suffolk, West ...	138	74	54
Hertfordshire ...	942	339	36	Surrey ...	1,471	535	36
Huntingdonshire ...	132	34	26	Sussex, East ...	448	173	39
Isle of Ely ...	176	77	44	Sussex, West ...	501	166	33
Isle of Wight ...	159	80	50	Warwickshire ...	631	269	43
Kent ...	1,967	772	39	Westmorland ...	90	29	32
Lancashire ...	1,513	660	44	Wiltshire ...	586	225	38
Leicestershire ...	431	220	51	Worcestershire ...	516	163	32
Lincs. (Holland) ...	220	65	30	Yorkshire, East Riding	294	131	45
Lincs. (Kesteven) ...	312	112	36	North Riding	446	155	35
Lincs. (Lindsey) ...	537	239	45	West Riding	1,841	590	32

Authority	Total number of children in care	Number Boarded Out	Percentage Boarded Out	Authority	Total number of children in care	Number Boarded Out	Percentage Boarded Out
COUNTIES IN WALES							
Anglesey ...	50	17	34	Flintshire ...	150	58	39
Brecknockshire ...	51	28	55	Glamorgan ...	1,045	469	45
Caernarvonshire ...	169	99	59	Merionethshire ...	52	12	23
Cardiganshire ...	112	79	71	Montgomeryshire ...	41	31	76
Carmarthenshire ...	217	117	54	Pembrokeshire ...	141	37	26
Denbighshire ...	202	69	34	Radnorshire ...	34	6	18
COUNTY BOROUGHES IN ENGLAND							
Barnsley ...	130	62	48	Lincoln ...	140	45	32
Barrow-in-Furness ...	58	29	50	Liverpool* ...	2,022	477	24
Bath ...	143	80	56	Manchester ...	1,504	508	34
Birkenhead ...	181	65	36	Middlesbrough ...	211	39	18
Birmingham ...	1,592	495	31	Newcastle-on-Tyne ...	489	135	28
Blackburn ...	107	32	30	Newport (Mon.) ...	164	76	46
Blackpool ...	177	95	54	Northampton... ..	154	75	49
Bolton... ..	256	70	27	Norwich ...	234	134	57
Bootle ...	117	41	35	Nottingham ...	614	412	67
Bournemouth* ...	326	246	75	Oldham ...	255	65	25
Bradford ...	573	130	23	Oxford ...	200	103	52
Brighton ...	293	114	39	Plymouth ...	445	283	64
Bristol... ..	630	345	55	Portsmouth ...	307	145	47
Burnley ...	76	39	51	Preston ...	149	31	21
Burton-on-Trent ...	74	28	38	Reading ...	304	165	54
Bury ...	68	27	40	Rochdale ...	98	35	36
Canterbury ...	49	15	31	Rotherham ...	166	91	55
Carlisle ...	119	44	37	St. Helens ...	132	45	34
Chester ...	83	29	35	Salford ...	379	174	46
Coventry ...	383	156	41	Sheffield ...	661	310	47
Croydon ...	323	177	55	Smethwick ...	130	68	52
Darlington ...	72	37	51	Southampton... ..	380	115	30
Derby ...	241	100	41	Southend-on-Sea ...	155	74	48
Dewsbury ...	79	40	51	Southport ...	85	35	41
Doncaster ...	110	46	42	South Shields... ..	215	90	42
Dudley ...	175	85	49	Stockport ...	193	57	30
Eastbourne ...	84	31	37	Stoke-on-Trent ...	450	163	36
East Ham ...	256	97	38	Sunderland ...	375	109	29
Exeter ...	103	61	59	Tynemouth ...	111	31	28
Gateshead ...	216	53	25	Wakefield ...	74	38	51
Gloucester ...	111	30	27	Wallasey ...	79	21	27
Great Yarmouth ...	50	15	30	Walsall ...	258	151	59
Grimsby ...	178	60	34	Warrington ...	151	50	33
Halifax ...	164	42	26	West Bromwich ...	121	63	52
Hastings ...	132	68	52	West Ham ...	283	89	31
Huddersfield ...	185	39	21	West Hartlepool ...	96	28	29
Ipswich ...	164	91	55	Wigan ...	137	35	26
Kingston-on-Hull ...	388	195	50	Wolverhampton ...	274	82	30
Leeds ...	669	190	28	Worcester ...	158	40	25
Leicester ...	472	166	35	York ...	216	69	32
COUNTY BOROUGHES IN WALES							
Cardiff... ..	431	149	35	Swansea ...	233	129	55
Merthyr Tydfil ...	98	49	50				

* More recent figures for Bournemouth and Liverpool are given in Annex 11.

	<i>Total number of children in care</i>	<i>Total Boarded Out</i>	<i>Percentage Boarded Out</i>
ENGLAND AND WALES	62,691	24,319	39

Note.—The proportion boarded out at the end of 1949 was 35 per cent. and at the end of 1950, 37 per cent.

Children's Department,
Home Office.
29th April, 1952.

APPENDIX IV

NOTE ON CHILDREN NOT SUITABLE FOR BOARDING OUT

1. Local authorities are required by section 13 (1) of the Children Act to board out a child in their care, unless this is not practicable or desirable for the time being. By boarding out is meant placing a child for whom this form of care is suitable in a foster home which is judged to be right for him and in which he is likely to settle happily.

2. The circumstances in which children are received into care, and their condition on coming into care, are so varied that it cannot be expected that one form of care, boarding out, will be suitable for all. Physical or emotional or mental disabilities may make the help of trained staff necessary for a child, at any rate for the time being. Consequently, two main groups of children are likely to be found in children's homes:—

- (a) those who may become suitable for boarding out later, including:—
- (i) children recently admitted to care and placed in a reception home so that their needs can be assessed;
 - (ii) children who have been neglected or assaulted and who need building up physically and emotionally, and, often, training in proper habits;
 - (iii) infants who have been neglected or are delicate and who need skilled attention which can best be provided in a residential nursery; and
 - (iv) children who have had to be removed from a foster home because of breakdown of the arrangement for one reason or another, or on account of the illness of the foster parent—
- (b) those who are unlikely to become suitable for boarding out, including:—
- (i) maladjusted children whose behaviour problems (for example, inability to give or accept affection, temper tantrums, anti-social conduct including destructiveness, enuresis or sexual precocity) make them unacceptable to, and unmanageable by, ordinary foster parents;
 - (ii) difficult or delinquent children who need the help of trained staff;
 - (iii) difficult adolescents (probably received into care after reaching adolescence) who cannot easily adjust themselves to a foster home;
 - (iv) children of low mentality (and sometimes unattractive appearance) who are not acceptable to the ordinary foster parent; some of these children will be waiting for a place in a special institution; and
 - (v) some of the children who have lived for a long time in a children's home (sometimes termed "institutionalised" children) and who would find too difficult the uprooting from a large community and adjustment to ordinary family life.

3. It is intended to develop as far as possible the boarding out of children with physical or emotional difficulties such as are indicated above, where this can suitably be done, but it is not easy to find foster parents able or prepared to assume the special responsibilities that are entailed. (Care is necessary in placing children who are more than ordinarily difficult because, just as a foster parent who finds satisfaction in caring for a child will often encourage boarding out in the neighbourhood, so the effect of an unsatisfactory placing may prejudice boarding out.)

4. There will also be found in children's homes children in care temporarily who might suitably be boarded out, but for whom no foster homes are available. Many people who are prepared to offer a foster home for a child who would remain with them indefinitely are not willing to take a succession of children for short periods.

Children's Department,

Home Office.

6th May, 1952.

APPENDIX V

NOTE ON EXPENDITURE ON CHILDREN IN CARE UNDER THE CHILDREN ACT FROM JULY, 1948, ONWARDS

The Children Act came into force on 5th July, 1948, from which date every local authority was under a duty to appoint a children's officer and adequate staff to assist him (section 41 (1) and (5) of the Act). As the child care service developed on lines advocated by the Curtis Committee and provided for in the Children Act, expenditure increased in these main ways:—

- (a) by the appointment of children's officers (mainly in the latter part of the financial year 1947-48), and of field staff and office staff (some transferred from other departments of the local authority and some engaged from outside); in 1948, a few local authorities employed trained officers on boarding out work, but in most areas boarded out children were supervised by school attendance officers or public assistance staff as part of their general duties, or by voluntary workers.
- (b) the need not only to provide field staff adequate to the new requirements of the situation in 1948, but also to cope with the rise in the numbers of children coming into care and with the steady increase in boarding out; each year the number of children in care has increased by about 3,700, and the number boarded out by about 2,500.
- (c) improved staffing of children's homes and nurseries to enable the children to be given that individual attention often lacking in the past, and the staffing of new homes.
- (d) provision of some reception homes and new children's homes to replace unsuitable accommodation including nurseries in workhouses, to relieve overcrowding, and to provide for some of the additional children in care; the number of children's homes increased from just under 600 in 1948 to 850 at the beginning of 1951, and to about 950 in 1952.
- (e) improvements in the premises and equipment of children's homes where necessary, including arrears of repairs and maintenance which accrued during the war.
- (f) additional expense arising from successive improvements in pay and conditions of service of staff (fixed nationally through wages negotiating machinery), and in the cost of food, clothing, light and heat and household equipment and requisites, and general upkeep and maintenance.

Children's Department,

Home Office.

6th May, 1952.

ANNEX 2

CHILD CARE, SCOTLAND

Memorandum by the Scottish Home Department

General

1. Since the Report of the Clyde Committee on Homeless Children and the coming into force of the Children Act, 1948, responsibility for the care of homeless children in Scotland has rested centrally on the Secretary of State, acting through the Scottish Home Departments, and locally on the councils of counties (31 in number) and large burghs (24 in number). Each local authority must appoint a Children's Committee and a Children's Officer, who may not, without the consent of the Secretary of State, do other

work. The Scottish Home Department pay a grant of 50 per cent. (reduced in respect of expenditure incurred centrally on training and on grants to voluntary bodies) on the costs incurred by the local authorities in exercising their functions.

2. Local authorities are responsible for the care up to the age of 18 of children whose parents are dead or are unable for any reason to look after them, and they may contribute to the cost of their educational training up to the age of 21 or later. They also have the duty of looking after under similar conditions children in need of care or protection who are committed by the court to their care as a "fit person". The local authority must exercise their powers so as to further the best interests of these children and afford them opportunity for the proper development of their character and abilities. In other words, they must perform in relation to the children the duties of a good parent.

3. In addition to the children in their care, local authorities must arrange for the visiting or supervision of children who are "taken for reward"; who are placed with prospective adopters by persons other than their parents; or who are spending with prospective adopters the trial period of at least three months required by the Adoption Act, 1950.

4. On 30th November, 1951, the total number of children for whom Scottish local authorities were responsible in one way or another was 12,113 compared with 9,658 in November, 1948. Details are as follows:—

Children in care under section 1 of the Children Act or committed to the care of local authorities as "fit persons"

	1951	1948
(a) Children boarded out	5,955	5,357
(b) Children in local authority homes	1,555	1,115
(c) Children in voluntary homes	1,745	1,500
(d) Children in National Assistance Act premises	38	91
(e) Handicapped children in residential special schools or homes	48	528
(f) Children accommodated in other ways, e.g., hostels provided by voluntary organisations	670	
Total ...	10,011	8,591

Children supervised under the Children and Young Persons

(Scotland) Act, 1937—children received for reward

	1951	1948
...	724	926

Children visited or supervised under the provisions of the Adoption Act, 1950

	1951	1948
(a) Children placed with prospective adopters by third parties	167	141
(b) Children awaiting adoption	1,211	—
Total ...	12,113	9,658

5. Apart from children for whom local authorities are responsible, there were at 30th November, 1951, 3,045 children in voluntary homes inspected by officers of the Scottish Home Department.

6. It will be seen that, of the children in the care of local authorities, 5,955 or 59 per cent. were boarded out with foster parents; 1,555 or 16 per cent. were in local authority homes; 1,745 or 17 per cent. were in voluntary homes; and 756 or 8 per cent. were otherwise cared for. The following paragraphs deal in more detail with the arrangements for each of these categories; with assistance to voluntary homes and bodies; with contributions from parents; with training in child care; with child life protection; and with adoption.

Boarding out

7. Boarding out has been the traditional Scottish method of caring for homeless children and it is now accepted as the best and cheapest. Under the Children Act the local authority must use it unless it is impracticable or undesirable to do so. The proportion of Scottish children boarded out, though higher than in England and

Wales, is smaller than it used to be—partly because of the difficulty of finding foster parents, and partly because of the increasing numbers of children who are in care for short periods—e.g., while their mother is having another baby—and who cannot therefore usefully be boarded out. The local authorities are actively seeking to increase the number of foster homes and there is some evidence that they are succeeding.

8. For grant purposes local authorities may incur, in accordance with arrangements authorised in Circular No. 7366, expenditure on the boarding out of children, up to an average for all the children in their care who can be boarded out, of 40s. per week per child, including clothing, pocket money, holiday expenditure and any other necessary items. This arrangement gives discretion to the local authorities to incur exceptional expenditure to meet exceptional needs. For the year 1951-52 the estimated cost per child averaged £1 5s. 1d. per week inclusive. Pocket money ranges from sixpence to two shillings per week according to the age of the child. Clothing is usually provided from bulk-purchased stocks, but there is a tendency to allow cash payments for the older girls so that they might have a chance to choose their own clothes. The cost of clothing is in the region of six to seven shillings a week. There is not a uniform boarding out rate in force for all local authorities in Scotland but the four cities, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee, who are together responsible for about 46 per cent. of children boarded out in Scotland, consult together from time to time as to what is an appropriate weekly payment, and the other local authorities tend to adopt a like rate.

Local Authority Homes

9. On 5th July, 1948, children's committees became responsible for 31 children's homes previously managed under Poor Law powers. These homes had accommodation for 1,200 children. In providing further homes the object has been to keep them small, the ideal as recommended by the Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care, in a Report published in October, 1950, being a family home for 8 to 12 children. This object could best be attained by building new premises but the restriction on capital investment has so far prevented this, and it has usually been necessary for large houses to be purchased and adapted. Between 5th July, 1948, and 31st December, 1951, local authorities acquired 26 properties to accommodate 561 children, an average of 21 children per home. The capital cost of purchase and adaptation was £185,000; the average purchase price was £4,900 and the average cost of adaptations £2,200. The cost of furnishings, including kitchen equipment, averaged about £150 per place.

10. The cost of maintaining children in local authority homes varies considerably according to the type of the home and the kind of children being cared for. The large converted house, for example, costs more to keep up than would a small specially built home; and nursery homes or homes for difficult or handicapped children need larger numbers of more highly trained and therefore expensive staff. The average cost (including allowance for loan charges) per child per week for all homes was £4 13s. 4d. in 1950-51 and £5 3s. 6d. in 1951-52.

Voluntary Homes

11. Circular No. 7391 of 14th April, 1950, authorised local authorities to incur expenditure of up to £3 per week for each child under 5 years of age placed in a voluntary home, and of £2 10s. per week for each child of 5 years or over. For 1950-51 the average payment per child to voluntary homes was 25s. 8d. per week; the estimated cost for 1951-52 is 30s. 1d. per week. The payment made by local authorities includes cost of clothing, pocket money and other incidentals and ranks for Exchequer grant if, in the aggregate, the above average rates are not exceeded.

Children accommodated in other ways

12. At 30th November, 1951, 756 children were accommodated otherwise than by being boarded out or placed in a local authority or a voluntary children's home. Of this number, 38 were in National Assistance Act premises (as against 91 in 1948). The Act allows children in care to be accommodated in such premises for periods of not more than 14 days or, with the Secretary of State's consent, for periods up to 8 weeks. The use of this kind of accommodation, even in emergency circumstances, is discouraged. Handicapped children in residential special schools or homes for handicapped children numbered 48, and 86 were in other local authority premises, e.g.,

residential nurseries. The remainder were in hostels for working lads and girls or similar accommodation. Expenditure on the various groups accommodated in these ways comes within the arrangement authorised by Circular No. 7366 of 14th March, 1950, i.e., expenditure within the average of 40s. per week per child boarded out or accommodated otherwise than in a children's home.

Grants to Voluntary Homes

13. Section 46 (1) of the Children Act, 1948, empowers the Secretary of State to make grants (of which 50 per cent. is recoverable from local authorities) to voluntary homes for improving premises and equipment and for securing qualified staff. Grants are not payable towards ordinary running and maintenance costs.

14. These grants are made after consultation with an Advisory Committee appointed by the local authority associations. Grants for improving premises and equipment—no grant has so far been made towards the cost of securing qualified staff—amounted to £2,310 in 1949-50, £4,610 in 1950-51, and (probably) £2,345 in the current year.

Contributions by local authorities to voluntary organisations

15. Section 46 (2) of the Children Act gives power to the local authority, with the consent of the Secretary of State, to contribute to any voluntary organisation, the object or primary object of which is to promote the welfare of children. Such contributions rank for Exchequer grant. Of the contributions made since 5th July, 1948, by local authorities to voluntary organisations, about 75 per cent. have gone to the Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The remaining contributions have gone to local bodies running voluntary homes.

16. In 1950-51 expenditure of local authorities under Section 46 (2) was £3,196; for 1951-52 the local authorities' revised estimate is £2,706.

Training in Child Care

17. So far, the only training courses held in Scotland have been short refresher courses for the staffs of children's homes; but it is hoped to begin a full training course for house-mothers towards the end of this year. It is hoped also to have a one-week course for staff engaged in boarding out work. The expenditure on training in 1950-51 was £228; and in 1951-52 £302. The arrangements required for training are made in consultation with the local authority associations and half the cost is recovered from the local authorities.

Child Life Protection

18. Local authorities have a duty, under Part I of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937, to visit children reported to them as having been received by private persons for reward. The visitor must be satisfied as to the health and well-being of the child. If it is considered that a child should be removed from an undesirable foster parent or from unsuitable premises, the local authority may apply for a sheriff's warrant for the removal of the child. Administrative responsibility rests with the children's officer but, frequently, the actual visiting of the children is carried out by the health welfare visitor. Expenditure on this function is negligible.

Adoption

19. Children's officers must under the Adoption Act, 1950, supervise children placed with private persons not by a parent but by a "third-party", and must arrange for children living with prospective adopters to be visited during the statutory trial period of at least three months. Adoption proceedings also impose another duty on children's officers. With the consent of the local authority concerned, the court may appoint the children's officer of the area as *curator ad litem* and to report confidentially to the court on all aspects of the proposed adoption.

Total Cost of the Children's Service

20. The total cost of the children's service for 1949-50, the first complete financial year after the Children Act, 1948, came into operation, was £774,610, the grant paid being £387,305; for 1951-52, the estimated cost is £1,101,690 on which a grant of £550,845 will be paid.

[The remainder of this paragraph is included in part (ii) of Table 3 in the Report.]

Remand Homes

21. The Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937 (Section 81), places upon the councils of counties and large burghs the duty of providing remand homes for their area. A council may themselves establish, or join with another council in

establishing, a remand home or they may arrange for the authority or persons responsible for the management of any institution other than a prison for the use of the institution, or any part of it, as a remand home. Under the Children Act, 1948, a local authority are required to exercise their functions with respect to remand homes through their children's committee. Expenditure on remand homes ranks for Exchequer grant of 50 per cent.

22. On 1st January, 1951, there were 7 remand homes situated in the more populous areas. In addition, in the less populated areas accommodation was available for use when required in certain private houses or small institutions approved for the purpose. In all, there was accommodation available for 171 children (131 boys and 40 girls). Six of the seven remand homes served groups of local authorities; the seventh is in Glasgow. The Glasgow remand home is the only home of any size, having accommodation for 43 boys and 4 girls.

23. Remand homes are provided for the safe custody of children and young persons:—

- (a) who are charged with offences and are not released on bail pending their appearance before a court;
- (b) who require to be lodged in a "place of safety", usually children judged to be in need of care and protection or beyond control of their parents, who are detained pending consideration of their cases by a court;
- (c) between sittings of the court while the case is adjourned for enquiries to be completed or reports to be obtained;
- (d) while detained after committal to an approved school and awaiting a vacancy; and
- (e) on committal to a remand home, under Section 58 of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937, for a period of punitive detention not exceeding one month.

24. Local authority remand homes are among the premises in which, under Section 13 (6) of the Children Act, 1948, local authorities may, in cases authorised by the Secretary of State, accommodate boys and girls received into their care under the Children Act, or committed to their care as a "fit person". The Secretary of State's authorisation is given only in exceptional circumstances.

25. The average period of stay in a remand home is about 10 days. The age range of the boys and girls accommodated is from 8-16 years and the problems they present are varied, calling for special personal qualities in the staff. In addition to the separation of the sexes, the aim has been to provide separately for junior and senior boys in different parts of the same premises.

26. The general routine in remand homes is governed by the Remand Home (Scotland) Rules, 1946, made by the Secretary of State under the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937; and remand homes are inspected by inspectors of the Scottish Home Department. The Secretary of State is empowered by Section 51 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act, 1949 (but has not yet exercised this power) to require his approval of the use of any premises as a remand home, and to apply to remand homes the provisions of the Act of 1937 relating to the approval of approved schools. By Section 51 (3) of the Act of 1949 the appointment of the person to be in charge of a remand home is subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

27. Children in remand homes receive school room instruction, either from a visiting teacher or from a member of the remand home staff. Most homes have developed craft work and other vocational work, not only as daily occupation for young persons over school age but also as spare-time evening hobby classes for younger children.

28. Courts sometimes remand children in custody for examination and report by a psychologist or psychiatrist before deciding on treatment, and the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act, 1949, expressly empowers local authorities to provide facilities in their remand homes for the observation of any person on whose physical or mental condition a report may be desirable for the information of the court. It is also customary for superintendents of remand homes to provide factual reports for the courts on the behaviour and character of children while in the home.

29. In view of the different sizes of remand homes and the resulting differences in the responsibilities of their staffs, there are no national scales of salary or conditions of service for remand home officers. Each local authority decides what salary is appropriate in the light of the local circumstances. All salaries are subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

30. Local authorities incur expenditure in connection with remand homes on the maintenance and training of the children in the homes, the salaries and wages, and in some cases the board and lodging, of staff, the purchase, adaptation and maintenance of premises and overhead and administrative charges. This expenditure is controlled on the lines agreed by the Scottish Local Government Manpower Committee and set out in the Scottish Home Department's Circular No. 7365 of the 11th March, 1950. This circular requires a local authority to seek approval before buying or renting a property for remand home use or carrying out any major works; and to keep within an annually approved estimate in doing repairs and minor works. At present limitations on capital investment restrict the amount of work that can be done.

31. The average cost of maintaining a child in a remand home is necessarily high and amounted in 1950-51 to £8 15s. 9d. per week. This is because accommodation has to be kept available for the unpredictable number of cases which the courts may send from day to day for periods of uncertain length, and because there must be remand homes within reasonable reach of the court. In the seven homes in Scotland only 41.5 per cent. of the available 171 places was used on average in 1951, when the total number of admissions was 2,348 and the average stay 10 days.

Scottish Home Department,
February, 1952.

APPENDIX I

EXPENDITURE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATION IN SCOTLAND
FOR THE YEAR 1950-51

	1950-51 <i>Actual Expenditure</i> £
Salaries of children's officers	20,398
„ „ staffs of children's officers	40,517
	<hr/> 60,915
Apportioned charges for services of other local authority departments, e.g., treasurer's department, works and buildings department, etc....	24,478
Office accommodation:—	£
(i) Direct	5,480
(ii) Apportioned	4,262
	<hr/> 9,742
Travelling expenses of children's officers and their staffs	13,091
Stationery and office expenses	5,845
Miscellaneous	7,733
	<hr/> £121,804
The revised estimate for 1951-52 is:—	£
(a) Children's officers and staffs	74,725
(b) Administration expenses	69,259
	<hr/> £143,98

[The break-up of (b) cannot be made until local authorities' claims for grant are received.]

Note:—

The total cost of local authority administration (including supervision under the child life protection provisions and the Adoption Act, 1950), was, for 1950-51, 4s. 10d. per week per child, and on the revised estimate for 1951-52, 5s. 6d. per week per child. These figures are based on the number of children in care on 30th November, and they do not take account of the "turnover" of children in care for short periods.

Analysis of cost of certain local authority children's homes in Scotland in the local financial year 1950-51

Local Authority	Home	Salaries and wages of staff	Food	Clothing	Rents, Rates, Taxes, Insurance	Repairs, Furniture, Fittings	Heating, Lighting, Cleaning	Capital expenditure met out of Revenue	Loan charges	Other expenses	Gross expenditure	Income	Net expenditure	Average number of children accommodated in Year	Average weekly cost per child
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£		£ s. d.
Aberdeen Town Council	71 Westburn Road	1,767	977	265	98	330	400	—	—	486	4,323	—	4,323	18	4 12 1
*Greenock Town Council	Ravensraig	3,302	735	124	69	806	224	—	68	240	5,568	397	5,171	15	6 12 3
Kirkcaldy Town Council	St. Olaf's ...	1,456	360	180	53	110	241	—	—	88	2,488	229	2,259	10	4 6 8
Paisley Town Council ...	Woodside Hse.	3,968	1,262	107	460	370	574	—	—	1,286	8,027	426	7,601	35	4 3 4
Paisley Town Council ...	Barrholm ...	2,545	1,251	218	69	675	309	—	—	564	5,631	162	5,469	30	3 9 11
Renfrew County Council															
Midlothian, East Lothian and Peebles ...	Midfield House	4,735	1,857	887	202	638	1,176	801	568	729	11,593	754	10,839	50	4 3 2
Glasgow ...	Eversley ...	6,025	1,573	244	197	1,502	465	—	—	1,053	11,059	487	10,572	35	5 16 —
Glasgow ...	Gryffe ...	4,371	1,890	768	253	1,279	970	—	856	1,763	12,150	494	11,656	55	4 1 —
Glasgow ...	Castlemilk ...	8,121	2,712	379	413	3,302	709	—	194	2,805	18,635	1,342	17,293	70	4 15 —
†Edinburgh ...	St. Katharine's	6,049	1,511	272	188	1,003	1,410	—	1,227	833	12,493	422	12,071	40	5 16 —
Edinburgh ...	Redhall ...	3,450	1,668	896	281	422	781	—	465	590	8,553	84	8,469	40	4 1 6
Totals	...	45,789	15,796	4,340	2,283	10,437	7,259	801	3,378	10,437	100,520	4,797	95,723	398	4 14 3
Per cent.	...	45.5	15.6	4.3	2.2	10.9	7.2	0.8	3.2	10.3	100.0	...	...	...	...

* The question of the high cost of Ravensraig, Greenock, was taken up with the Town Council and as from May 1951 the home became a reception home and the staff was reduced.

† Nursery.

APPENDIX II

NOTE ON THE "FOSTER AUNT" SCHEME IN SCOTLAND

1. Before 1948 there was no organised foster aunt scheme in Scotland. A good deal has been done in the last three years to develop the foster aunt (or uncle) idea and the scheme in one form or another is now in operation in about half the local authority homes taking "long term" children and also in a number of the voluntary homes.

In the case of some of the large voluntary homes situated at a distance from a town it is not possible to get sufficient foster aunts for all the children, and the managers of some homes believe that it is not a good thing for some only of the children to be taken out by foster aunts. In one large voluntary home situated at a distance from a town successful efforts have been made to get correspondents who will write to a child from time to time, send him small gifts on his birthday and at Christmas, and even occasionally to visit him.

2. The Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care recommended in their Report (1950) that the foster aunt system (extended to provide holidays in private homes) should be encouraged for children in long-stay homes, and suggested that local women's organisations might help in developing it. The Boarding-Out Committee of the Council were not in favour of the extension of the system to boarded-out children.

3. The W.V.S. in Scotland have been active since 1949 in getting their local centres to develop the system in their areas. Through the Scottish Home Department, the organisation have established local contacts with children's officers. The W.V.S. make sure that any one of their own members volunteering to become a foster aunt fully appreciates what is involved, that she is generally suitable, and that she realises the need to continue to act as a foster aunt unless for a good reason she has to discontinue the work. The W.V.S. have been very willing, for the purpose of the scheme, to put the machinery and experience of their local centres at the disposal of other organisations or of private persons who are interested in becoming foster aunts.

4. In some areas the Soroptomists and other women's organisations, Rotary Societies and Church Organisations, arrange on occasion to take the children in a home, or some of them, for summer outings or for other treats. A few private persons have offered to take a child in a home with them on holiday, and it is hoped that more offers of this kind will be forthcoming.

5. In November, 1950, the Secretary of State made a public appeal for Christmas hospitality for children in children's homes. The generous response to this appeal was almost embarrassing to many children's officers. There was also a good response to an appeal made by the Secretary of State at the same time for more foster aunts.

6. Experience of the foster aunt system over the last three years brings out the need for a certain caution. A foster aunt must be prepared to face initial difficulties in getting a friendly response from the child, to continue in the role once it has been assumed, and to be most careful to avoid any collision with those who have the day to day care of the child. Great harm can be done to a child who is "dropped" when the initial enthusiasm of the foster aunt has waned, and experience of this kind of temporary enthusiasm has made some homes chary of continuing the scheme. Too much occasional generosity to the child can also give rise to difficulty.

Scottish Home Department.

April, 1952.

APPENDIX III

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BOARDED OUT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN SCOTLAND
AS ON 30TH NOVEMBER, 1951

COUNTIES

Authority	Total number of children in care	Number Boarded Out	Percentage Boarded Out	Authority	Total number of children in care	Number Boarded Out	Percentage Boarded Out
Aberdeen	652	589	90	Lanark	385	194	50
Angus	132	69	52	Midlothian	141	45	32
Argyll	91	65	71	Moray and Nairn	198	160	81
Ayr	296	101	34	Orkney	17	11	65
Banff	273	185	68	Peebles	6	2	33
Berwick	22	3	14	Perth and Kinross	107	44	41
Bute	8	5	63	Renfrew	188	86	46
Caithness	29	17	59	Ross and Cromarty	74	69	93
Clackmannan... ..	31	15	48	Roxburgh	67	39	58
Dumfries	71	27	38	Selkirk... ..	35	20	57
Dumbarton	180	71	39	Stirling	144	49	34
East Lothian	75	25	33	Sutherland	10	10	100
Fife	250	174	70	West Lothian... ..	116	70	60
Inverness	101	78	77	Wigtown	98	55	56
Kincardine	82	76	93	Zetland	13	3	23
Kirkcudbright	35	21	60				

BURGHES

Aberdeen	416	255	61	Glasgow	2,958	2,061	70
Airdrie	30	8	27	Greenock	200	146	73
Arbroath	18	13	72	Hamilton	166	97	58
Ayr	45	19	42	Inverness	52	38	73
Clydebank	75	37	49	Kilmarnock	113	29	26
Coatbridge	76	28	37	Kirkcaldy	98	78	80
Dumbarton	57	31	54	Motherwell and Wishaw	62	28	45
Dumfries	34	7	21	Paisley... ..	133	52	39
Dundee	418	155	37	Perth	76	39	51
Dunfermline	785	48	70	Port Glasgow... ..	32	11	34
Edinburgh	69	324	41	Rutherglen	20	5	25
Falkirk	69	35	51	Stirling	82	33	40

SCOTLAND ...	Total number of children in care 10,011	Total Boarded-Out 5,955	Percentage Boarded-Out 59
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Scottish Home Department.

APPENDIX IV

CHILD CARE INSPECTORATE

Letter from the Scottish Home Department to the Clerk to Sub-Committee D

SCOTTISH HOME DEPARTMENT,
12-13, CARLTON TERRACE,
EDINBURGH, 7.

9th May, 1952.

DEAR LIDDERDALE,

You asked for a brief note on the Scottish Home Department's child care inspectorate.

Perhaps I may supplement paragraph 1 of the enclosed note by explaining that the original complement was one chief inspector, one grade I inspector, three grade II inspectors and two welfare visitors. The grade I inspector has not, for various reasons, yet been appointed. Throughout 1951-52 there was a vacancy for one welfare visitor, and for the whole of that year the inspectorate was as shown in paragraph 1 of the note. These numbers will not be exceeded so long as the standstill arrangement in reference to staff employed at 1st October last applies. The Treasury have, however, agreed in principle to a reorganised complement, for the same range of duties, of one chief inspector, one grade I inspector and five grade II inspectors. It was originally intended that the welfare visitors should be engaged primarily in visiting boarded-out children, but experience has shown that, with our small staff, this distinction between the duties of inspectors and welfare visitors is unworkable.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) T. M. MARTIN.

D. W. S. Lidderdale, Esq.
Committee Office,
House of Commons,
LONDON, S.W.1.

NOTE ON THE CHILD CARE INSPECTORATE OF THE SCOTTISH HOME DEPARTMENT

1. The Department's child care inspectorate consisted in 1951-52 of one chief inspector, three grade II inspectors (one man) and a welfare visitor.
2. The chief inspector spends about two-thirds of his time on child care work; he undertakes also certain duties in connection with probation and the after-care of offenders. One of the inspectors is engaged for about one-fifth of her time on the after-care of girls released from borstal.
3. The inspectors carry out regular inspections of local authority and voluntary children's homes and visit boarded-out children in their foster homes; the welfare visitor visits boarded-out children. The inspectors and the welfare visitor discuss with children's officers individual cases and matters of general interest to the children's services. The inspectors consult county clerks and town clerks as necessary.
4. The inspectors work from Edinburgh. There is no rigid territorial division of inspectors' and the welfare visitor's duties but in practice it is found convenient for individual officers, who may spend up to three weeks at one time on a tour of duty, to concentrate on particular areas.

Scottish Home Department.
6th May, 1952.

ANNEX 3

REMAND HOMES, CARE AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN, VOLUNTARY HOMES AND TRAINING IN CHILD CARE

Memorandum by the London County Council

1. *Boarding Out*

The Children's Committee of the London County Council have decided for child care reasons that no child shall be placed in a foster-home against the wishes of its parents, and that so far as possible brothers and sisters shall be kept together or in contact with one another. This has the effect of limiting the number of children who are individually available for boarding out. In addition to availability, under the Council's scheme children have to be *suitable* for boarding out, not only in a general sense, but in a particular one in so far as the particular child and the particular foster-home have to "match" one another. This child care requirement is a further limiting factor on the number of children who can properly be placed in foster-homes. A third limiting factor is the wishes of foster-parents to have a child of a particular sex, age, temperament and so on.

Boarding out is cheaper than accommodation in a residential establishment, but the needs of the child have always been regarded as paramount, and some children are found not to be suitable for boarding out, in which case residential accommodation must be found for them.

There is a serious shortage of Roman Catholic foster-homes for Roman Catholic children in care. More of these children could be boarded out if more foster-homes could be found within the Roman Catholic community.

The Curtis Committee recommended that payments to foster-parents should not contain any element of remuneration and the present rates do not allow of any margin. On this point, the Committee said: "... the acceptance of payment for work cuts at the root of the relation between foster-mother and child which we wish to create".

The Council is not able at present to take into care all the children it should provide for under the Statute. If more children could be boarded out, the Council would not only be able to receive more children into care but the average cost per head of all children in its care would thereby be reduced, though the aggregate expenditure would almost certainly be increased.

The Council is constantly endeavouring, through its officers, to increase the number of children boarded out (see Table I for some figures). The measures taken, to this end, include:—

- (i) General propaganda, by way of newspaper advertisements and news and feature articles in national and local papers, daily and weekly.
- (ii) Contacts with, including talks and lectures to, parents, schools, churches, youth clubs and youth activities, women's institutes, townswomen's guilds, W.V.S., philanthropic societies, e.g., rotarians, big brothers, etc.
- (iii) Posters and handbills displayed in public libraries, food offices, citizens advice bureaux.
- (iv) The Home Office film, "A Family Affair".
- (v) A specially organised scheme, run by child welfare assistants in the Council's six large residential establishments, to induce and maintain contacts with the so-called "Uncles and Aunts", which in turn lead to foster placings and adoptions.
- (vi) Seeking recommendations by existing foster-parents of likely prospective foster-mothers.
- (vii) Constant review of children in care in residential establishments with a view to the boarding out of suitable and available children.

2. *Children's Homes*

The present service for deprived children, which resulted from the recommendations of the Curtis Committee (1946) and the policy laid down by the Children Act, 1948, is new and still growing. Substantial savings are not to be expected during the period of development, at least not without some lowering of standards prescribed by the Home Office. The new conception of child care involves local authorities in a considerable additional outlay in many directions, for instance:—

- (a) In setting up special reception (assessing) centres as required by the Children Act, and

- (b) authorities have inherited residential establishments (including old accommodation and staffing standards) which are out of keeping with modern requirements regarding child care.

It cannot be over-emphasised that the service for deprived children is still a growing one, and this in itself militates against a reduction in the gross cost.

(Note—The estimated and actual costs of maintaining children in the Council's residential establishments are shewn in Table II.)

3. *Further existing means of effecting general economies*

A constant review of children in care, with a view to their discharge to the care of the parents where such is in the interests of the child, is part of the vital routine work of the Children's Department. The Council has, subject to the necessary consents, decided to give a grant of £200 (£100 under the Children Act, 1948, and £100 under the National Health Service Act, 1946), in 1951-52, to the Family Service Units, a voluntary organisation which gives domestic "first-aid" to families and so prevents the necessity of children being received into care. Any preventive work of this nature would be useful.

4. *Some possibilities for economies*

Fewer children would require to be received into care, if greater use could be made of alternative forms of family assistance. *Examples (a)* Special National Assistance payments might be made to unmarried mothers or widows, etc., to enable them to remain at home caring for their children, rather than going out to work and placing the children in a local authority's care; *(b)* Special domiciliary help might be provided both day and (under special circumstances) night to keep a home running and care for the children there, when for example the mother has to be removed to hospital, for a limited period, thus avoiding the reception into care of the children. The cost of such assistance under both examples *(a)* and *(b)* might well be less than the cost of accommodating and maintaining the children in residential establishments under the Children Act. While some of the above measures are now possible it may be that some extension of statutory power would be required in others.

5. *Remand Homes*

It is the statutory duty of the Council to provide Remand Homes for their area. They may be situate either within or without the area, and the Council may arrange with the occupiers of premises for that purpose, or they may themselves establish, or join with the Council of another county or county borough in establishing, such homes.

A remand home is intended to provide accommodation for children and young persons who may lawfully be remanded in custody; it is a place of safety for children and young persons; it is a place in which a child or young person who is found guilty of a serious offence may be detained in custody for any term not exceeding one month, and in which a juvenile may be accommodated who has been committed to an approved school, but for whom there is no immediate vacancy. Since the day to day incidence of juvenile delinquency cannot be forecast, and because it is necessary always to have places available for the immediate accommodation of juvenile wrongdoers, it follows that there is a tendency towards under-occupancy of all the places provided, and, to the extent that this is guarded against, as far as possible (by providing less than the peak number of places) the likelihood that temporary overcrowding may on occasion occur, when there is a peak number of juveniles to accommodate. Overcrowding may be more easily dealt with than under-occupancy, because recourse can be had in the former case to other local authorities who may have vacancies, but in the latter case vacancies can only be filled in general by children or young persons on remand, and a shortage in the flow of these is often general and not confined to one local authority. At the present time endeavours are being made in the London and Home Counties area to increase the degree of co-operation in the matter of co-ordinated user of remand home places, both in regard to economy and in a search towards the more effective classification of the accommodation, with resulting benefits in the realm of child care. So far as London is concerned, the Council has asked the Home Office and the London Juvenile Courts Consultative Committee to agree to Stamford House remand home being reorganised to act as an observation and classifying centre competent to submit recommendations to the Courts as to appropriate methods of treatment.

6. Voluntary Homes

As stated above, the Council may deal with a child in their care by boarding him out, by placing him in one of their own Children's Homes, or by placing him in a voluntary home, the Managers of which are willing to receive him. At the present time there is a Home Office circular extant whereby local authorities may claim Exchequer grant on payments for maintenance of children in voluntary homes which in the aggregate do not exceed £2 10s. per week for a child of five years of age or over, and £3 per week for a child under five years. The circular envisages the possibility of a local authority having to exceed these average payments, in which case the authority is expected to approach the Home Office immediately. The County Council cannot at present accommodate all the children in its care, and it therefore finds it convenient to make use of vacancies in approved voluntary homes, but under the Children Act it is expected to provide its own homes, and may be required to do so by the Secretary of State, placing into voluntary homes being only a third option. It should be stated that the local authority has the duty of visiting all children in voluntary homes in its area, and the right of visiting its own children in voluntary homes in other areas. It is a fact that the preponderance of local authority children in voluntary homes so far as the L.C.C. is concerned, are of the Roman Catholic faith, and increasing liaison between the authorities on both sides, in respect of these children, is now being developed.

7. Training in Child Care

The Curtis Committee issued an interim report emphasising the necessity of training for child care, and the Central Training Council has been very active in pursuing this end, by arranging courses for the child care certificate (fourteen months' course) and refresher courses.

So far as London is concerned it was found that the service was not attracting recruits from those who had passed through the central training courses, and therefore the County Council, with Home Office consent, decided to institute its own training courses, and so far as refresher (three weeks) courses are concerned these are now in operation, and the long-term (fourteen months) courses are to commence shortly. These courses attract one hundred per cent. grant from the Home Office. In addition, the Council is running qualifying courses, parallel to the refresher courses which newcomers to the service are expected to take after a preliminary period of work on a temporary footing.

It is anticipated that the following numbers of L.C.C. child care staff in residential establishments will pass through the Council's courses in the next two years.

	<i>No. of staff</i>
(a) Qualifying courses for new entrants	60
(b) Refresher courses for existing members of staff	360
(c) Long-term courses for existing staff	20

Annual turnover of child care staff in residential establishments prior to inception of courses.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Recruited</i>	<i>Number on books at end of year</i>
1951	412	437	735
1950	451	469	710

(Sgd.) HOWARD ROBERTS,
Clerk of the Council.

TABLE I *

Progress in boarding out as compared with residential establishment care

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total in care</i>	<i>In care in establishments</i> (As at 30th November in each year)		<i>In care under boarding out</i>	
			<i>Percentage of total</i>		<i>Percentage of total</i>
1949	5,681	4,640	81·8	1,041	18·2
1950	6,625	5,178	78·1	1,447	21·8
1951	7,338	5,542	75·5	1,796	24·4

TABLE II

The following table shows the actual and estimated costs of maintaining children in residential establishments under the control of the Council. The actual costs relate to the year ended 31st March, 1951, the last year for which full figures are available. The estimated costs are for the year commencing 1st April, 1952, and are based on estimates later than and slightly different from those submitted to the Home Office in October, 1951.

Type of establishment	Actual figures 1950-51			Estimated figures 1952-53		
	Number of establishments	Average number of children in occupation	Average cost per child week	Number of establishments	Average number of children in occupation	Average cost per child week
			£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Remand homes ...	2	113	10 - 5	2	136	8 13 -
Residential nurseries ...	7	478	9 11 5	7	513	9 3 -
Residential nursery schools	8	315	7 10 8	8	360	7 4 11
Reception homes ...	3	129	7 4 10	3*	97	8 1 4
Large children's homes (excluding cost of education where this is carried out on site) ...	9*	2,598	4 10 3	7	2,648	5 1 6
After-care hostel ...	1	12	4 7 6	2	37	5 1 9
Family households ...	None open		—	3*	90	4 15 1
Small children's homes ...	Included in large homes figure above			groups 8*	64	5 10 9

* Including some establishments open or to be opened for only part of the year.

The average costs shown include central administrative charges and debt charges.

Average actual cost over all establishments 1950-51—3,645 children at £5 14s. 1d. per week.

Average estimated cost over all establishments 1952-53—3,945 children at £6 per week.

ANNEX 4

EXPENDITURE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN RESPECT OF REMAND HOMES, CARE AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN, VOLUNTARY HOMES AND TRAINING IN CHILD CARE

Memorandum by the County Councils Association

Status of Memorandum

1. The time within which the Association have been asked to submit this memorandum has not permitted of it being considered by a committee of the Association or by the Executive Council; in these circumstances it must be received on the basis that it is subject to the approval of the Executive Council and as representing the views only of a small ad hoc committee specially appointed for the purpose by the Chairmen of the Executive Council, the Parliamentary and General Purposes Committee, the Local Government Finance Committee and the Children and Welfare Committee.

The reports of proceedings of the Executive Council are available to the public and as the memorandum has, under the terms of the letter of the 19th March from the Clerk of the Sub-Committee, been required to be regarded as a confidential document until reported to and published by order of the House, the Executive Council will not consider this memorandum until after that time. From the point of view of the Committee, however, the nature of the contents of the memorandum is not such as would have led them to impose any requirement of secrecy.

Terms of Reference

2. The Chairman of Sub-Committee D of the Select Committee on Estimates of the House of Commons has invited the views of the Association upon "the sub-heads of the Home Office estimates which cover the Treasury grants to local authorities in respect of remand homes, care and welfare of children, voluntary homes and training in child care", with particular reference to the methods which are or might be used to increase the proportion of children in the care of local authorities who are boarded out and to decrease the cost of children's homes without lowering their standards. It is observed that the Select Committee on Estimates are confined by their terms of reference to reporting on "what, if any, economies consistent with the policy implied in those Estimates may be effected".

The Committee have been informed also that "one aspect of the question of the cost of local authorities' children's homes in which Sub-Committee D are particularly interested is the possibility of keeping a central check upon the expenditure involved".

Principles of control of local authorities by Government Departments

3. The references to Treasury grants to local authorities and to central check suggest to the Committee the need for restating certain principles which, being of general application to the administration of grant aided local authority services, have to be kept in mind when expenditure on the particular service now under review by Sub-Committee D is being examined.

These principles were most recently declared in the first and second reports of the Local Government Manpower Committee set up in January, 1949, with the following terms of reference:—

"To review and co-ordinate the existing arrangements for ensuring economy in the use of manpower by local authorities and by those Government Departments which are concerned with local government matters; and to examine in particular the distribution of functions between central and local government and *the possibility of relaxing departmental supervision of local authority activities and delegating more responsibility to local authorities.*"

The sub-committee will, in particular, note the concluding words which have been italicised which seem to express the view of the Government of the day on the desirability of relaxing departmental supervision and delegating more responsibility to local authorities.

This expression of view found recent confirmation in the replies given by the Parliamentary Secretary to questions in the House of Commons on the 1st April, 1952. For convenience the questions giving rise to these replies are reproduced below:—

"Mrs. Eirene White asked the Minister of Housing and Local Government what arrangements he has made to inform himself of the number of local housing authorities which require builders of houses under licence to observe the standards laid down by the National Housebuilders Registration Council, as recommended in the appendix to the circular issued by his Department on 27th November, 1951.

Mr. Marples: My right hon. Friend considers that this is a matter which should be left in the hands of the local authorities.

Mrs. White: If that is so, what possible assurance can the Minister give to the House or to the public that they will be protected from low standards of building, and to the kind of jerry-building which was suffered before the war?

Mr. Marples: The local authorities are the agents in this matter, and my right hon. Friend is a firm believer in the fact that the "gentleman in Whitehall" does not always know best."

The Ministry of Health, in circular 96/47, inviting local authorities to review organisation and staffing of departments with the object of effecting all possible economies went on to say that "every endeavour will accordingly be made, in carrying out the Government's policy, to limit the demands made upon local authorities to what is reasonable, and it is the desire of the Government to simplify so far as possible the administrative arrangements as between Departments and the local authorities."

On the Local Government Manpower Committee representatives of the Treasury, the Home Office, the Ministries of Labour and National Service, Health, Education, Transport and Town and Country Planning joined with the representatives of the local authorities in reports from which the following are extracts:—

"3. During the first part of our work we concentrated mainly on the second part of our terms of reference, namely, 'the possibility of relaxing departmental supervision of local authority activities and delegating more responsibility to local authorities'. In so doing we recognised as a guiding principle that local authorities are responsible bodies competent to discharge their own functions and that they exercise their responsibilities in their own right. In consequence we recommended revised arrangements over a wide field representing a considerable simplification and loosening of departmental control".

"9. *Tendency to central control*

... we re-emphasise the general principle that 'the objective should be to leave as much as possible of the detailed management of a scheme or service to the local authority and to concentrate the Department's control at the key points where it can most effectively discharge its responsibilities for Government policy and financial administration'. However much this principle is acknowledged, it tends not to be wholly carried out. It is understandable that anyone who is responsible for some activity should try to keep his finger on the detail of it; but this temptation should be resisted. Instances may occur where a close central control is necessary as a matter of deliberate policy; but, except in such special circumstances, we recommend that the general principle should be the one which we have adopted."

General objection to further departmental control

4. The Committee wish, therefore, at the outset to stress their opinion that any further addition to existing central checks on expenditure will (a) tend to reverse the trend of policy evident from the reports of the Manpower Committee and advocated after prolonged consideration; (b) involve, or be likely to involve, additional central staff whose supervisory or inspectorial duties will much more often than not be supererogatory, and wasteful of money and manpower; (c) tend to substitute the uniformity of the personal views formed in retrospect by a departmental official for the opinion of the local authority and the exercise of the discretion given to them by Parliament based on the facts of cases as they arise; (d) by reducing independence and discretion tend still further to reduce the interest which members of local authorities and voluntary workers can take in local government.

The Committee also wish to point out that the imposition of checks on expenditure is a ready means of dictating the direction of policy both financial and other than purely financial and, in so far as it is so used intentionally or unintentionally with that result, will remove from the sphere of local government that freedom of choice and experiment in the provision and scope of services which has been so valuable in the past.

5. Central checks on expenditure can be used to control or influence not only policy but also administration and it would not be unnatural for officers or indeed other persons, to attempt to "rationalise" or even impeach local administration on no more evidence than that afforded, for example, by the knowledge that administrative costs form a higher proportion of expenditure in some local authorities than in others.

6. The Committee feel sure that, if the Sub-Committee have it at all in mind that there is merit in the idea of further regulation of the expenditure—and consequently the activities—of local authorities by the imposition of further central checks, the County Councils Association and doubtless the other Associations of local authorities would wish to have the opportunity of submitting a more detailed memorandum refuting that idea and supplementing what has been stated above.

Costs in the Children Service

7. The relatively high cost of certain parts of the Children Service is to a large extent the result of the standards maintained by local authorities in respect of accommodation and child care and also those recommended by the Home Office. Whilst it is not suggested that these standards are undesirable, the fact remains that no appreciable reduction of expenditure on the service is likely to be achieved without some modification of them.

It might, perhaps, at this point be useful to remind the sub-committee that the Regulations prescribing standards for school premises made by the Minister of Education in 1945 have been replaced by the Regulations of 1951 which have varied the previous standards of accommodation. The Regulations introducing these less expensive standards were the subject of prior consultation with the Associations of local authorities. The memorandum on the provision and conduct of residential nurseries issued by the Home Office in 1950 for the guidance of local authorities was not prepared in consultation with the Association and any revised memorandum which may be considered desirable in the interests of economy should be the subject of consultation as was the case with the Ministry of Education.

The Committee wish to make it abundantly clear that, in making observations which suggest an alteration of existing standards adopted by or recommended to local authorities, they do not propose anything which they would regard as disturbing the essential fabric of the service, but they believe that idealistic provision for the few should not be allowed to be the enemy of practical and beneficial provision for the many.

The Committee certainly do not regard more meticulous central control of local finance and administration as likely to lead to any saving; on the contrary, they consider it would waste manpower and increase the overall cost of the service. At the moment, the Home Office operate a regional inspectorate and the Committee do not consider there should be substituted for it, or added to it, any further system of centralised control. As an instance of the unnecessary lengths to which an inspector of the Home Office can go, reference is made to the fact that, following a visit in one county, the County Council were informed that "the organisation of the office work and the system of record keeping do not, however, do justice to the good standard of the field work and might, with advantage be reviewed." The Committee take the view that these are matters with which, in accordance with the principles of the Manpower Committee, the Home Office should not concern themselves.

Observations on particular parts of the Children Service

8. Turning from the general to the particular, the following are the Committee's views upon the subheads of the Home Office Estimates covering Treasury grants to local authorities.

Remand Homes

9. The running costs of remand homes as measured by cost per head per week throughout a year are apt to seem high. There are two main reasons for this. First, the demands upon accommodation vary greatly from week to week and even from day to day, with the result that there are inevitably vacant places—and sometimes many vacant places—in the homes. This inevitably raises the average cost of maintenance per child accommodated to a figure much above the average cost per place which, as a criterion of the appropriateness of expenditure involved, would normally be much more reliable. Secondly, the advent of the new "classifying approved schools" has tended to shorten the length of stay of children sent to remand homes, without reducing the total numbers sent to them, with the consequent inevitable increase in the level of costs of maintenance. This matter has already been the subject of representations to the County Councils Association who have been asked, and have the request at present under consideration, to urge the Home Office to make known to local authorities at an early date their policy with regard to the provision of classifying approved schools and remand homes, thus enabling the local authorities to make a more realistic assessment of the amount of remand home accommodation which they should provide.

Care and Welfare of Children

10. The Committee have considered this matter under two headings, namely, (i) the provision of children's homes and nurseries and (ii) boarding-out arrangements.

Provision of Children's homes and Nurseries

11. The Committee do not question the desirability of the publication, for the information or guidance of local authorities, of certain standards of accommodation, and even in some cases equipment, and they recognise that public opinion is exceedingly sensitive about this matter, with the result that the local authorities, like the Home Office, are concerned to see that the conditions in which deprived children are accommodated are above criticism.

Thus the Committee recognise that the Home Office, before approving schemes for the erection of new premises or the adaptation of existing premises, should be reasonably satisfied that the premises will be adequate and suitable for the purposes for

which they are intended. Any additional, and in some cases a continuance of the existing, degree of constant supervision or inspection of the administration of these premises would constitute an unwarrantable and, in the Committee's view, wholly unprofitable interference in the conduct of the service by the responsible local authorities.

12. The drawback to any nationally recommended standards lies in the temptation on the part of officers of the Government Departments concerned to adhere to them rigidly, and to regard them as absolute minima rather than as standards. The Committee suggest that in the use of such standards there is some means of effecting economy.

Cases may often arise where, without in any way lowering the degree of *care* in a children's home or nursery, it is possible, by departing somewhat from the recommended standards of accommodation and equipment, to increase the number of children accommodated or to reduce the amount of equipment required. The examples given in the following sub-paragraphs illustrate this point. The examples, incidentally, suggest that in many cases central control would not check, but rather lead to further, expenditure.

(a) A superintending inspector of the Home Office after a visit to a new home for 28 boys wrote:—

"The cream bedsteads look very nice, but they are six inches wider than the usual size which we had allowed for in allotting the numbers for the bedrooms. Consequently the rooms look very crowded and it will be difficult to find room for bedside chairs and the necessary furniture for the boys to have the care of their own clothes unless numbers are reduced or the beds changed."

Not unnaturally this observation, suggesting a reduction of numbers or a change of beds met with the following reply:—

"Although the beds we have provided are larger than you anticipated, the floor space and cubic space remains the same per boy and undoubtedly the boys sleep much more comfortably on the larger beds. A re-arrangement of the beds in the two larger rooms has made them look less crowded and in view of the very ample space downstairs, I am sure my Committee would not agree to any reduction in the number of beds while there is such pressure on accommodation generally in the Homes."

(b) In another case the Home Office urged that a small home accommodating 18 children should have that number reduced to 13 which the local authority were not prepared to do until such time as the total number of children in care allowed for such a reduction to be effected without the provision of alternative accommodation.

(c) Apart from questions of accommodation, requests for works of improvement are often made and the following correspondence is quoted as an instance of what the Committee regard as a proper exercise of discretion by the local authority concerned:—

"I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that he has received a report of a visit made to Nursery by a Medical Inspector of the Home Office.

The report indicates that the washing facilities in the children's ground floor cloakroom are inadequate, and, as a result, the washing of hands after toilet and before meals is not invariably carried out. Consideration might be given therefore, to the provision of fitted wash-hand basins."

To this letter the following reply was sent:—

"The Sub-Committee instructed me when replying to the Department's letter to say that, while they appreciate that to turn Nursery into an ideal nursery it would be necessary to carry out the Department's recommendations, they do feel that, in the present conditions of financial stringency, to incur the necessary expenditure would not be right."

(d) in a home for 16 children with two resident staff the local authority proposed the installation of 9 lavatory basins, two baths and six W.Cs. The Home Office asked for one additional lavatory basin and 1 additional bath. In another reception home for 25 children with five resident staff the local authority recommended 13 lavatory basins, 5 baths and 8 W.Cs. The Home Office requested the addition of 3 further lavatory basins. In another case a scheme of adaptation for the use of the property as a home for 23 children was approved in principle by the Home Office. The Committee considered the matter further and were strongly

of the opinion that a unit for 23 only would be an uneconomic proposition, particularly having regard to the size of the property and the cost of adaptations. They, therefore, proposed an alternative scheme of adaptations to enable 39 boys to be accommodated. This new proposal was submitted to the Home Office and at a conference it was made clear that the alternative scheme would not be approved for grant purposes since the Home Office did not recommend single sex Homes of this size. The Committee, therefore, abandoned the whole scheme and the property was sold at a loss.

13. The Committee are informed that, in practice, when plans for the provision or adaptation of institutions are approved by the Home Office, they are definitely approved for a specified number of children, in other words, the recommendations contained in a memorandum issued by the Home Office are applied as if they were obligatory. In this connection the Sub-Committee may like to have before them the recommended standards of sanitary accommodation and ablution arrangements contained in the Home Office memorandum on residential nurseries and to consider whether they are in present day circumstances, on the generous side if regarded as minima.

" Sanitary accommodation

Washbasins: 1 for every 3 children aged two years and over.

Baths: 2 or 3 for children aged 0-1 year and 2 or 3 for children aged 1 year and over in a unit of 30 children, according to staff available for bathing. The smaller baths may be portable.

W.Cs.: 1 for every 5 children aged 2 years and over."

14. It is understood that some county councils submit schedules of equipment of new establishments to the Home Office for approval, others do not submit such schedules and the Committee suggest that submission of them to the Home Office is an unnecessary addition to the work of the Department.

15. The Committee feel that without loss of efficiency some economies could be effected in the running of children's homes and nurseries if local authorities were to exercise a greater degree of latitude in their application of recommended standards and if Home Office officials were to recognise that minima and standards may differ considerably and that the exercise of a local authority's discretion between or beyond them is a statutory responsibility of the authority for which they are answerable to the public. For example, isolation rooms which would otherwise be kept unused for probably as many as 50 weeks in a year have been used by some local authorities in spite of objection by Home Office inspectors as dormitories; should sickness occur in the home all that is necessary is a temporary adjustment of the sleeping accommodation.

Boarding out

16. The Committee understand that the attention of the Sub-Committee has been drawn to the wide variation, in different areas, in the percentage of children in care who are boarded out with foster parents. Thus whilst in two counties the percentage of children in care who are boarded out is 13 and 21 per cent. respectively, in another two counties the percentage is 53 and 58. The Sub-Committee may feel—and indeed many persons may without enlightenment regard themselves as justified in believing—that on these figures there is a *prima facie* case for investigation of the practice of individual local authorities with regard to boarding out. Particularly so since boarding out is a much less expensive matter than the provision of accommodation in children's homes and nurseries and since it is so often in the best interests of the child. The two considerations last mentioned are so evident and so obviously important that they of themselves should deny the case for investigation. Local authorities know that boarding out is much less costly and have every financial inducement to promote it. They also know that it is often in the best interest of the child and consequently have every impulse in favour of it.

17. The variations in percentage figures are so apt to be misleading, that the Committee feel it necessary to draw attention to the following factors (inter alia) influencing, and sometimes cumulatively, the degree to which boarding out is feasible in any county:—

(a) the nature of the county (i.e. whether it is predominantly industrial, residential or rural);

- (b) the proportion of the population who may be regarded as potentially satisfactory foster parents occupying suitable homes ;
- (c) the extent to which there is an industrial demand for female labour ;
- (d) the ratio which the number of children taken into care by the county council bears to the total population of the county. This ratio will be found to vary considerably ; thus, Cambridgeshire with a population of 167,000 has 100 children in care while the Isle of Ely with a population of 89,000 has 158 children in care. Lancashire with a population of 2,045,000 has 1,434 children in care, while Middlesex with a population of 2,268,000 has 2,876 children in care.

(The actual figures for each county council are given on pages 16-23 of the accompanying return of statistics prepared by the Society of County Treasurers in conjunction with the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants.)

It must be borne in mind, too, that boarding out in the areas of some county councils may prove to be more difficult because other county councils, notably the London County Council, and voluntary organisations such as Dr. Barnardo's Homes and the Church of England Children's Society board out extensively in some counties.

18. For the information of the Sub-Committee there is given in the appended Table I a calculation of the percentages of children in care who are also boarded out. Even with the fairly wide basis upon which the calculation for each group is made, it is apparent that the variations in percentage are considerable and the danger of accepting an average for any purpose whatever is thereby further illustrated. The danger of using a percentage standard for boarding out may be further emphasised by reference to the annexed Table II from which it seems quite impossible to draw any inference of general application.

19. In every case the paramount consideration must be the welfare of the child and this can only be decided by persons with full and first-hand knowledge of all the facts. It would be highly dangerous to take any step, for example, by criticism of an apparently low boarding out figure, or by suggestion of a minimum percentage figure for boarding out, which would tend to bring pressure to bear upon children's officers to board out children in such numbers as would ensure a "respectable" percentage. Children's officers have to shoulder a heavy responsibility when boarding out children and it is far far better to have possibly twenty too few than twenty too many. In the opinion of the Committee, it would be foolish as well as impracticable to attempt to impose a requirement that any minimum percentage of children in care should be boarded out with foster parents. The Committee add that it would also be unwise for a Home Office Inspector to be given the task of supervising or inquiring into the propriety or impropriety of the choice by a Children's Officer of a foster home for a child.

20. It has been brought to the notice of the Committee that in one county 85 per cent. of the children at present in children's homes and nurseries are not and never will be suitable for boarding out with foster parents and that this percentage includes a considerable number of children who are mentally deficient, maladjusted, or educationally sub-normal and for whom, for one reason or another, it has not been found possible to provide residential accommodation in more appropriate surroundings. This information serves again to show the unreliability of any inference drawn from mere comparative percentage figures.

Voluntary Homes

21. The Committee have little comment to make under this heading. County councils as a whole are glad to be able to avail themselves of the facilities provided in these homes and it has not been the general experience that the charges made for this accommodation are in any way excessive. The Association are at present, in consultation with the Association of Municipal Corporations and the London County Council, discussing with the National Council of Associated Children's Homes the possibility of achieving some simplification and standardisation of the accountancy methods adopted by voluntary homes and establishing uniform maintenance rates for individual homes to which children from a number of different local authorities are sent. The Association are hopeful that these discussions will result in some overall saving in the cost of administration by reducing the amount of time which has to be spent by individual local authorities in satisfying themselves that the charges made by voluntary homes are reasonable.

Training in Child Care

22. At present the responsibility for providing courses of training for house fathers and house mothers and boarding out officers rests with the Central Training Council in Child Care which is appointed by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Children Act, 1948, and whose expenses are shared equally between the Home Office on the one hand and the local authorities for the purposes of the Children Act, 1948, on the other. The training of nursery nurses is undertaken by certain local authorities.

So far as the Committee are aware this field offers no scope for appreciable financial savings, though it has been suggested to the Association that it would be more satisfactory if the financial responsibility for the training of nursery nurses were to be transferred to the Central Training Council in Child Care, which would lead to some simplification in accountancy and administration. This matter is still under consideration by the Association though any resultant financial saving affected would be inconsiderable in relation to the whole cost of the service.

TABLE I
CHILDREN SERVICES STATISTICS—1950-51

Society and Institute Return

Group of Authorities	Children in Care boarded out (col. (7))	Total number of Children in Care (col. (10))	Column (7) as percentage of col. (10)
COUNTY BOROUGHs... ..	7,004	22,083	per cent. 36·20
COUNTIES			
ENGLAND (excluding London) ...	11,042	27,700	39·86
LONDON	1,447	6,625	21·84
WALES	1,220	2,590	47·10
TOTAL	13,709	36,915	37·14
ALL AUTHORITIES	21,703	58,998	36·78

Additional to Groups quoted in the Return:—

COUNTIES—ENGLAND AND WALES (excluding London)	12,262	30,290	40·48
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TABLE II
CHILDREN IN CARE, 1950-51
Compared with average number of pupils on school registers, 1950-51

County	Population	Number of children on school register	Percentage of children on school registers to population	Number of children in care	Percentage of children in care to number of children on school register	Number of children in care per 1,000 of population	Percentage of children in care boarded-out
Buckingham	386,164	45,777	11.8	469	1.02	1.22	37.7
Cheshire	824,438	96,680	11.7	660	0.68	0.80	53.0
Derby	685,072	98,789	14.4	434	0.44	0.63	50.9
Devon	513,819	55,277	10.7	862	1.56	1.68	45.5
Durham	902,821	138,287	15.3	736	0.53	0.82	14.5
Hereford	127,092	16,633	13.1	270	1.62	2.12	52.6
Hertford	609,735	74,708	12.2	925	1.24	1.52	30.0
Kent	1,535,508	194,395	12.7	1,774	0.91	1.20	42.8
Lancashire	2,046,457	269,249	13.1	1,434	0.53	0.70	43.9
Stafford	855,184	124,623	14.6	718	0.58	0.84	42.5
Suffolk (East)	217,061	27,420	12.6	298	1.09	1.37	71.8
Surrey	1,351,963	147,156	10.9	1,347	0.91	1.00	36.4
Worcester	400,738	53,741	13.4	445	0.83	1.11	20.0
Yorks. (W. Riding)	1,588,776	229,986	14.5	1,750	0.76	1.10	32.6
Totals and Average for ALL counties— England	24,684,585	3,168,303	12.8	27,700	0.87	0.11	39.9

ANNEX 5

REMAND HOMES, LOCAL AUTHORITIES' CHILDREN'S HOMES AND
BOARDED OUT CHILDREN*Memorandum by the Association of Municipal Corporations*

1. In response to the letter from the Clerk to the Sub-Committee the Association of Municipal Corporations submit the following memorandum.

2. Our Association is a voluntary organisation representing all the county boroughs and all the non-county boroughs in England and Wales, the City of London and all the metropolitan boroughs (except Westminster), together with the Northern Irish cities of Belfast and Londonderry. All the county boroughs are local authorities under the Children Act, 1948.

3. We accordingly welcome the opportunity afforded us of submitting our views to the Sub-Committee on the subject of their present investigation. We observe, however, in the second paragraph of the letter inviting our views, the important limitation that the enquiry is confined to the examination of economies which do not affect the standards of the service. The latter expression is capable of a wide interpretation, embracing accommodation, dietary and clothing which account for a large proportion of the expenditure on children's homes. If such items are to be excluded, the scope for suggesting appreciable economies is considerably reduced.

A. REMAND HOMES

4. The *unit cost per week* of some remand homes is high and has been the subject of criticism. It is believed, however, that high costs are due to low demand and consequent under-occupation rather than to extravagance on the part of the owning and managing authority. Where occupation is well up to capacity unit costs are usually reasonable having regard to the peculiar nature of these homes.

5. The Home Office require a certain standard of building, staffing and maintenance. The only variables relate to items such as provisions; staff and other "overheads" continue at the standard necessary for full occupation even though there may be many occasions when the home is only half full or even less. A remand home with accommodation for twenty-four has at times had only one or two children in residence but accommodation must of necessity always be available in case it is required for children committed by the magistrates.

6. If a remand home is closed and this results in children having to be sent a considerable distance, costs incurred in travelling, time of policemen, etc., can be very high.

7. We do not suggest that unnecessary remand homes should not be relinquished but that all elements of cost must be kept in mind in making comparisons. Having regard to the costly nature of this service the greatest care must be exercised in scrutinising the expenditure.

B. CHILDREN'S HOMES

8. Average costs per head for children's homes catering for children of school age are around £5 per week, and residential nurseries catering for younger children, about £7 per week. There is no evidence that this apparently high cost is a new problem: it has, however, become more obvious now that the cost of these homes in consequence of the passing of the Children Act, 1948, does not form part of the estimates of much larger services such as education or public assistance or health.

9. Such increases in costs per head as have occurred since the passing of the Act can probably be accounted for under the following headings:—

- (i) increases in salary and wage rates and improvements in conditions of service (e.g., holidays, hours, etc.)
- (ii) increased cost of food, fuel, equipment, and practically everything else purchased for the homes
- (iii) modernisation of premises, furniture and equipment, where necessary
- (iv) reduction of overcrowding, where necessary.

10. The general principle upon which local authorities work is to provide the children with a good but not extravagant diet; this is an important factor in keeping children healthy. Suitable but not elaborate clothing is provided, purchased in the most economical way. Some authorities make use of bulk purchase arrangements; others send the children with welfare visitors to retail shops. This latter method may well be as economical as bulk purchase if the staff are properly trained.

11. *Staffing*: This is usually the major factor in determining the cost per head.
- (a) Wage and salary rates are fixed nationally by Whitley Council machinery and have risen considerably in the last three or four years. They are still, as far as the staffing of children's homes is concerned, fixed on the basis of "manual labour" rates: a housemother receives 3d. an hour and an assistant housemother 1½d. an hour, more than a cleaner.
 - (b) The ratio of staff to children is an important factor in determining costs. In children's homes for children of school age this is usually about one member of staff to four children. In the residential nurseries the Home Office have asked that local authorities should provide at least one member of staff to three children. These staffs have to cover approximately ninety-eight hours a week (roughly from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. for seven days a week) plus night duty in residential nurseries housing babies. They also have to cover holidays and staff illness.
12. It is normally accepted that the staffing ratio must be high enough to allow the staff to give *individual* attention to each child in care. The higher ratio of staff in residential nurseries is necessary in view of the much greater amount of attention which young children require, and the greater risk of the spread of infection.
13. *Premises and Equipment*: We have no doubt that provided the standard of accommodation and equipment is reasonable the quality of the staff employed for this type of work is more important than embellishments in accommodation although the standard of accommodation *must* be reasonable if the right quality of staff is to be obtained and retained. Nothing can be more unsettling to children or more unsatisfactory to the running of homes than constant changes of staff.
14. *Degree of overcrowding*. The Home Office have laid down certain standards which in many cases have led to a reduction in the number of children accommodated in individual children's homes without making possible a corresponding reduction in the main overhead expenditure. As a result, there are a number of homes in which the costs per head have risen quite sharply.
15. *Student Training*. Few local authorities are able to secure sufficient qualified nurses to staff their residential nurseries adequately without employing students. No nursery may take students, however, unless a special inspection by representatives of the Ministry of Education and Home Office has resulted in recognition of the nursery for student training. This system seems unnecessarily cumbrous and expensive. In the first place there seems no good reason why the ordinary Home Office inspection should not be used for this purpose. In the second place, it seems unreasonable that a nursery should be regarded by the Home Office as suitable for the care of children and yet as unsuitable for the training of students. If the amenities for the children and the competence of the staff are not good enough for student training, they should not be allowed to continue, in the interests of the children. The present system results in some nurseries running for periods half-empty although most of their overhead expenses are continuing.
16. *Repayment by Parents*. The net costs to public funds of maintaining children in children's homes would be reduced if it were possible to raise the average rate of repayment by parents. This could be effected to some extent by certain minor changes in the law making stepfathers and cohabiters liable, and also making it possible for a contribution order granted after a child has been received into care to be made retrospective to the date when the child first came into care, subject, perhaps to a limit of three months before the making of the order.

C. BOARDED OUT CHILDREN

17. Boarding-out means the placing of a child away from his family into another family.
18. Since there are no powers of compulsory billeting, the local authorities under the Children Act must, therefore, secure in each case a suitable *voluntary* offer, and place an *acceptable* child in the home offered—and must secure such offers and find such children in adequate numbers.
19. It is normally assumed that apart from being more economical, boarding-out is a much more satisfactory method of maintaining a child than keeping him in a children's home or nursery. This is probably true where the child settles in the home and makes an adequate personal link with foster parents who are prepared to give him the affection, security and opportunity he needs for successful development.

20. In most instances a child comes into the care of the Children's Committee from a home which has broken up; if the reason for this is not neglect or ill-treatment, it may well be the death or long-term illness of the mother. In any case, the break is likely to be a psychological shock to the child who almost invariably will feel insecure. Very few such children can be boarded-out immediately because of this feeling of insecurity and there are some cases in which it gives rise to such maladjustment that it is not possible for ordinary foster-parents to deal successfully with the child.

21. A considerable proportion of children who are unsuitable for boarding-out when they first come into care can be brought up to boarding-out standard after a few months in a children's home which specialises in such work. There are some children, however, who cannot be brought up to the standard which most foster parents will expect as a minimum, or who for other reasons are not suitable for boarding-out.

22. Children coming into the care of local authorities can be divided in various ways—

- (a) children with no parents, guardians, or other relatives in the background, and those who are still in touch with parents, guardians, or relatives who might eventually resume their care; or
- (b) children coming into care for a strictly temporary reason; children coming into care for a definite period, but who are likely, eventually, to pass back into the care of their parents etc., and children who are likely to remain the responsibility of the local authority until the age of eighteen, unless adopted in the meantime.

23. Few local authorities, if any, secure enough offers of homes to cover all categories of children adequately. Far more offers are made for girls than for boys, and even the offers for girls are most commonly for girls under school age, or girls about to leave school. Most offers, again, are for children who have no family or other ties, and who can settle down permanently in the foster-parents' family; such offers frequently carry a proviso that the children should be available eventually for adoption. Few foster-parents, too, are prepared to agree that the children's own parents should visit them, since such visits often have a disturbing effect on the children, and far too many of the parents concerned show a complete lack of gratitude for what foster-parents are doing, but are, on the other hand, only too anxious to make sure that the children's loyalties to them are not undermined.

24. It is not easy to see what methods, if any, could bring forth an adequate stream of offers to cover all children who could be boarded-out, and this is especially true of the larger towns where housing conditions are difficult, wages are high and a large proportion of housewives go out to work. It is by no means certain that in areas where these conditions exist higher boarding-out allowances giving an element of profit would bring any substantial increase in the number of homes offered, nor that the additional homes offered would necessarily be very suitable.

25. What are required in large numbers are offers for short-term and medium-term children, particularly children whose parents would wish to visit them. It is understood that one or two authorities have secured a few such offers by paying boarding-out rates two or three times as high as those normally granted. One more serious difficulty is to determine which children are in fact likely to be in care for a short term or a long term. Frequently a child who originally comes into care for a short time has his term in care extended and extended because of parental circumstances, while it occasionally happens that a child whom a local authority thought likely to remain in care permanently, goes out of care suddenly when a parent or relative turns up.

26. The percentage of children boarded-out differs widely under different local authorities, but the crude percentage of children boarded-out cannot be regarded as a measure of the local authority's success. Among others, the following factors would almost certainly influence this—

- (i) the proportion of long-term to short-term children in care;
- (ii) the relative proportions of younger children and older children in care;
- (iii) housing conditions in the area;
- (iv) the general level of wages locally;
- (v) the extent to which housewives go out to work;
- (vi) the proportion of children in respect of whom consideration of religion or colour, involving difficulties in finding suitable foster homes, exist.

D. CONCLUSION

27. There are two important factors to bear in mind in considering the costs of local authority homes besides those to which reference has already been made, viz.:—

- (a) the requirements of the Home Office in relation to standards of accommodation; and
- (b) the careful scrutiny which is exercised over local authority expenditure.

28. As regards the second of these factors, quite apart from routine examination by officials, the officers responsible to the local authority for the service must justify their expenditure before their committees, any member of which may ask questions on the accounts—and many often do—while questions not infrequently arise in the meetings of finance committees and councils. Further opportunities occur when annual estimates are being considered and again when the annual accounts of the children's committee are presented. The fact that grant is payable in respect of a particular service does not detract from the care with which expenditure on it is examined. When a local authority are considering the payment of money or the cost of a service they concern themselves with the whole sum of money which they are called upon to pay and which initially will have to be borne by the general rate fund, even though at a later stage grant may be payable on it. Furthermore returns are now published annually showing costs of all local authority children's homes throughout the country which enable local authorities to compare their own costs with those of other authorities.

29. Generally speaking we think that the high costs of the children's services are due very largely to the necessity for compliance with the Home Office standards, and we foresee that as those standards continue to be progressively implemented by local authorities the costs will tend to rise still higher. In our view one of the most effective contributions that could be made to the reduction of expenditure would be for local authorities to be given greater freedom to fix their own detailed standards within a broad national policy of giving to deprived children a reasonable and modern standard of care. The laying down of national standards, coupled with a rigid control, is not, in our opinion, conducive to economy, but quite the reverse, and economies are much more likely to come from the exercise by the local authority of a freedom to experiment, even if, in the process, mistakes are occasionally made.

30. We are strongly of the opinion that another way of reducing the cost of the children's service which would be not only in the interests of economy, but also socially desirable, would be found in the development of preventive work to save the family home before it is broken up, but we realise that this would involve legislation to confer further powers on local authorities and that this may not be immediately possible. In the meantime, therefore, we offer the following suggestions for reducing the total expenditure on child care work as part of an immediate short-term policy:

- (i) further campaigns to recruit foster-parents by films, newspaper publicity, lectures to religious, political, women's and teacher-parent organisations and periodical meetings of foster-parents with the local authority;
- (ii) more intensive examination of family circumstances prior to the admission of children into care and persuasive efforts to induce relatives or friendly neighbours to accommodate children so as to reduce the number of admissions to children's homes;
- (iii) the recruitment and training of increasing numbers of boarding out staff of the right calibre;
- (iv) more efforts to effect the discharge of children from care, and greater liaison with other departments and voluntary bodies to effect the rehabilitation of families (particularly with the housing authority); and
- (v) the greater use of scattered homes provided by the local authority with unpaid foster-parents (boarding out allowances only paid).

Palace Chambers,
Bridge Street,
Westminster, S.W.1.

18th April, 1952.

ANNEX 6

COST OF CHILDREN'S HOMES, ETC.

Memorandum by the Scottish Counties of Cities Association

This memorandum is submitted by the Scottish Counties of Cities Association (the constituent cities of which are Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen) in response to a request made by Sub-Committee D of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Estimates that consideration should be given and a memorandum prepared on methods being used or which could be used to decrease the cost of local authority children's homes and remand homes without lowering their standards and to increase the proportion of children boarded out.

CHILDREN'S HOMES

Children's homes have been established in the four cities for many years and as a result of the experience gained the homes are maintained efficiently and at a reasonable level of comfort. Strict economy is exercised and all expenditure, ordinary and extraordinary, is scrutinised by the Children and Finance Committees.

The numbers of staff employed conform, where applicable, to a ratio, advised by the Department of Health for Scotland, and where not, to the particular needs of the home. The ratio referred to is mainly for trained personnel and excludes domestic staff. One staff unit is allowed for every two children up to 2½ years or for every four children up to 5 years or for every six children over 5 years. The majority of the staff available at present is untrained and conditioned to a 48 hour week and as a result it is only with difficulty that the above minimum ratio has been adhered to. Overtime has to be paid which would not be necessary if salary conditions were improved for certificated nursery nurses whose basic salary for some years is less than that for untrained staff. It may well be that improved conditions would lead to the recruiting of nursery nurses with an increase in efficiency and a decrease in working hours. Meantime there is no possibility of reducing the number of staff required. Salaries and wages are in accordance with the scales laid down by the appropriate negotiating machinery and the cost of food and clothing is largely determined by the controlled prices for the relative commodities.

An analysis of the cost of maintenance in one children's home accommodating some 80 children shows that salaries and wages account for 42 per cent. of the total cost. Other administrative charges (rates, insurance, superannuation contributions, national insurance, etc.) bring that figure to 55 per cent. The remaining 45 per cent. is accounted for as follows:—

	Per cent.
Food	14
Clothing	5
Heating and lighting	4
Laundry	2
Miscellaneous	20

It is apparent that the major cost is staffing. As mentioned above, the staff, unlike those in most voluntary homes, are paid at a standard wage. The cost of food, clothing, etc., compares favourably with other institutions or homes.

The Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care envisage small homes of some twelve children in each which are reputed to be more economical to maintain but there is little prospect of general permission being given to build such units. Meantime local authorities are "making do" with converted mansion houses which are generally unsuited for the purpose, costly to adapt and expensive to maintain.

Children's homes are an essential factor in the local authorities scheme for child care. They have to provide for the child temporarily deprived of a home and, on a more or less permanent basis, for the child who is enuretic, maladjusted or subnormal and unsuitable for boarding with foster parents. In this respect local authority homes differ from most voluntary homes which are generally not prepared to accept a child requiring special supervision or attention. Accordingly local authorities are obliged to employ in their homes a higher ratio of staff to children at a more expensive rate and the wear and tear on furniture, furnishings and clothing (both bed and personal), is greater.

BOARDING OUT

In Scotland boarding out of children with foster parents has been recognised for over a century as the most satisfactory method of providing for deprived children and every effort is made by propaganda and advertisement to expand this practice. Some 60 per cent. of the children in the care of the four cities are boarded with foster parents and great difficulty is experienced in maintaining this percentage and at the same time obtaining the type of home which is regarded as suitable. There are several reasons for the difficulty in finding suitable foster parents and probably the most important is the housing situation; many potential foster parents are providing accommodation for married members of their family and their children. They accordingly do not have any surplus accommodation to enable them to take foster children.

The Association are of the opinion that the children's homes are maintained on an economic basis and that the cost of maintaining children in these homes is attributable to the cost of staffing and the increased cost of living. The Association further consider that the boarding out system is used to its fullest extent.

J. STORRAR,
Clerk to the Association.

Edinburgh,
8th April, 1952.

ANNEX 7

CARE AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN, ETC.

Memorandum by the Association of County Councils in Scotland

On 26th March, 1952, the Clerk to Sub-Committee D of the Select Committee on Estimates wrote to the Association stating that part of the functions of the Committee is to examine such of the estimates presented to the House as they think fit and to report "what, if any, economies consistent with the policy implied in these estimates may be effected therein".

It was explained in the communication that Sub-Committee D is at present investigating those subheads of the Home Office and the Scottish Home Department estimates which cover the Treasury grants to Local Authorities in respect of Remand Homes, Care and Welfare of Children, Voluntary Homes and Training in Child Care. The views of the Association on the subjects mentioned above were requested, particularly as to the methods which are or might be used to decrease the cost of Local Authority Children's Homes without lowering their standards and to increase the proportion of children in the care of Local Authorities who are boarded-out.

The views of the Association have been requested by 18th April and in view of the urgency of the matter, the Association has not had an opportunity of going into the matter as exhaustively as it would have wished. The following observations may, however, be of some assistance to Sub-Committee D:—

1. It is the view of the Association that, wherever possible, children taken into care should, if they are suitable for boarding-out, be boarded-out with foster-parents, as this is more beneficial to the child than being brought up in a Home. There is appended to this Memorandum a Statement* showing the average cost in several Scottish Counties of maintaining children in Homes as opposed to the cost of boarding-out from which it will be seen that the cost of maintenance in Homes is much in excess of the cost of boarding-out.
2. Accordingly, the Association is of opinion that every effort should be made to board out the maximum possible number of suitable children and understands that this is the general view of its affiliated County Councils. Unfortunately, the affiliated County Councils have recently found difficulty in getting suitable foster-parents. One County Council states that their experience is that people who are prepared to become foster-parents have a decided bias towards or preference for girls and as the children in care in that County are in the ratio of approximately five boys to four girls, they have particular difficulty in placing the boys with foster-parents. The same County Council finds a decided dearth of foster-parents for Catholic children as compared with foster-parents for non-Catholic children and they require therefore to make a much greater use of Voluntary Homes for Catholic children than they would otherwise do. These factors would indeed seem to indicate an increasing need to provide more Children's Residential Homes with a corresponding increase in the cost of the child care service.

* This statement is not published.

3. In some areas there is an urgent need to provide modest hostel accommodation for certain boys and girls who are under after-care i.e. boys and girls of 15 to 18 years of age who are in employment. There are recurring occasions when such boys and girls must be accommodated somewhere, either on a short or a long-term basis and it is thought to be wrong to attempt to accommodate them in Children's Homes—the only other alternative being Hostels. In some areas at least the number of boys and girls in after-care is increasing.
4. It is difficult to suggest methods which might be used to decrease the cost of Local Authority Children's Homes without lowering their standards. The Association is satisfied that its affiliated County Councils make every effort to keep expenditure on their Children's Homes to a minimum while maintaining proper standards. The only method of decreasing the cost of Children's Homes which the Association can see is to board out the maximum number of suitable children with foster-parents and, as has been already stated in this Memorandum, difficulty is being experienced in getting foster-parents. If, however, a greater number of children could be boarded-out, this might result in some Children's Homes not being used to their full capacity and to a possible closing of some of the Homes through a combination of Local Authorities or otherwise. Whether or not Homes could thus be closed would of course depend on the circumstances of each case.
5. Children's Homes are expensive to run but are essential to the Service. As regards cost, this should not be compared with Voluntary Homes as the latter are maintained to a large extent from the proceeds of endowments, public subscriptions, etc., which are not available to Local Authorities. The costs incurred by Local Authorities in the care and welfare of children in Homes, boarding-out, etc., is not entirely controlled by the Authority, for it must be borne in mind that such costs are reflected in the national cost of living. Adequate food, clothing and conditions giving happiness and contentment are the necessities of life for children deprived of a normal home life and this should be borne in mind when considering possible economies.
6. Parents who are prosecuted and convicted for child neglect should be severely dealt with. If severe sentences were imposed parents would be made to realise their responsibilities and fewer children would require to be taken into, or committed to, the care of Local Authorities.
7. In view of the shortage of suitable foster-parents being experienced and of the fact that boarding-out is regarded as being the most suitable way of dealing with the children and is also cheaper than maintaining them in Homes, it is for consideration whether boarding-out should be encouraged by national appeals made from time to time through the press and the radio.
8. Adoption of children in care should be encouraged, as this is not only the best solution in the interests of the child, but relieves public funds of the charge for its maintenance.

For the Association of County Councils
in Scotland.

(Sgd.) GEORGE DAVIE,

Secretary.

3, Forres Street,
Edinburgh, 3.

17th April, 1952.

ANNEX 8

CHILDREN'S HOMES

Memorandum by the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland

Perhaps one of the significant points, viewing the position locally is that £1,500 out of the full gross £2,500 of expenditure on a typical small children's home last year represents remuneration costs, which are virtually outwith local control, since salaries and wages are scaled by reference to national standards.

While this emphasises the need to review closely the strength of such a children's home staff, it does somewhat narrow the potential field for economies.

Nevertheless, some economy of staff is possible where suitable voluntary help is available and can be used. For example, voluntary help is employed locally in taking out infants and young children—a job which might otherwise require much of a children nurse's time.

Of the remaining £1,000 of expenditure, just over half, £540, is on provisions and clothing. Some economy might be effected in provisions if such a children's home has ground available to undertake some farm produce. This need be no more than a poultry run or a vegetable garden—jobs which can usefully be done in the marginal time of, say, a boilerman or a kitchenmaid.

As to economies in clothing, where the institutional look can be avoided, and where real economy will be achieved, bulk purchase can be employed not merely for Children's Homes but for similar demands for boarded-out children. The stores facilities and records can probably best be maintained by clerical staff in the Health and Welfare service.

It is found, in practice, that the under school age group is the most expensive group to manage in such homes, since they need much more care and attention. It is thought that the practical solution to this may be to run children's homes principally for these groups and to divide the school age group into families of 6, 7 or 8 children, who would live with a married couple, as foster father or mother, in say a 5-apartment dwellinghouse (the rent of which would be part of the emoluments of the husband and wife). The father would, as in a normal family, go out to his usual work and would receive a small payment for the extra duties he undertook as foster father. A daily help would probably be necessary, who would also act as relief on days off. Summer holidays with foster aunts and uncles could be arranged by the Children's Officer for the older children, the couple taking, say, the three youngest with them to a holiday camp.

Economies in the boarded-out children service have, in part, been mentioned above. Perhaps, however, the principal economy would be to promote preventative measures. In other words, where the local incidence of children in care is much higher than average, the service of an approved social worker in improving and maintaining standards in families where the welfare of the children is imperilled, might well effect economies by way of prevention, much greater than the additional salary involved.

Earlier adoption of children by foster parents is another economy measure which could usefully be encouraged to scale down the cost of maintaining children in local authority care.

A characteristic of these services, common to most other services, is that the more zealous and enterprising the chief officer, the greater the tendency for the service to expand. In other words, there are areas where more discrimination could probably be practised by the Children's Officer in accepting cases for local authority care. There is the point that committees may not appreciate the time spent by an officer in investigating the practicability of the alternatives to local authority care. There is also the view that the fewer cases actually in care, the smaller and less important the service, and this might influence some Children's Officers in their work. Where this tendency exists, the appointment of a social worker would probably act as a useful counter-measure.

14th April, 1952.

ANNEX 9

TREASURY CONTROL OF THE CHILD CARE VOTE

Extract from Memorandum by the Treasury

Primary responsibility for controlling expenditure on Child Care necessarily rests with the Home Office, but the Children Acts require the Secretary of State to obtain the consent of the Treasury in determining the amount of any payments made out of moneys provided by Parliament and the conditions upon which such payments are made (e.g. Sections 45, 46 and 47 of the Children Act, 1948).

Subheads C (Remand Homes) and E (Care—Welfare)

In exercising their control of local authority expenditure the Home Office must have regard to the approved recommendations of the Local Government Manpower Committee, which were based on the principle that local authorities are responsible bodies competent to discharge their own functions and that Government Departments should accordingly leave to them as much as possible of the detailed management of grant-aided services, the Department's control being concentrated at the key points where it can most effectively discharge its responsibilities for Government policy and financial administration.

Certain forms of expenditure by local authorities, e.g. payments to foster-parents for boarded-out children and to voluntary homes for children whom the local authority places in such homes, lend themselves to control by means of prescribing a per caput maximum or average figure, the observance of which is made a condition of grant. In considering Home Office proposals for prescribing or amending such limits the Treasury have to satisfy themselves, in the light of the best evidence available to them as regards e.g. costs of maintenance, that the arrangement proposed can properly be given their consent.

A large part of local authority expenditure, including the administration of children's homes and remand homes, does not lend itself to control in this manner. Over this part of the field the Treasury's role is to ensure that the Home Office are effectively exercising such general measures of supervision as are reasonably practicable.

Expenditure on new buildings and adaptations of existing premises is also subject to a different form of Treasury control through the limits imposed by the Capital Investment Programme.

5th May, 1952.

ANNEX 10

EXPENDITURE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN RESPECT OF REMAND HOMES, CARE AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN, VOLUNTARY HOMES AND TRAINING IN CHILD CARE

*Supplementary Memorandum by the County Councils Association**Scope of Supplementary Memorandum*

1. The original memorandum submitted on behalf of the Association dealt at some length with the question of boarding out deprived children with foster parents and gave some reasons why in different counties the considerable variations between the percentage figures of boarded out children were apt to be misleading if taken at their face value. The memorandum in particular stressed the danger of any criticism, or suggestion of a minimum percentage figure for boarding out, which would tend to bring pressure to bear upon children's committees to board out children for whom, for one reason or another, this was not the best form of treatment.

When the representatives of the Association gave evidence before the Sub-Committee on the 6th May, the discussion centred upon two main points, firstly, the question whether anything could properly be done to bring about a substantial increase in the number of deprived children boarded out with foster parents and secondly, the desirability of improving the facilities for the exchange of information between authorities responsible for the care and welfare of deprived children. On the first point the Chairman of the Sub-Committee requested that detailed information should be obtained from the Cornwall, Durham, Holland, and Staffordshire County Councils upon the number of children in care, the numbers boarded out and the reasons for the non-boarding out of the remainder.

Boarding Out

2. The factual information requested by the Chairman of the Sub-Committee has now been obtained. Statistics were also received from the Kent County Council together with details of the numbers of boarding out officers employed by the county councils concerned and of the rates of salary which they receive.

After careful consideration of this factual information the Committee, whilst adhering to the view expressed in their original memorandum that it is dangerous to place undue reliance on the percentages of children boarded out in different counties, have come to the conclusion that there is evidence to suggest that in some counties at any rate the numbers of children boarded out could be increased without in any way departing from the principle that the welfare of the individual child must have precedence over all other considerations.

Thus it is apparent from the information received that past history may play an important part in determining the extent to which boarding out is possible. For example, the policy of the Durham County Council prior to the passing of the Children Act, 1948, was not to board out children who were in the care of the Public Assistance Committee with the result that in 1948 there was virtually no existing boarding out organisation upon which to build and there must have been many children in care who had spent most if not the whole of their lives in public assistance homes and whose transfer to foster homes would have presented exceptional difficulties.

Another cause contributory to low boarding out figures may well be the legacy of unhappy experiences of foster parents with whom wholly unsuitable children were placed in former days by officers who possessed no qualifications or training in the delicate and often difficult tasks of a boarding out officer.

Furthermore, it seems likely that very divergent views are held by different county councils and their officers upon the types of child suitable for boarding out. For example, the terms "maladjusted" or "educationally sub-normal" and "enuretic" are capable of widely varying interpretation. Children who in one county would readily be boarded out with foster parents might in another county be regarded as wholly unsuitable for such treatment, with consequent repercussions upon the percentage figures of the counties concerned. In this connection it is noticeable that two counties, each showing 56 children as being unsuitable for boarding out because they are educationally sub-normal or maladjusted, give the figures of 10 and 52 respectively as the number who cannot be boarded out because they are enuretics. These figures are out of a total number of children in care of 473 and 914 respectively. Yet another county with a total number of 2,054 children in care show 313 as being educationally sub-normal or maladjusted, as against only 17 enuretics. Whilst the very disparity of these figures makes it unwise to draw from them any firm conclusions, the Committee feel that the question of suitability for boarding out is one upon which such varying opinions may be held that an early interchange of views by the responsible authorities seems highly desirable. Further reference to this matter is made in paragraph 3 below.

The Committee desire to endorse the views expressed by the Cornwall County Council about the importance of providing adequate boarding out staff and of decentralising boarding out arrangements so that officers work in their own districts and not from the central office.

The following table shows the relative position in the five counties consulted:—

County	Number of Children in Care	Number of Children Boarded Out	Number of Boarding Out Officers Employed	Average case load of boarded out children per boarding out officer
Cornwall ...	473	320	6	53.3
Durham ...	1,029	239	5	47.8
Holland ...	231	73	2	36.5
Kent ...	2,054	975	23	42.4
Staffordshire ...	914	465	10	46.5

These figures suggest that the number of boarded out children who can be looked after by one boarding out officer, in addition to his current work of investigation and placement, is something between 35 and 55 and that in counties where the percentage of children boarded out is low this may in some measure be due to the insufficiency of boarding out officers employed.

Having regard to the information which has been obtained in the course of these investigations—and in particular the figures received from the five counties consulted and those contained in the statistical return prepared by the Society of County Treasurers and the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, extracts from which appeared in the original memorandum submitted by the Committee—it is proposed to draw the attention of county councils to the desirability of an immediate review of all cases of deprived children in their care who are not at present boarded out and of the sufficiency or otherwise of their existing establishments of boarding out officers.

Interchange of Information

3. The Committee have carefully considered the present facilities for interchange of information and discussion of current problems connected with the care of deprived children and have reached the conclusion that these could usefully be enlarged. As was pointed out to the Sub-Committee by the representatives of the Association who gave evidence before them, the joint conference which had been arranged was postponed this year in the interests of economy. The inquiry of the Sub-Committee has served to emphasise the need for an annual conference of representatives of the authorities responsible for the care of deprived children and it is hoped that it will be possible to make the necessary arrangements in consultation with the Association of Municipal Corporations and the London County Council for such a conference to be held which representatives of the several Government Departments concerned could be invited to attend.

In addition the information obtained from the five counties consulted indicates a widely divergent practice amongst county councils in their treatment of what may be described as short-term cases and the Committee feel this might profitably form one of the subjects for discussion at the proposed conference. Another and even more important subject would undoubtedly be the policy with regard to boarding out arrangements generally and in particular the question of the numbers of trained staff employed for this purpose.

Undoubtedly the Children Officers' Association provides a valuable forum for the interchange of information and ideas—particularly with regard to technical matters such as the types of equipment used in children's homes, accommodation standards and current practices in the running of reception centres, children's homes and nurseries—but the Committee feel that it would be valuable to reinforce this by giving greater prominence in the County Councils Association's Gazette to the experience of different county councils in dealing with problems related to the care of deprived children and they propose to take immediate steps to this end.

ANNEX II

BOARDING OUT

Supplementary Memorandum by the Association of Municipal Corporations

Information from the Councils of Birmingham, Bournemouth and Liverpool, forwarded by the Association of Municipal Corporations.

The Association asked the three local authorities to answer the following questions:—

1. What factors does your authority encounter which (a) assist
(b) make more difficult
the boarding out of children in the care of your authority?
2. Has there been any substantial variation in the percentages of children boarded out by your authority since the Children Act came into operation, and to what is such variation (if any) attributed.
3. What is the percentage of the children in care of your authority who are regarded as unsuitable for boarding-out? For what reasons are they regarded as unsuitable? (In dealing with this last question illustrative examples would be helpful).

Extracts from the answers are given below.

(1) BIRMINGHAM

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

Report on Boarded-out Children for House of Commons Select Committee on Estimates

1 (a). The main factor assisting the authority in the boarding-out of children is the interest which members of the City Council (both those on the Children's Committee and others) and local organisations have taken in this problem. This interest has resulted in hundreds

of invitations being received and accepted for speakers to talk about the work of the Children's Department and the problems of boarding-out to groups all over the City. The press has been equally helpful and a number of articles relating to the problem have been published. The general effect of this, however, has been rather to create a "climate" of public opinion than to bring in a large number of spontaneous offers. This is not regretted, since spontaneous offers are more likely to be from unsuitable and sentimental people than from the type of foster parents likely to do good work. The bulk of the acceptable offers which come forward are the result of existing foster parents interesting their friends and neighbours in the needs of the Children's Committee.

1 (b). There are a number of factors which make boarding-out difficult in Birmingham—

- (i) The housing situation is as difficult as it is in other very large cities, and as a result there is quite serious over-crowding. This is increased by the fact that workers both during and since the war have flocked to Birmingham in the hope of securing higher wages than are available elsewhere: in the five years beginning with the middle of 1946 some 70,000 more people have come to live in Birmingham than have left it—a figure which is additional to a natural increase of 49,000 in births over deaths. Because of its rapid growth in the nineteenth century, the City still has many thousands of very small back to back houses, and although an average of one hundred new houses are being completed each week, the number of applicants for houses increases by something like two hundred per week. The result is that families going into municipal houses normally fill them, and, even on the new housing estates, there is little if any room for boarded-out children.
- (ii) The high wages paid to many workers in Birmingham mean that there is no economic incentive, as there was in pre-war days in at least certain areas in the country, for householders to take boarded-out children.
- (iii) A fairly high proportion of wives go out to work.
- (iv) The City contains a fairly high proportion of Roman Catholics and non-Europeans. Indeed, of the children in care approximately 25 per cent. are Roman Catholics, whilst a further number are children of mixed marriages. These facts make boarding out more difficult since the number of foster-homes which are offered for Roman Catholics or for coloured children is extremely limited.
- (v) The family background and character of many of the children coming into care makes it very difficult to board them out:—
 - (1) Very few prospective foster parents will accept children whose parents or other relatives are actively interested in them, and likely to visit them.
 - (2) Where children are in care because the mother is in hospital suffering, for example from tuberculosis, the authority is frequently asked not to board the children out because the thought of the children becoming too fond of foster parents, or not receiving such good care as is known to be available in the Children's Homes maintained by the Committee, are thought to be additional anxieties for the mother.
 - (3) Where parents are still in active touch with their children in the care of the Committee, the children often refuse to co-operate when placed in a foster home because consciously or unconsciously they feel their loyalties are divided between parents and foster parents.
 - (4) In a very high proportion of cases, more than one child of a family comes into care, and it is very rarely that foster homes are offered for more than one child at a time. Where brothers and sisters are obviously very fond of one another and would be seriously upset by being parted from one another (after inevitably having been parted from their parents) the Children's Committee have been very hesitant to force separation by boarding out one or two members of the family, and leaving others in their own residential accommodation, or by boarding out members of the same family in separate homes.
 - (5) It is found in practice that a proportion of children boarded-out fail to settle down because they feel so lonely in a home where there are no other children.
- (vi) With regard to the type and number of foster homes offered, practically all offers are for girls, and particularly girls under five years of age, and practically all offers are for children who are permanently in care and who will never be withdrawn from the foster home; since the Birmingham Children's Committee consider it their first duty to return children to their own parents if that is at all possible, and is in the interests of the child, there are very few children available who fulfil this condition.

Again, very few foster-parents will accept children who show mental retardation, physical defect, or aggressive and destructive behaviour which the foster parents themselves have not, perhaps, met before in children: equally, foster parents find it difficult to accept an emotionally retarded child who cannot show much in the way of normal affection, while many foster parents tend to build up in their own minds an ideal picture of a perfect child of high intelligence and are quite unable to accept the limitations of a foster child offered to them.

2. During the period November 30th, 1949, to November 30th, 1951, the percentage of children boarded-out by the Birmingham Authority rose from 25·5 per cent. to 31 per cent., a rise of approximately one-fifth as compared with what is understood to be a rise of approximately one-seventh over the country as a whole. There are probably two main reasons for this rise:—

- (a) The interest and propaganda work resulting from it mentioned in the reply to question 1 (a) above. As part of the propaganda, leaflets have been issued at different times. (It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that specific press advertisements for foster homes have been issued at times but the result as far as the number of homes offered and suitable is concerned, has been so disappointing as to suggest that this form of approach is not a satisfactory method of spending public money.)
- (b) There has grown up a very much more careful choice of children for placing in foster homes in a deliberate attempt to reduce the proportion of breakdowns in boarding out. The implications of this policy are set out more clearly in the answer to the next question: here it is sufficient to say that a considerable reduction in the number of children boarded-out per month has been accompanied by a very great reduction in the number of boarding-out breakdowns, with the result that in spite of the placing of fewer children, the net proportion of children remaining boarded-out has risen steadily.

3. The strictly arithmetical answer to this question is probably 1 per cent., since only those children who are ascertained to be ineducable and are either in mental institutions or awaiting entry to such institutions should be regarded as finally and completely unsuitable for boarding-out. Apart from these, no child in the care of the Birmingham Children's Committee is ever regarded as quite hopeless from this point of view. At any given time, however, probably something like 50 per cent. of the children are for the time being unsuitable for boarding-out. There are various reasons for this unsuitability:—

- (a) Before the passing of the Children Act, it was a requirement of the Home Office Boarding-Out Rules that every child committed to the care of the local authority had to be boarded-out within three months, or Home Office permission obtained for the accommodation of the child in some other way. As a result of this pressure, there are at present in the residential accommodation of the Birmingham Children's Committee, a large number of children who have been boarded-out four, five, six, or even in one case, twelve times, and for whom boarding-out broke down on each and every occasion. For each of these children each breakdown must have carried the sense of a personal rejection, and most of them are now so strongly resistant to the idea of further boarding-out that they are quite unsuitable from this point of view.

It is hoped that with the disappearance of this particular Home Office rule, and very careful efforts to make sure that each child boarded-out is really ready and suitable at that point, this will be a gradually diminishing problem.

That this is the case is suggested by the fact that practically the whole of the reduction in the number of children in the Children's Homes and Nurseries maintained by the Committee (a reduction of approximately 70 in 1,053) is in the number of children under five years of age so accommodated.

- (b) Some children are unsuitable for the time being at least *for the homes which are available*, because of mental backwardness, physical defect, or behaviour difficulties which the foster parents available would not tolerate, and which would lead to the rejection of a child if boarded-out. In this connection it must be realised that children in the care of a Children's Committee are by no means a normal cross-section of the child pupils of the area concerned. In Birmingham 0·85 per cent. of school children are ascertained as educationally sub-normal whereas the corresponding figure for children in the care of the Children's Committee is over 11 per cent. On the contrary, only 1·2 per cent. of the school children of secondary school age in the care of the Children's Committee are in Secondary Grammar Schools, which, of course, is out of all proportion to the corresponding figure for the population as a whole.

The term "unsuitable" used in the previous paragraph is relative, and the qualification "for the homes available" is important. On the one hand, a home with unusually understanding foster parents is occasionally offered where a child unsuitable for the average foster home can be successfully placed. In this case, this particular child ceases to be "unsuitable" and becomes suitable for at least that home. On the other hand, such offers are extremely rare, and a large proportion of the children unsuitable at a given time remain unsuitable for the homes which are available. With very young children, of course, special care and attention in the Children's Homes and Nurseries often results in the child being brought up to the standard which average foster parents will accept, and there are many children now successfully boarded-out by the Birmingham Children's Committee who at one time were thought to be quite unsuitable. It must be emphasised, however, that it is very unwise to risk boarding out a child in a home where it is not likely to settle: if the placing breaks down, the child feels rejected (and not for the first time because it has already lost its parents for one reason or another), and the foster parents are liable to lose interest in the possibility of having a child boarded-out with them.

A child's suitability for boarding-out is not left to the mere guesswork of a Children's Department official. When, after careful discussion between the members of staff concerned, it is thought that a particular child would settle in a suitable foster home, and such a home is available, a system of trial week-ends is started. The child is told that it is going to have a week-end's holiday, and the prospective foster parents are told that the child will be brought to them for a week-end, and they are asked not to say anything about boarding-out. Only when the child has had two or three such week-ends in the same home, and there is every sign that the child is settling in happily and the foster parents are content, is a definite boarding-out placement made.

With this system, if the trial boarding-out fails, the child is not discouraged, since all it knows is that it has had two or three holiday week-ends, and the foster parents are left without any resentment and are usually prepared to try again.

- (c) Some children are not suitable for boarding-out because they are not available being in residential special schools. Over the last two years this factor has affected 6 per cent. of the children in the case of the Birmingham Children's Committee.
- (d) It is the policy of the Birmingham Children's Committee to place for adoption all suitable children who are available on the grounds that the best thing that they can do for a child who has been deprived of its own family roots is to place it permanently in another family. Some children, therefore, are unsuitable for boarding-out merely for the reason that they are available for adoption. In the last two and a half years the Birmingham Children's Committee have placed sixty of the children in its care for adoption. If these had been retained in care and boarded-out they would have raised the boarding-out percentage by 4 per cent. to 35 per cent.

(Sgd.) ERNEST J. HOLMES,
Children's Officer.

May, 1952.

(2) BOURNEMOUTH

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BOURNEMOUTH,
Town Clerk's Office,
Bournemouth.

27th May, 1952.

DEAR SIR,

Boarded-out Children

I refer to your communication on the 7th May.

I would preface the specific information you request by the following general observations: whilst the matters to which I refer may appear superfluous, they nevertheless provide the basis from which the Bournemouth Children's Committee's experience is by way of logical development.

The Committee on its formation gave considerable thought to the main purposes and principles of the new Act and to the views and recommendations of the Curtis Committee which preceded it, including the question of boarding out as opposed to institutional and kindred care.

The Committee wholeheartedly agreed with the views and reasoning of the Curtis Committee concerning boarding out as expressed in their Report and their final recommendations, the statutory recognition of which is to be found in section 13 of the Act.

The members of my Committee from their personal inclination and experience, coupled with the advice and support of their Children's Officer, sincerely believe that the foregoing views and the confirmation thereof by legislature, constitute a wise and enlightened approach to the problem of the care of the deprived child. Provided that the method is carefully used, they are convinced that it can operate to the advantage and benefit of the child and they share the thought of the Curtis Committee that "in the conditions of ordinary family life with its opportunities for varied human contacts and experiences, the child's nature develops and his confidence in life and ease in society are established in a way that can hardly be achieved in a larger establishment living as it must a more strictly regulated existence."

In the result, therefore, the Committee expressed a firm preference for boarding-out as opposed to institutional care where the circumstances justify that course. I stress the last words of the foregoing sentence and wish to make it clear that the system is not and must not be applied blindly or on a basis of "boarding-out at any price". The utmost care must be taken to ensure that the child, the proposed foster parents, home conditions, personal character and inclinations, etc., clearly justify the system. The information given below indicates that in certain cases this method is unsuitable or impossible.

Subject to the foregoing, the Committee through their Children's Officer (who is an enthusiastic supporter of boarding-out and a tremendously hard worker) set about to implement the above policy and it is in the course thereof that they have encountered and had experience of the factors to which you refer and with which I now deal.

1. (a) *Factors which assist*

(i) Although it may appear a statement of the obvious, I would say that in my Committee's experience the most helpful, fundamental and indeed crucial factor is a genuine belief in the virtues of the system and a real conviction that properly applied it is a means of providing the child with a better, happier and more useful life than it might otherwise obtain. This in turn involves the making of vigorous efforts to find people and homes of the right type.

(ii) Events have proved that if such efforts are made to the required extent these people can be found and it is by this means that the local figures have increased to the extent shown in 2 below. My Committee, however, would not wish to dogmatise and I stress that these remarks are based on their local experience. It may well be that conditions elsewhere could affect the implementation of such a policy to a greater or lesser degree.

(iii) In furtherance of the above, the Committee have been assisted by the many and various steps which have been taken by the Children's Officer to "educate" the public and to bring home to them that the taking of a child is not merely a means of obtaining money but an honourable and important function which has as its object the provision of opportunities which go with family life as opposed to the more limited conditions of institutional homes however well run. This has been developed in various ways including the co-operation of the local Press together with the help of the clergy of all denominations and the various women's organisations. The latter are given talks, periodically, by the Children's Officer which have enlivened their interest in the topic and caused them favourably to entertain the idea and purpose of boarding-out. The Children's Officer attaches importance to these efforts and tells me that she has spoken to almost every such body in Bournemouth and that they have all co-operated.

(iv) A further assisting factor springs from the development of the status of foster mothers who are encouraged to feel themselves part of an organisation and not paid people whom the Children's Officer's staff are "watching". Lectures and social gatherings for foster mothers were arranged last winter. These were very successful and friends were brought in who in turn became interested in the subject. (Incidentally, the Committee's foster mothers have now asked for a Summer outing). The position has been helped by an acceptance of the principle that office administration must bend itself to the system of boarding-out and not the system to administration. It is not easy to particularise about this proposition but as an illustration, the Children's Officer stressed the help she has obtained by the rigid rule that letters and enquiries from prospective foster parents must be dealt with promptly to encourage the personal aspect which is so important.

Another feature which has helped is the determination to tackle difficult relatives quite firmly, generally by the Children's Officer herself. Arrangements are made to ensure that visits by parents shall be made at a time and in manner likely to cause the least upset to the child and the foster parent. The success of the system is also affected by a recognition of the fact that varying social standards of homes are required for different children having regard to the child's particular background and the knowledge that some would be unhappy in and could not necessarily live up to the standards of a home vastly different from that to which they had been used.

(b) *Factors which make boarding-out more difficult*

Experience suggests that local conditions may be easier than those found in many places. At the same time, Bournemouth is a holiday resort and many residents probably have summer

lettings rather than children at heart. Care has to be taken of many offers where there is a possibility that the child might be used as an unpaid domestic and possibly moved to odd corners during the letting season. It is difficult to generalise in this connection but the foregoing consideration tends to reduce the number of suitable homes. The business in such premises is also of a seasonal nature and in many homes the income level is reduced in the off season.

2. Variation in boarding-out numbers

The percentage of children boarded-out in February, 1949, was 21·6 per cent. as against the present 82·1 per cent. This substantial variation is attributable to the development of the boarding-out policy in the circumstances and for the reasons described above. It might be mentioned that this increase made six cottage homes redundant and their use under the Children Act was terminated this year, with a financial saving to the Council as Children Authority. Such homes are now to be used as Part III accommodation under the National Assistance Act.

3. Percentage of children regarded as unsuitable for boarding-out

The following statistics show the position as at 31st March, 1952:—

				<i>Per cent. calculation of children in care</i>	
Total children in care	...	...	...	307	
Children not boarded out	...	...	...	55	17·9
Children boarded out	...	...	...	252	82·1
55 children not boarded out are accounted for as follows:—					
13 in Residential special schools or other institutions for mentally or physically handicapped children.					
3 in Children's Homes at present awaiting vacancies as above.					
2 in R.C. convents and who must be away from Bournemouth.					
5 over school leaving age and receiving special vocational training.					
—					
Total	23	children for whom boarding out is not feasible...	...	...	7·5 per cent.
	6	for whom boarding out is not necessary as they will shortly return to their own parents	...	...	1·9 „
	13	ready for boarding out but still in residential accommodation pending the completion of boarding out arrangements	...	...	4·25 „
	13	in residential accommodation and although they should be considered as boardable they will require very special foster homes—mainly where bed-wetting, pilfering, etc. will not be minded	...	...	4·25 „
	55	children not at present boarded out	...	...	17·9 „

If I can be of any further assistance, will you kindly let me know.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) A. LINDSAY CLEGG,
Town Clerk.

G. H. Banwell, Esq.,
Secretary,
Association of Municipal Corporations,
Palace Chambers, Bridge Street,
Westminster, S.W.1.

(3) LIVERPOOL

Town Clerk's Office,
Liverpool.
14th May, 1952.

DEAR SIR,

Boarded-out Children

Referring to your letter of the 7th instant, regarding the above-mentioned matter, I trust the information given below will be of assistance to you.

Paragraph 1 (a)

What factors do the Authority encounter which assist boarding-out?

In order to get home to the public at large the vital need for foster homes, every effort has been made by newspaper publicity, lectures to women's organisations, and the use of the film "A Family Affair". Newspaper publicity is effected in two ways:—

- (a) by direct advertisement;
 - (b) by Press reports of abandonment and cruelty, etc. These often bring in spontaneous applications for fostering.
- (a) It is considered that such efforts meet with very little response whether the advertisements are sponsored by the Home Office or the Local Authority. This is probably due to the fact that such advertisements invariably appear amongst "official notices" which few people read.
- (b) Any publicity of cases of gross neglect or cruelty invariably bring in applications. These are often ill-considered and are sentimental in origin rather than arising from a deep concern and a wish to do something positive.

The film "A Family Affair" has brought very little response. It was shown publicly in cinemas, but the response was nil. It has aroused a certain amount of interest when the 16 mm. version has been shown privately to women's organisations. The effect in producing foster homes, however, has been very disappointing. What success has been achieved has been by the direct efforts of the welfare staff by interview or by lecturing to women's organisations, or by getting recommendations from other foster parents.

It is considered that really good B.B.C. publicity might be more effective. It is not considered that any form of newspaper advertisement will have the desired results.

Paragraph 1 (b)

What difficulties are experienced in boarding out?

The major problem in this city is the acute housing situation. There are approximately 47,000 families on the housing list and the accommodation problem must adversely affect the chances of boarding out.

Paragraph 2

What is the variation in percentages since the Children Act, and to what is this due?

The following figures give the percentage of boarding out in this city from 1948 to the present time:—

Date	Boarded out	Case load	Per cent. boarded out
15. 3.48	318	1,850	17.2
8. 9.48	336	1,894	17.7
31.12.48	355	1,875	18.9
16. 9.49	411	2,086	19.7
30.11.49	443	2,070	21.4
1. 4.50	466	2,114	22.0
1. 8.50	505	2,101	24.0
30.11.50	501	2,074	24.2
1. 4.51	497	2,067	24.5
1. 8.51	501	2,102	23.8
30.11.51	477	2,022	23.6
1. 4.52	452	1,904	23.5

Although boarded out cases in Liverpool show a slight tendency to fall, this is really only in sympathy with a similar trend in the case load. In this city there is a large number of what we have termed "de facto" cases, i.e. cases where a child has been sent to live with relatives, who have later applied for boarding out allowances. These are not true boarding out cases in that in many ways standards are such that the welfare officers would not have considered boarding out in the home had it not been an accomplished fact when reported to the Children's Department, and the danger of emotional upset to the child precludes consideration of transfer, unless the conditions are such as to warrant this step. Within the group of children boarded out in this city there has been a big fall in the number of these "de facto" cases and almost as great an addition to the true boarded out cases. Therefore it is true to say that boarding out has been rather slightly more successful than the figures would tend to show.

Paragraph 3

What percentage of the children in care are considered unsuitable for boarding out?—and why?

That part of the case load at 1st April, 1952, from which children could normally be drawn for boarding out (i.e. excluding children already boarded out, fit person cases residing with parents and still under supervision, hostels, residential employment, approved lodgings, etc.) is as set out below:—

	Total	Coloured	Enuretic	P.Ds. Maladjusted Mentally defective E.S.N.
Local Authorities' Homes ...	683	80	52	69
Voluntary Homes ...	445	30	43	25
Boarding Special Schools ...	75	—	—	75
Total ...	1,203	110	95	169
	1,203	(..... 374		
	Residue	... 829		

There are various factors which prevent boarding out as follows:—

- The colour problem:* Generally speaking the white population will not accept coloured children and there are very good reasons for this, such as difficulties of adolescence and placing in employment. It is not encouraged, except in very exceptional circumstances.
- Physical and Mental Disabilities in Children:* It is extremely difficult to board out children who suffer from a physical or mental handicap, e.g., enuresis and educational sub-normality.
- Short-term cases:* It is not in the child's interests to board-out short-term cases because of the emotional conflict and divided loyalties which arise when he is returned to his own home. There are approximately 300 cases in care at any one time who may be considered in this category.

Large families

Very frequently deprived children are to be found in large families, and it is considered wrong to split families unless one is forced to do so. Rarely does one find a foster home which would take more than one or two children, and the chances of boarding out a group are remote. It is considered wholly wrong to break up a family, and boarding out separately invariably does this.

Finally, the residue who have passed through all the preceding screening processes, must then be matched with available foster homes. Not only is it necessary to take into account the compatibility of temperament and mutual attraction between prospective foster child and parents, but it is also necessary to consider sex, age, etc. Many of the children come into care at an older age, and it is very much more difficult to board out older children than younger ones, particularly adolescents. It is generally found easier to board out girls than boys.

It is roughly computed that, taking into account all the foregoing factors, about 232 children are suitable for boarding out and have not yet been so placed, i.e. about 12 per cent. of the total case load is still available for this type of placing.

The following cases are examples of the difficulties which are encountered:—

- Case of 5 children—2 girls, 3 boys:* Mother dead and father serving prison sentence. Offers were received from foster parents, and relatives of the children whose homes are in close proximity to care for the girls. Normally the splitting of the family would not be allowed, but in this case, while the girls were healthy the three boys

suffered from tuberculosis and required prolonged hospital treatment. Consequently the two girls have been boarded out.

- (b) *Family of six children of tender age (all born within a period of five years, five months) committed to the care of the authority under the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933. Children half-caste Chinese. While it is possible occasionally to board out one child of this type (sometimes with mixed marriage foster parents) it is manifestly obvious that the chances of boarding out this family in toto are negligible.*
- (c) *Cases of children suffering from congenital venereal disease for which prolonged treatment is necessary.*
- (d) *Cases of children with serious behaviour problems, e.g. that of a boy recently committed to the care of the local authority who had a long history of collecting rubbish and eating it, tearing his clothing deliberately, and running away. Incidentally this boy is classed as educationally sub-normal and has a very poor health record, has been operated on for spina bifida, and also has a club foot.*

Conclusion

It is the considered opinion of the Children's Department that the best type of boarding out is that where there is a possibility of adoption later, and every effort is made to encourage this type. It must be appreciated that amongst the deprived children, there is a high percentage of those who may be considered below par either physically or mentally, who are not attractive. Rarely does one find foster parents willing to undertake the care of such children, and most often one finds that the applicants are people who have either been denied children or for some reason cannot build the size of the family they want. Such parents really require a child who will become an integral part of their family, and will only accept when there is a strong possibility that the child will be with them permanently.

There must be parts of the country where boarding out is not nearly so difficult and where saturation point has not been reached. It is for consideration whether some plan could not be devised centrally whereby the more favourably placed authorities could inform those in the industrial areas who are experiencing great difficulty of available foster homes.

While appreciating the vital necessity for matching the child to home and vice versa it is considered that such a plan as outlined is not impossible. It might well be that foster parents who have intimated their wish to receive a child could initially invite a suitable child for a holiday on one or more occasions, and this would serve to indicate whether the child was likely to settle in his new surroundings. It is felt that these points are worthy of serious consideration.

Yours faithfully,

T. ALKER,

Town Clerk.

G. H. Banwell, Esq.,
Secretary,

Association of Municipal Corporations,
Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, S.W.1.

ANNEX 12

REASONS FOR WHICH CHILDREN ARE TAKEN INTO CARE

(1) *Note by the Home Office*

The circumstances in which it is the duty of a local authority to receive a child into care are specified in section 1 of the Children Act. According to the last annual statistical return furnished by local authorities in England and Wales, 36,590 children came into care during the twelve months ended 30th November, 1951, in these circumstances:—

	Numbers	Percentage
No parent or guardian	777	2·1
Abandoned or lost	1,364	3·7
Infirmity of parent or guardian	20,372	55·7
*Other circumstances	10,406	28·4
While on licence from an approved school (section 6 (4) of the Children Act)	85	·3
Fit person order	3,586	9·8
Total	36,590	100·0

* Including, for example, families without a home because of eviction or other reason.

It may be of interest to the Sub-Committee to know that the return shows also that, during the twelve months to 30th November, 1951, 32,786 children went out of care in these circumstances:—

	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Restored to parent or guardian (including 757 on revocation of a fit person order)	28,342	86·5
Adopted	872	2·7
Emigrated	43	·1
Attained age eighteen	2,369	7·2
Died	113	·3
Other reasons	1,047	3·2
Total	32,786	100·0

(2) *Note by the Scottish Home Department*

Local authorities in Scotland have not hitherto been required to give statistical information about the reasons for which children were received into care; but we have asked them for the year ending 30th November next, to include such information in the statistical return for 1952 and subsequent years. We cannot therefore give more than a sample analysis based on the figures collected since 1st June last by the Corporation of Glasgow, which is responsible for about 30 per cent. of all children in care in Scotland.

*Children received into care by the Corporation of Glasgow
from 1st June, 1951 to 14th May, 1952*

Abandoned	53	8 per cent.
Orphans... ..	44	6 "
Illness of Parents	361	51 "
Others (Deserted by parent(s), care and protection cases, illegitimate, father in prison, unsatisfactory home conditions)	242	35 "
	700	100 "

137 of the 700 (i.e. approximately 20 per cent.) are illegitimate.

In the above figures the number of children received into care because of the illness of parents is probably proportionately higher than for other areas, particularly rural areas, in Scotland.

The Corporation of Edinburgh, for their own purposes, prepare a very full analysis of the reasons why children come into their care. The subjoined figures refer to the number of children who were at 15th December last in children's homes for which Edinburgh Corporation are responsible.

REASON FOR BEING IN CARE

Homeless—Unmarried mothers	38
Evicted	22
Itinerant	10
Unable to provide accommodation	10
Mother—In certified institution or mental hospital	8
Deceased	16
Tuberculosis	7
In prison	3
In hospital	11
A minor	3
Parents' neglect	2
Unsatisfactory conditions	4
Deserted	24
Abandoned	2
Committed (non-delinquent)	18
(delinquent)	1
	179

ANNEX 13

REQUIREMENT OF PARENTS' CONSENT BEFORE A CHILD IS BOARDED OUT

The Home Office and the Scottish Home Department were asked to comment on the decision of the London County Council not to place any child in a foster home against its parents' wishes, and the Council were asked to submit a note explaining the reasons for this decision. The following replies were received:—

(1) *Letter from the Home Office, dated 19th May, 1952*

The Children Act, by section 13 (1), puts local authorities under a duty to board out children in their care, unless it is not practicable or desirable for the time being to do so; and, by section 12 (1), requires the authority to exercise their powers with respect to a child in their care so as to further his best interests, and to afford him opportunity for the proper development of his character and abilities. No distinction is made in the Act between children in care for long and short periods, nor is any duty placed on the authority to consult a child's parents as to the way in which he should be provided for.

It is known that some parents, most often those whose children are not likely to be in care indefinitely, express opposition to the boarding out of their children, sometimes because they fear that their place in their child's affections may be taken by the foster parents and sometimes because they think that their child will be safer in a children's home. The advantages of boarding out for a child who has to be away from his own home for a long time and who can suitably be placed in a foster home, are usually so great that it would be inequitable if he were to be accommodated in a children's home for a long period simply because his parents maintained their opposition to the idea of boarding out. At the same time, it is important to secure the continuing co-operation of parents in the child's interest and in the hope of his eventual return home, and desirable for these reasons that the arrangements made for the child should be acceptable to his parents. It is incumbent on local authorities where necessary to persuade parents of the advantages of boarding out, just as there has been need (though the circumstances are different) to convince the staff of children's homes that in the children's interests they should co-operate in getting more children boarded out.

Boarding out is to be preferred for most short stay children where this can be arranged. In some areas foster parents have been found who are willing to take children for short periods so that the children who can suitably be placed with a private family need not go to a children's home at all. If the parent of a child who was likely to be in care for only a short period were to sustain his objection to his child being boarded out, there might sometimes be little to be gained by pressing the proposal.

It is considered that the action of a local authority in a matter of this kind is not susceptible to regulation by fixed rule. It is to be expected that the authority would do all that they could to persuade the parent to accept their view as to the best way of providing for the child. In the last resort, the interests of the child must be the deciding factor after all the circumstances have been considered.

Only in one or two isolated cases has it come to notice that local authorities have adopted the practice that children should not be boarded out against the wishes of the parents. The policy of the Home Office is as explained above.

What is said above relates to children received into care under section 1 of the Children Act, whose parents have the right to take over the care of their child at any time. Where a child in care is the subject of a fit person order, or of a resolution passed by the local authority under section 2 of the Children Act, the authority are in possession of parental rights and should act accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) W. H. CURRIE.

(2) *Extract from letter from the Scottish Home Department, dated 24th May, 1952*

It is the duty of a local authority under section 13 (1) of the Children Act to board out a child unless this is not practicable for the time being. In the view of the Department a local authority would be justified in not boarding out a child considered suitable for boarding out only if there were exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances would include the prospect of an early return to the parent(s); the prospect of a family being rehabilitated and regular contact with the child or children regarded as an essential factor in the rehabilitation; the existence of strong emotional ties between the mother and the child, which would make successful boarding out impossible for the time being; the desire of a widower to keep in touch with his child until other domestic arrangements, such as the engagement of a house-keeper, could be made. It is not possible to lay down a hard and fast rule; the welfare of

the child must be the deciding consideration. The problem is not likely to occur where the child is in "permanent" care, and it has not as yet emerged in Scotland in relation to short term cases because local authorities are in any case finding it a matter of the greatest difficulty to get foster parents to accept children for short periods.

(3) *Letter from the London County Council*

The County Hall, S.E.1

17th June, 1952

DEAR MR. LIDDERDALE,

The Children's Officer informs me that Sub-Committee D of the Select Committee on Estimates would like a note explaining the reasons which prompted the London County Council to decide that "no child shall be placed in a foster-home against the wishes of its parents" as stated on page 1 of the Council's Memorandum.

In reply I have to state that the Children's Committee, after considering a report by the Children's Officer on the subject, approved the then existing practice of not boarding out a child (except when the Council has parental rights), when the parent refuses consent. In special cases, however (e.g. lack of real interest by a parent who refuses consent just to be awkward) they agreed that discretion should be allowed to the officers concerned to approve boarding out against parental wishes in special circumstances where the child's interests would be well served by it.

In the report to the Children's Committee it was stated that "the main reasons for this practice are:—

- (i) The wishes of the parents, as parents, call for consideration, especially when there is a hope that the children may return home before long.
- (ii) Too often boarding out against the wishes of the parents ends in trouble for the child as a result of divided emotional loyalties in the child, or a growing fear of a troublesome parent.
- (iii) Apart from the unfortunate effect on the child, an aggrieved parent can and often does cause the withdrawal of a foster parent from the panel by making trouble for the foster parents during authorised or unauthorised visits to the foster home and by other means. If the foster home is lost for this reason, the effect on other foster parents in the same district is very serious and may indeed prevent the recruitment of other foster homes. The foster home that is lost as a result of annoyance by aggrieved or jealous or ill-behaved parents is the worst possible advertisement for the boarding out scheme.
- (iv) The wishes of many foster parents to have foster children with little or (more frequently) no parental ties."

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) HOWARD ROBERTS,
Clerk of the Council.



The Committee on the subject of the proposed changes in the structure of the House of Representatives has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. and to inform you that the same has been referred to the subcommittee on the subject of the proposed changes in the structure of the House of Representatives.

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