

# Provisions for the Protection of Children in Belgium and Sweden

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*Under the United Nations Reciprocal Exchange Program for the study of social work, the author visited Belgium and Sweden in the fall of 1957 to study the provisions made by those countries for the protection of children. The following pages present a brief description of the two countries and a summary of their protective legislation; Belgium's programs are reported more fully. Detailed information on Sweden's programs will appear in an early issue of the Bulletin.*

**M**OST European nations have established programs for the protection of their children. The programs of Belgium and Sweden are of particular interest because although their provisions for children are similar in some respects, a distinct difference of approach is apparent. Belgium protects children primarily through court procedures, and Sweden uses administrative rather than court procedures.

## Background and Summary

Belgium, which is about the size of Maryland, has a population of about 9 million. It is a small, densely populated, highly industrialized country. Located as it is at the crossroads of Europe, Belgium has frequently been the battleground for the various European powers. As a result, for centuries Belgium has had to overcome the almost incalculable human and economic costs of war.

Sweden, with almost the same population as Belgium, and 15 times its area, is a sparsely settled, agricultural country. It has not been occupied by a foreign power since the Middle Ages and has had the great good fortune to be the only country in the world to have enjoyed, for more than 130 years, uninterrupted internal and external peace.

Both countries are constitutional monarchies with a bicameral parliamentary system. In both countries the local districts (or communes) have primary responsibility for providing most of the care and protec-

tion of children. In Belgium, there are 2,666 local districts.

Sweden had about the same number of local districts until 1952, when a parliamentary reform became effective that amalgamated small districts into larger units. As a result, the number of rural districts was reduced from about 2,400 to 904. With these, plus the 133 cities and towns, there are now 1,037 local districts in Sweden.

In both Belgium and Sweden, the provision of formal training for social work began at about the same time—shortly after the end of World War I. Belgium now has 21 schools of social work, with about 300 graduates each year. The Central Government, through the Office of Protection of Children in the Ministry of Justice, is responsible for determining the general content and organization of the curriculum of training for social work, for conducting examinations, and for granting diplomas in all schools of social work.

Sweden has three schools of social work, with about 140 graduates a year. There is no standard-setting or accrediting body; the schools collaborate with each other and rely on close cooperation for assuring similar standards of training in social work. The period of training required for a diploma is about 3 years in both countries.

## Legislation

*Belgium.*—The basic act in Belgium for the protection of children is the law of May 15, 1912. The first two chapters of this law define the children protected by it. Chapter I per-

tains to the removal of parental rights, and chapter II relates to children in conflict with the law.

Chapter I is based on civil law and is derived from the Napoleonic code. It provides for two types of removal of parental rights—mandatory and discretionary. Removal of all parental rights is mandatory under certain specified conditions—when, for example, the mother or father is convicted of an outrage on decency or of committing, exciting, facilitating, or encouraging debauchery, corruption, or prostitution. Removal of all or part of the parental rights is discretionary with the judge when the parent endangers the child's health, security, or moral well-being through bad treatment, abuse of authority, notorious misconduct, or grave neglect. The civil chamber of the district court has jurisdiction in cases of this type.

Whenever removal of parental rights has been pronounced by the judge, the justice of the peace is responsible for calling a "family council," preferably composed of the child's relatives. The council submits to the court its recommendations as to who should be given parental rights over the child.

Chapter II is based on the Belgian penal code, to which have been added certain provisions similar to those found in juvenile court laws in the United States pertaining to delinquent youth. At the time this law was originally under consideration a member of the Belgium Parliament visited the United States, and he was so impressed with the provisions of the juvenile court laws many States were then adopting that he resolved to incorporate some of them in the Belgium law. He succeeded in doing so with respect to the provisions for children in conflict with the law. Matters covered by this chapter are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile judge of the district court—a different judge from the one having juris-

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diction in matters involving parental rights. Various specialized procedures are provided for handling children in conflict with the law but none for children affected by removal of parental rights.

The Office of Protection of Children in the Ministry of Justice is responsible for all that concerns the "moral" protection of children and youth, and particularly the application of the law of May 15, 1912.

The National Children's Agency, established by a law of September 5, 1919, is responsible for encouraging and developing measures for the protection of children and especially for (1) emphasizing the dissemination and application of guides and scientific methods for promoting the health of children, whether in families or in public or private institutions for education, assistance, or protection; (2) encouraging and supporting related activities, by allocation of subsidies or otherwise; and (3) exercising an administrative and medical control over the activities supported. This Agency is an official, public agency. It is under the control of the Ministry of Health and of the Family with respect to its financial administration but is autonomous with respect to its program. Since it is authorized to receive voluntary contributions, it administers both public and voluntary funds, and therefore it is sometimes described as a semipublic agency. At the same time, it is a "parastatal" organization because the public funds it administers are included in the budget of the Ministry of Health and of the Family.

The law authorizes the National Children's Agency to subsidize those organizations that meet its conditions for activities for the protection of mothers (for example, prenatal clinics and maternity homes), the protection of children (well-baby clinics, child-health clinics, day nurseries, and nurseries for full-time care of infants), and the protection of the frail child and the adolescent (colonies for frail children, day camps, and vacation centers). It is authorized to administer similar activities directly when subsidies have not been requested for such activities. The agency is also responsible under the law for inspection of all children under

age 7 who are placed, in return for payment, in institutions or in foster-family homes for nursing or other care.

The Ministry of Health and of the Family, in addition to its health functions, has statutory responsibility for the Central Government's public assistance functions. Two of these functions immediately related to the protection of children are: (1) inspection of all institutions operated by public assistance commissions and of all voluntary institutions caring for children placed by public assistance commissions; and (2) granting of funds to the commissions for construction or renovation of their institutions.

A 1925 law requires the establishment of a public assistance commission in all local districts. These commissions are responsible under the law for exercising guardianship over "found" children, abandoned children, and "poor" orphans.

The Royal Patronage Commission, a consultative body created by Royal Order on March 15, 1894, is concerned with an intermediate group of children—those in families where the parents' treatment of the children creates problems not serious enough to call for removal of parental rights and those whose misbehavior is not serious enough to place them in conflict with the law. The Commission coordinates the activities of patronage committees in each of the 26 judicial districts, who actually provide the care for these children. It also distributes subsidies to these committees from funds allocated by the Ministry of Justice. The committees are private organizations. Although most of their funds come from voluntary contributions, in addition to the subsidies they sometimes receive public funds from the Provinces or counties or from the local districts.

Under the law as amended in 1940, adoption is a contract made in the presence of the justice of the peace. It must be ratified by a court "of the first instance." The law provides that adoption must be in the best interest of the child. The court is to ensure, also, that the adoptive parents are of good reputation. A social study is not required.

*Sweden.*—In Sweden the basic law

for the protection of children is the Child Welfare Act of 1924 and its subsequent amendments. This law makes it mandatory on every local district to establish a child welfare committee, organize its care of children, and adopt measures for the protection of young persons within the district. These committees look after children who are ill-treated, neglected, or exposed to other danger to their health; children who are delinquent or in danger of becoming delinquent; and young persons who are found to be living a disorderly, lazy, or dissolute life or to have manifested other vices.

As part of their responsibilities, the local child welfare committees are required to take measures regarding individual children who are neglected, delinquent, or in danger of becoming delinquent. Among the measures that may be taken is "protective upbringing"—with or without the consent of the parents. The law provides a number of specific safeguards; it requires, for example, that a social study of the child's situation be made and that before the child is removed from his home for protective upbringing the parents be given an opportunity to appear before the committee. The decision as to what is to be done with the child rests entirely with the local child welfare committee, and there is no court procedure—either for removing the rights of the parents or for determining who should take over the legal control or responsibility for the child. If the committee takes the child for protective upbringing against the will of the parents, a record of the committee's action must be sent to the county board, which is an arm of the Central Government. If the board does not approve the committee's action, it may order the local committee to take other measures in behalf of the child.

The law provides that no child under age 1 may be placed in a foster home without the consent of the local child welfare committee. It defines a foster child as a child living in any other private home than that of his parents or guardian. In other words, all children living with relatives other than parents, as well as children living with nonrelated families, are considered foster children. The commit-

fee is required to supervise all foster homes within the local district.

Each of the 26 counties must, under the law, submit a county plan of institutional care for children. This plan must provide for children's homes in such number and of such a nature that the requirements for the various kinds of institutional care within the county will be met in a suitable manner. The plan is developed and submitted by the county council, which is an elected body representing the entire county.

A child who is in need of foster care and who is not delinquent must be boarded in a private home suitable for the purpose, unless special circumstances call for some other action. The same basic child welfare law provides for the establishment, by the Central Government, of child and youth welfare schools for children of school age.

Under separate legislation, the local child welfare committee is responsible for the appointment of a guardian for every child born out of wedlock. It is the guardian's duty to assist the mother with advice and information, to take the necessary measures to establish the child's paternity, to see that the father fulfills his obligations, and generally to watch over the rights and welfare of the child.

Adoption is governed by another law. An adoption application must be ratified by judicial authorities, who must examine the general conditions of the adoption and may grant an order only if it is to the advantage of the child. If the child is under age 18, the advice of the local child welfare committee must be sought.

### **Administration of Provisions**

*Belgium.*—The primary agency for the protection of children in Belgium is the district court in each of the 26 judicial districts. The judicial structure differs completely from the administrative structure. Administratively, Belgium is divided into 9 counties or Provinces, each of which is divided into a number of local districts.

Within the district court, one judge has jurisdiction over removal of parental rights and another, over children in conflict with the law. The Office of Protection of Children of the Ministry of Justice pays trained

social workers, who are assigned to and available to the judges in each of the district courts. Under the supervision of the court, these workers make social studies, which they follow up with inspections, of children who have come to the attention of the court. With respect to children whose parents have been deprived of all or part of their rights over the children, the family council determines who is to be given the rights over the child. The judges must approve this decision and may, and frequently do, order some other plan for the child's care.

Children who must be cared for away from their own homes or the homes of relatives are, for the most part, cared for in institutions. Boarding-home care is just beginning to be developed in Belgium.

The public assistance commissions in the 2,666 local districts exercise guardianship over "found" children, abandoned children, and "poor" orphans, under their statutory authority and without a court procedure. In addition, they are often asked by the family councils to take over responsibility for children whose parents have been deprived of all or part of their rights by the court. About 100 children's institutions are operated by public assistance commissions. There are a number of intercommunal institutions, which are operated by an association of the commissions. Eighteen or 20 commissions in one section may band together, for example, to operate an institution for children under their care. The commissions frequently have no paid staff. In the larger communities, where there is a paid staff, social workers are increasingly being used to provide services to children.

In general, there are no standard-setting provisions comparable to those governing the licensing of foster-care agencies or institutions in the United States. The agencies paying for the care of a child are responsible for inspection service with respect to the care he is receiving. As a result, it is common for inspectors from more than one public agency to visit a particular institution, whether it is public or private. The National Children's Agency subsidizes certain types of activities (day nurseries, nurseries for full-time care of infants,

colonies for frail children, and others). These subsidies are made on the basis of an agreement whereby the institution meets certain standards set by the national agency. This same Agency is responsible for the inspection of all children under age 7 for whom board is paid, regardless of the source of funds. The Agency is required, if its instructions are not observed, to bring the situation to the attention of the juvenile judge.

*Sweden.*—The protection of children in Sweden is provided almost entirely through administrative agencies without any court procedures. Since the local district reform that took effect in 1952, an increasing number of local child welfare committees have a paid staff. Usually, when a committee has a paid staff, the staff is employed by a social welfare agency that carries out the responsibilities of several local committees, such as the public assistance committee, the child welfare committee, the committee on the blind, and the committee on pensions for the aged. These agencies have responsibilities somewhat similar to those of local public welfare agencies in the United States. At the present time, however, many local child welfare committees—perhaps as many as half of them—have no paid staff. In these instances, the committee members themselves study and supervise the children under their care.

With the emphasis in the law on the use of foster-family care for children who must be cared for away from their own homes, institutional care for children who are not delinquent is used to only a limited extent. There are institutions for the temporary care of infants, as well as reception and observation centers, but other institutional care is used sparingly. Institutions are used to a greater extent for delinquent youth, usually public institutions operated by the Central Government.

The scope of the programs in the local communities varies considerably. The Stockholm social welfare agency has what is probably one of the most comprehensive programs in the world, including child-guidance clinics, family counseling, youth centers for leisuretime programs, hostels, and day-care facilities of all types, in addition to foster-family care, adoption serv-

ice, and various other services. In the rural communities the programs are much more limited and tend to be restricted mainly to foster care, except for guardianship for children born out of wedlock. In general, there are few preventive social services provided for children in their own homes.

### *Proposed Legislative Changes*

In both countries, in the effort to plan adequately for the increased child population and to meet the already increased demand for services for the protection of children, major legislative revisions are being developed. Official groups have made comprehensive studies of the present legislation and have completed reports that are in various stages of consideration preparatory to submittal to the Parliament. In both countries the proposals in these reports provide for much greater emphasis on preventive services and for major expansion and improvement in the provisions of present legislation.

## **Belgium**

Since responsibility relating to the protection of children is divided among several agencies in Belgium, the provisions for the protection of children are discussed agency by agency, rather than by the groups of children for whom the protection and care are provided.

### *Office of Protection of Children*

The Office of Protection of Children is one of the five major units of the Ministry of Justice. It has as its responsibility all that concerns the "moral" protection of children and youth, and particularly the application of the law of May 15, 1912. Its major functions are listed below.

(1) **Judicial.** All problems relating to the application of the 1912 law that are submitted to it are examined by the Office and particularly those submitted by the judicial authorities.

(2) **Administrative.** The Office has established and operates seven State institutions for observing and educating youth. It is responsible for all operations necessary to assure the protection, maintenance, and education of minors committed to these in-

stitutions. (These institutions are primarily for delinquent youth.)

(3) **Inspection.** The Office is responsible for inspection of all placements—whether in families, private institutions, or public institutions—that are made in connection with the application of the 1912 law. It pays for the care of the children placed, but it has no authority, except in its own institutions, for the standards of care.

The Office is also responsible for the scientific and pedagogic control of schools of social service and for various other activities—for example, a commission for the control of motion pictures.

Two groups of children are the concern of the Office: (1) children in situations where all or part of the parental rights have been removed by the court, and (2) children in conflict with the law. It has no direct responsibility for children who do not come to the attention of the courts. It does, however, subsidize the Royal Patronage Commission, which in turn allocates funds to the provincial patronage committees that provide some care and service for "morally abandoned" children.

The children admitted to the institutions operated by the Office are sent there as the result of an order from the juvenile judge. The children are placed "at the disposition of the government," however, rather than sent by the court to a specific institution for a specific purpose or period. Thus, the Office of Protection of Children decides which institution (or unit of the institution) is best for the child and when the child is ready to leave the institution.

The children are first sent to an observation center, where a medico-psychological study is made in which a social worker participates as a member of the team studying the child. The study team, in its report, specifies which institution is recommended for the child and may include other recommendations—the education or employment, for example, for which the child seems best adapted. Since the Office has authority to place the child in any of its institutions, placement can be made immediately upon completion of the study. If the child does not adjust, he may be referred back to an ob-

serva-tion center for study and recommendation of future treatment.

The institutions place some children in private homes of "semi-liberty," where the children have an opportunity to work for a small amount of wages during the week and return to the institution for the weekend.

The Office of Protection of Children has long been in a position of leadership in developing social services and encouraging the use of trained social workers. As pointed out earlier, it carries major responsibility for the scientific and pedagogic control of training in schools of social work. By providing permanent delegates (social workers) to the district courts, the Office has made available in all parts of Belgium social workers with full training. Even though the number of these delegates may not be adequate for the need, in some districts they are the only persons working with children who have full social work training.

### *District Courts*

*Removal of parental rights.*—The petition for the removal of parental rights is filed by the public prosecutor. This official represents the King, who is the protector of minors. Whenever the judge has pronounced removal of parental rights (either complete or partial), a family council is called by the justice of the peace. The council is made up of three representatives of the paternal relatives and three representatives of the maternal relatives; the justice of the peace is the chairman. If there are no relatives, or they are not available, the justice of the peace must choose six persons interested in the protection of children to serve as the family council. The council recommends the person or persons who should be given parental rights over the child. The judge frequently modifies the choice of guardian made by the council, and he may also subsequently modify the original choice at any time. If the child is committed to the care of a society or to an institution, an individual is designated who will be especially charged with representing the child.

Although the basic substance of the law has not been changed since its enactment in 1912, two major ad-

ditions were made in 1948 and 1949. One provides that expenses for the care of children (when those responsible for their care are unable to pay) are to be paid by the State. (Previously they were paid for by the local authorities, and problems had sometimes arisen when the local authorities tried to work out the plan that cost the least even though it was not the plan that best met the needs of the child.) The second amendment requires that the Office of Protection of Children assign social workers, known as permanent delegates, to the public prosecutor; they are responsible, under his direction, for making initial social studies of cases involving the removal of parental rights and for placement and supervision of the children who are involved.

During 1956, parental rights were removed in 582 cases—an all-time high. There were 204 removals in 1935, 219 in 1945, and 331 in 1951. The number of children involved in these cases during the 4 years and the provision made for them are shown in the following tabulation.

Type of placement	Number of children			
	1935	1945	1951	1956
Placements, total.....	2,343	3,291	3,825	5,322
With individual.....	521	655	1,193	1,503
In private educational society or institution.....	1,582	2,125	2,181	3,224
In special private institution.....	200	461	416	555
In State educational institution.....	24	30	25	26
In special State institution.....	15	20	10	14

Source: *Résultats Statistiques Comparatifs—Année 1939-1956* (on the Application of the Act of May 15, 1912, for the Protection of Children), Central Office of Statistics, Ministry of Justice, Brussels, Belgium, 1956; and unpublished data from the Central Office of Statistics.

The significant increase in recent years is believed to be the result of the availability of social workers to the public prosecutor and of State funds for care of these children. It also indicates that the amendments of 1948 and 1949 are accomplishing their purpose of assuring better provisions for children lacking adequate parental guardianship.

*Children in conflict with the law.*—Under a 1948 amendment, the expense of caring for delinquent chil-

dren is met by the State (when those responsible for their care are unable to pay). An amendment adopted in 1949 provides that the juvenile judge is to ask the permanent delegates of the Office of Protection of Children to take, under his direction, all useful steps in the application of this law. The following tabulation shows the trend in the number of children and disposition of cases involving minors in conflict with the law who were brought to the attention of the public prosecutor serving the juvenile judge from 1939 to 1956.

Year	Children referred to public prosecutor			
	Total number	Percentage increase from 1939	Number of cases dismissed	Number of children sent to juvenile judge
1939.....	14,550	-----	11,347	2,782
1942.....	33,661	131.3	27,342	6,840
1943.....	26,324	80.9	19,685	6,290
1945.....	24,472	68.2	16,041	6,993
1947.....	20,205	38.8	14,615	4,171
1949.....	19,228	32.1	14,205	3,563
1951.....	19,256	31.6	14,002	3,752
1952.....	18,403	26.5	13,321	3,223
1953.....	18,695	29.0	16,087	3,203
1954.....	19,240	32.0	12,399	3,464
1955.....	19,199	32.0	15,505	3,445
1956.....	23,076	58.5	19,126	3,813

During the years of the German occupation of Belgium (1940-44), the number rose sharply as a result of war tensions. There has been some increase in recent years, but the number in 1956 was considerably less than the peak reached during the war years. Although 3,813 children were initially brought to the attention of the judge in 1956, more than 12,000 were under the court's jurisdiction at the end of the year as a result of action taken by the court with respect to children brought before it, as shown below.

Placement	Number
Total .....	12,752
Probation .....	9,703
Home of individual .....	661
Private educational institution .....	1,519
Special private institution .....	235
State educational institution .....	232
Special State institution .....	202

In addition to permanent delegates, volunteer delegates are used in working with delinquent children. In some instances, they are former staff of the courts who do not meet the re-

quirements for permanent delegates; although they may not be paid a salary, they may be reimbursed for such services as escorting children. In other instances, they are individuals who are recruited to take an individual, personal interest in one or more children.

The Brussels court is reported to have several hundred volunteer workers. The six full-time permanent delegates in this court have a continuing job of recruiting volunteer delegates to help children who are on probation. Each volunteer may work with one, two, three, or four children. One of the reasons for their recruitment is that the permanent delegates have a larger caseload than they can carry adequately, and the volunteer delegates are used to provide a continuing relationship for the child. Another reason is to enable the child to know someone, perhaps a teacher or a businessman, from a field in which he is interested, since the volunteers may be from various fields. The judge decides who are to be volunteer delegates, and, after their appointment, they make their reports to the judge, who sends them to the permanent delegate in whose district the child lives. The permanent delegates in general carry the more difficult cases.

### *National Children's Agency*

Under the administration or direction (through subsidies) of the National Children's Agency are 1,164 well-baby clinics (in 673 local communities); 588 centers for home supervision of infants (in 1,825 communities); 307 clinics for children aged 3-6; 287 prenatal clinics; 47 day nurseries and 29 nurseries for full-time care of infants; 112 permanent colonies for frail children; 173 sections for frail children in institutions; 111 day camps; and 1,157 vacation camps.

Since this Agency is primarily a preventive health agency it has relatively few social workers. Social workers are not employed in connection with the maternity homes, day nurseries, or other group-care facilities for children operated or subsidized by the Agency. In 1954 the Agency had about 74 social workers and more than 1,000 nurses.

Some of these social workers are

employed in the well-child clinics, either in place of a nurse or in addition to the nurse who, with the doctor, makes up the usual clinic staff. The principal duties of the social workers in these clinics consist of informing pregnant women and young mothers of their social privileges and rights and assisting them in completing the formalities required to obtain the benefits available to them; making social studies and taking the necessary steps for helping indigent, sick, or abandoned mothers or mothers who are themselves children; and for helping sick, frail, abandoned, or mistreated children or children of working mothers.

The Agency has a Central Social Service, which carries out the following activities:

(1) Studying difficult or special social cases. The medical assistants of the well-child and prenatal clinics are responsible for handling "simple" social cases. The central social service takes charge of the more complicated cases.

(2) Providing direct assistance in the form of clothing or layettes, and referring cases to other Agency services and to other organizations and agencies.

(3) Furnishing information to enable the medical assistants in the clinics to aid families in the best possible way.

(4) Providing services in adoption that consist of full reports on future adoptive parents and children to be adopted, and regular visits after adoption. (In 1955 the Agency placed seven children for adoption, an indication of the very limited use of adoption in Belgium.)

Under its basic law, the Agency is responsible for supervision of children under age 7 placed in family homes or in institutions. Social workers make the initial inspection of family homes. Subsequent supervision is usually by nurses and doctors. During 1956, more than 1,000 foster families with at least one child under age 7 had been supervised by the Agency. The number of children supervised was 2,981. During the same year, 14 applicants were refused authorization to care for children under age 7. The Agency does not set any limits on the number of children who may be cared for in one

home. The number varies; it may be as high as 12, depending on the size and equipment of the home.

### *Ministry of Health and of the Family*

Under a Royal Order of July 2, 1949, the Ministry of Health and of the Family may make grants, normally for 60 percent of the cost, for building, enlarging, renovating, or making major repairs in certain institutions operated by public assistance commissions, including maternity homes and children's institutions. Grants for these purposes are not available to the voluntary institutions for children.

The basic public assistance law of 1925 authorizes the establishment, by Royal Order, of a system of inspection for public assistance. On October 18, 1930, a Royal Order was issued setting up this service in the Ministry of Health and of the Family.

The purpose of this inspection service with respect to children's institutions is to visit those operated by public assistance commissions in order to obtain necessary information, make suggestions and criticism concerning their administration, and relieve abuses or abnormal situations. Private institutions caring for children placed by the commissions are, like the public institutions, visited by the inspection service.

The majority of these institutions are also inspected by the National Children's Agency. That Agency is concerned principally with the care given to the children, medical supervision, nutrition, physical arrangements, sanitation, equipment of infirmaries, and isolation and quarantine arrangements.

The institutions in which war orphans are placed are inspected by the Ministry of Reconstruction, and those in which children are cared for through funds from the Ministry of Justice are inspected by that Ministry.

Since 1951 the Ministry of Health and of the Family has been giving special emphasis to encouraging children's institutions to improve their programs and facilities. In that year the Ministry issued a letter to all directors of institutions for the aged and for orphans and abandoned children, the subject of which was "Im-

provement of Hospices and Orphanages." The letter began by saying:

The investigations made by the Inspection Service show that very many establishments caring for the aged, or for orphans and abandoned children are antiquated and no longer conforming to modern requirements of hygiene and comfort.

A number of them should be closed to make room for new and more appropriate buildings; most of them need important changes. Budget restrictions, unfortunately, do not permit subsidizing the necessary or desirable changes.

Most often, however, judicious adjustments, even though costing very little, would improve the situation, especially if these adjustments were accompanied by a change in internal regulations which still too frequently are based on out-of-date concepts.

The letter went on to enumerate a number of specific areas in which change was needed and included comments such as "the orphanage is frequently a sort of barracks, somber and without gaiety where children don't have the chance to develop physically, intellectually and morally"; "living arrangements for children should be separate from those for the aged"; "a complete weekly bath should be the general rule."

Considerable progress has been made since then, particularly in improving the facilities to make possible more individual care of children and in improving attitudes to and understanding of children's needs.

### *Royal Patronage Commission*

The Royal Patronage Commission is a consultative body for examining questions of legislation and general administration in matters pertaining to the protection of "morally abandoned" children and penitentiary problems. It also coordinates the work of the Provincial patronage committees and distributes to them the subsidies allocated by the Ministry of Justice, which are based on the activities of the individual committee.

The committees have a double activity—prison work and protection of children. They are divided into sections for the two types of activities, and some also have sections for work with persons who are mentally deficient.

The sections on protection of children are the most important in terms of numbers and activities. These sections concern themselves with "morally abandoned" children, and more than 400 of these children are under their charge. The children may be

placed in institutions or in family homes. The committees look after their education and their social adjustment. In addition, the committees provide guardianship for about 4,000 children whose parents have been deprived by the court of all or part

of their rights in relation to the children and whom the family councils have committed to them.

*The information on Sweden's program for children will appear in an early issue of the Bulletin.*

## Notes and Brief Reports

### Federal Grants to State and Local Governments, 1956-57\*

During the fiscal year 1956-57, Federal grants to States and localities continued the upward trend started at the end of World War II, with an annual rate of increase higher than in any of the preceding 7 years except 1952-53. Although grants for education declined somewhat for the second year in a row, there were increases of varying size in grants for public assistance and other welfare services, employment security, health services, and all other purposes. In consequence, total grants rose 14 percent from the \$3,438 million of 1955-56 to \$3,933 million for 1956-57 (table 1).

The purpose and financial characteristics of existing Federal aids to States and localities vary considerably. The term "grants," as used here, is confined to grants for cooperative Federal-State or Federal-local programs administered at the State and/or local level and for those programs in which the bulk of the funds is channeled through agencies of State and local governments. Emergency grants and the value of grants-in-kind have been included when they conform to this definition. Federal aid granted directly to individuals and private institutions and reimbursements to State and local governments for expenses incurred by them as agents of the Federal Government in administering programs primarily national in character have been excluded. Shared revenues have also been excluded.

Grants for public assistance pay-

\* Prepared by Sophie R. Dales, Division of Program Research, Office of the Commissioner.

ments and administration amounted to \$1,556 million in the fiscal year 1956-57, \$101 million or 7 percent more than the \$1,455 million granted in 1955-56. The amounts granted for each of the four categorical assistance programs and the percentage change from the preceding year are shown below. The relative proportion

Program	Amount (in millions)		Percentage change	
	1956-57	1955-56	1956-57 from 1955-56	1955-56 from 1954-55
OAA.....	\$973	\$928	+4.8	+0.9
APTD.....	107	92	+16.2	+12.2
ADC.....	436	397	+9.8	+2.3
AB.....	41	38	+7.4	+5.6

of all public assistance grants represented by grants for each of the programs in 1956-57 remained about the same as in 1955-56: old-age assistance, 63 percent; aid to the permanently and totally disabled, 7 percent; aid to dependent children, 28 percent; and aid to the blind, 3 percent.

The largest increase (16.2 percent) from the preceding year occurred in the youngest of the four programs—aid to the permanently and totally disabled, which completed its sixth full year of operation in 1956-57. During the year, the plan submitted by Kentucky was approved for Federal participation, bringing to 46 the total number of States and Territories with approved plans that received grants in 1956-57. (Plans submitted by California and Texas were approved in the first quarter of 1957-58.)

Despite moderate increases from the preceding year in the amount granted for each public assistance program, the 1956-57 total as a pro-

portion of all Federal grants was lower than in any year since 1940-41. It represented only 39.6 percent of all Federal grants, compared with 42.7 percent the preceding year. This drop is explainable partly in terms of the growing importance of other continuing grant programs and the addition of new grant programs. It also reflects changing economic conditions and the continuing expansion of the old-age and survivors insurance program that had led, by the year 1956-57, to a considerable degree of stabilization in State public assistance outlays.

Grants for public assistance are the largest made by the Federal Government for any one purpose. Second in order of dollar magnitude are the highway construction grants made by the Bureau of Public Roads in the Department of Commerce. From 1950-51, when the fourth public assistance program was added and assistance grants reached an all-time peak percentagewise, grants for public assistance and highway construction have represented the proportions of total Federal grants shown below.

Year	Percent of total grants	
	Public assistance	Highway construction
1950-51.....	62.9	17.8
1951-52.....	50.7	18.1
1952-53.....	48.3	18.8
1953-54.....	48.7	18.2
1954-55.....	46.1	19.3
1955-56.....	42.3	21.7
1956-57.....	39.6	24.3

Public assistance grants represented 79.2 percent of the grants administered by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in both 1956-57 and 1955-56. During the past 4 fiscal years they have accounted for 98 percent of the Social Security Administration grants; the remainder