

THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT ACT.

"It is wiser and less expensive to save children than to punish criminals."

The Juvenile Delinquent Act, which was adopted by the Dominion Parliament at the session of 1907-8, marks a great advance in the methods of dealing with delinquent children. It provides for a system such as is already in force in Great Britain, Germany, the United States (26 States), Australia and Sweden, and which is likely soon to be universally adopted throughout the civilized world. The system, however, depends for its effective operation on an enlightened public opinion, and the Dominion Act, therefore, wisely provides that it will be put in force by proclamation in such places only as ask for it, and are prepared with the necessary machinery for putting it into proper operation. With a view to enlisting co-operation in this splendid work, the reader is asked to give attention to the following:—

The great requisite in Canada to-day is population, and accordingly we spend vast sums in encouraging immigration. It is calculated that every able-bodied male immigrant is worth \$1,000 to the State. Yet there are at the present moment more than 2,000 able-bodied men confined in our gaols and penitentiaries, not only making no contribution to the wealth of the community, but housed and supported and guarded at great expense to the State. This is on the material side, and there is, of course, the vastly more important moral aspect of the case. Why are these men criminals? They are in at least the vast majority of cases, what they have been brought up to be. If they are criminals it is because they have been made so while children. Statistics show that comparatively few become criminals after reaching maturity. The delinquent children of to-day are the adult criminals of to-morrow.

Children are the product of their surroundings. Children who break the criminal law or are growing up in idleness and crime are precisely what any children would be if similarly situated. Of the children taken from the worst surroundings by the Ontario Children's Aid Societies and placed in good foster homes, less than two per cent. go wrong. The