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# Police accused over children in court

CHILDREN under the care of the Queensland Department of Children's Services are repeatedly brought to court on minor offences, apparently to boost crime solution statistics, a Salvation Army officer said yesterday.

"Many of the children appearing before the Children's Court are previous offenders. In a period of three years some of them could have six to eight court appearances," the officer, Captain J. McIver, said.

"They appear to be being brought before the court again and again to satisfy statistical requirements on solving crime."

Captain McIver, the superintendent of the Aldra Boys Home at Indooroopilly, Brisbane, said the court appearances were bringing the law into ridicule in the eyes of the children.

Only the first Children's Court appearance when the child was committed to care would be effective. In subsequent appearances, the Magistrate could only re-commit the child to the care, he was already under or admonish and discharge him.

He said it was up to the Director of Children's Services to say when the child would be discharged from care, where he could be placed and for how long.

Captain McIver said there appeared to be some difficulties between the Police Department and the Department of Children's Services on procedures for handling juvenile crime.

These difficulties seemed to be with the police, who had decided to crack down on juvenile crime to counter what they regarded as soft-peddling on so-called delinquents.

"I have no argument with bringing boys to book for what they do."

"My bone of contention is the way in which they are being brought to book and why," he said.

Captain McIver said he was talking only about children already committed to the care of the director of Children's Services.

"I'm not grizzling about the fellows who go to court for things like break and enter and illegal use of motor vehicles."

"But kids picked up for helping themselves to milk money and shoplifting quite candidly would be far better treated as naughty boys rather than criminals."

"It virtually categorises them as future criminals," he said.

The Queensland Minister for Welfare Services, Mr J. Herbert, said last night he doubted the allegations.

"But we don't put ticks next to children's names or keep statistics of their convictions," he said. "If Captain McIver has got such figures, as he apparently claims, we would be interested to see them."

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