

First Report on the progress and assimilation of migrant children in Australia

Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council
- Special Committee The Progress and
Assimilation of Migrant Children in Australia
Canberra, Commonwealth Government Printer,
1960.

The progress and assimilation of migrant children in Australia

By a Special Committee of The Commonwealth
Immigration Advisory Council

Presented to Australian Citizenship Convention,
Canberra. February, 1960.

Committee

Chairman:

The Honorable Mr. Justice Dovey.

Members:

Sir Richard Boyer, K.B.E., Good Neighbour
Councils of Australia.

The Honorable P. J. Clarey, M.P.

Dr. J. R. Darling, C.M.G., O.B.E.

A. J. Lee, Esquire, C.B.E., M.C., National
Executive, R.S.S. and A.I.L.A.

A. E. Monk, Esquire, President, A.C.T.U.

Mrs. J. G. Norris, O.B.E., National Council of
Women.

Terms of Reference

(a) To investigate and report upon the progress and assimilation of migrant children and the Australian-born children of migrant parents, taking into consideration such aspects as -

- (i) their educational and general progress in Australian schools; cultural, sporting and social activities and general participation in the life of the Australian community;
- (ii) any special problems which may be foreseen, e.g., difficulties arising in the home life of migrant families as a consequence of resettlement;
- (iii) the standard of behaviour generally and the incidence of delinquency amongst migrant children.

(b) To suggest any measures which might be taken to facilitate satisfactory assimilation.

Foreword

Since the immigration programme began, more than 470,000 young migrants have come to this country, and nearly 500,000 first generation children have been born here.

Their progress is important to us all. They will play a vital part in the future of our country. But more than that, they are important to us in their own right, as individuals. For these reasons, the Minister for Immigration, the Honorable A. R. Downer, M.P., asked the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council to undertake a comprehensive investigation of their progress in the Australian community, at school, at work, and in their social life, and our Committee was appointed to undertake the task.

This is our first report. Our investigations are continuing. We do not claim to have established the final answers to the questions put to us, but our findings and recommendations are based on our assessment of the fullest possible information obtainable. We have gathered this information throughout 1959 by personal interviews in all States, by correspondence, and by extensive Australia-wide surveys. In addition, we have been able to draw on our collective experience, particularly in other investigations made by the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council during the past nine years.

Not everyone will agree with our report. This is as it should be. Healthy controversy on a subject as important as this is vital, if further progress is to be made. We therefore welcome it.

Finally, we would like to stress our gratitude for the help given by literally thousands of people throughout Australia. This is their report as much as ours.

W. R. Dovey, Chairman.

R. J. F. Boyer
J. R. Darling
A. E. Monk

P. J. Clarey
A. J. Lee
A. M. Norris

Table of Contents

1	General Findings and Recommendations
2	Scope of the Investigations
3	Pre-school Children
4	School Children
5	Young Workers
6	Social Aspects
7	Delinquency
8	Further Investigations

Appendices

"A"	List of those who co-operated in the investigations
"B"	Sampling methods used in education survey
"C"	Arrivals: Young Migrants: Australia: 1946-1958
"D"	Births and Parentage: Australia: 1946-1958
"E"	Results of Education Survey, October, 1959

Section 1 - General Findings and Recommendations

1.01 What began as a study of problems has ended as primarily a record of achievement. We cannot, however, be complacent. These achievements have resulted only from the efforts of the youngsters concerned, the encouragement of their parents, and the work of many thousands of Australians; teachers, welfare officers, club members and many others.

1.02 While it is a record of the achievements of migrant children, it is also a tribute to Australian youngsters. They have accepted the newcomers naturally and without reservation. In doing so, they have set an example for adults to follow.

1.03 The success of the great majority of migrant youngsters must not be allowed to obscure the difficulties which some - fortunately few - are facing. We would be failing ourselves, as well as them, if we left undone anything which might assist them.

1.04 Our investigations show that -

- most young migrants - about 97 per cent - settle down well to life in Australia;
- as a group, they are above-average in scholarship;
- in social activities, both at school and in the community generally, a large number tends to lag behind Australians;
- they have good employment records, and are favourably regarded by employers, trade unions, apprenticeship authorities and employment officials;
- their conduct is good. Delinquency is, if anything, less of a problem than amongst young Australians;
- in most cases, their family background helps them, but:
 - there is some evidence that, as a group, migrant parents are preoccupied with the material aspects of life in Australia.
 - some are handicapped because English is rarely used in their homes;

- national groups among young migrants are relatively few, and are not a serious problem. They tend to be a symptom, rather than the primary cause, of difficulties of adjustment;
- migrant parents, as a group, take too little part in the social life of the community, but will usually participate if encouraged;
- family migration is best for both adults and youngsters. Adults can be helped to settle down through their children, and young migrants whose parents are with them tend to do better here than those without family ties.

1.05 Factors contributing most to the successful progress and assimilation of young migrants in the Australian community are -

- the adaptability of children to new environments. Most settle down more quickly and, apparently, more easily, than we had expected;
- a satisfactory family background, particularly in relation to the use of English in the home, parents' interest in education and vocational training, and parental guidance and affection;
- mutual acceptance by migrant and Australian youngsters at school, and at work;
- the large number of "old" migrants in Australia who know, from personal experience the inevitable problems of the newcomers, and who can help them during their early months here, both at school and at work;
- educational research and the work of teachers, particularly in assisting young migrants to obtain an adequate knowledge of English in a comparatively brief period of time;
- the positive measures taken by health authorities, voluntary organizations and others, sometimes through the Good Neighbour Councils and sometimes spontaneously, to recognize and meet the special needs of migrants;
- careful planning of the immigration programme, particularly as to size, a balanced intake of nationalities, and the importance given to family migration.

1.06 Inevitably, there are those who find it difficult to settle down. On the evidence before us, however, only about three per cent of young

migrants are "problem" cases, and only some of these are delinquents. Even these small numbers could be smaller. Some of the contributing causes could be overcome. There is a fairly common pattern amongst these youngsters in their failure to adjust themselves to life in Australia -

- their ability is often below average;
- their home environment is unsatisfactory;
- their school and employment records are poor;
- their knowledge of English is inadequate;
- they sometimes seek refuge in national groups.

1.07 There are unduly large numbers of these children amongst:

- families who have lived in hostels for long periods if, in addition, the children lack parental guidance;
- families where English is not spoken in the home.

There is an important difference between these. Parents in the first group are apathetic. Those in the second group are, in many instances, unaware of the harm they are doing to their children.

1.08 Migrant parents tend naturally to cherish much of their old life - the customs, culture and language of their homeland. Some carry this too far. Their children also err, and too often tend to reject completely anything which is not Australian. This can lead to conflict, which is bad both for family relationships and the family's progress in the community.

1.09 The Committee recommends:

(1) a national campaign, particularly through foreign-language newspapers, to encourage parents to speak English in the home for their children's sake;

(2) English classes for children should be provided on migrant ships, as is done for adults;

(3) all children, particularly the children of migrant parents, should be encouraged to learn

more about the history, language and literature of the countries from which our migrants are coming;

(4) migrant families should be encouraged not to remain in hostels - which are only intended as temporary accommodation - longer than is reasonably necessary to obtain private accommodation, unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary;

(5) greater efforts by everyone, as individuals and as members of clubs and other organizations, to encourage migrant children and their parents to participate more fully in the social life of the community;

(6) campaigns by clubs and other bodies, directed specifically to migrants, to encourage them to become youth leaders and club organizers in order to -

- widen their field of social activities;
- increase youth clubs' ability to accept new members;
- provide a migrant element in the clubs which will lead newcomers to join;

(7) a nation-wide effort to direct attention to and co-ordinate these efforts.

Section 2 - Scope of the Investigations

2.01 The Committee's investigations have covered education, police, child welfare and health authorities, employers' and trade associations, trade unions, pre-school, social, sporting and other voluntary associations throughout the Commonwealth.

2.02 As far as possible, members of the Committee personally interviewed those concerned. Individual members visited all States in the course of the investigations and, in particular, had long and helpful discussions with education, police and child welfare authorities. Where personal interviews were not practicable, the Committee wrote seeking co-operation. The response was most generous. Some organizations voluntarily made extensive analyses of their records, and others conducted special surveys of their members.

2.03 In addition, the Committee undertook special surveys of pre-school centres and schools and also the incidence of delinquency among migrants. These would not have been possible without the wholehearted support of the various authorities involved.

2.04 The size of our task has been such that it has not been possible to consult all the many organizations interested in our field of inquiry. We have, however, covered as large and representative a group as practicable.

Section 3 - Pre-School Children

Family life is the most important factor in social adjustment. Outside training and guidance, as at pre-school centres, can help considerably.

The Committee is pleased to note the use made of pre-school centres and child health facilities by many migrant parents. The attitude of pre-school and other workers towards migrant children is positive and friendly.

Too few parents, however, participate fully in the work of those centres. They need more encouragement to do so.

Most of the children settle down quickly. Until they learn English, some are lonely, difficult, or aggressive. The period of adjustment is longer where English is not spoken in the home.

3.01 By reason of their age these children's lives are centred on the home; they have little experience of life outside the family.

3.02 Difficulties which arise for these children may appear to be matters of family, rather than public, concern. Provision, of course, is made in the existing legal and welfare machinery for neglected children and those with other social problems. However, the lives of all these children are matters of concern to the community. We have a very real interest in their welfare. Training for future citizenship begins in the child's early years. Subsequent adjustment to school life, employment and the social life of the community is affected by training and guidance at the pre-school age.

3.03 Physical and emotional health are both important. Physical well-being, which bears on emotional stability, can be aided by child health and guidance facilities. The Committee therefore sought information on the use made by migrant parents of child health and guidance facilities and pre-school centres.

3.04 With the co-operation of the associations and State authorities concerned, the Committee has made an exploratory survey of pre-school centres throughout the Commonwealth. Although enrolment is voluntary, there are large waiting lists of Australian and migrant children. The survey thus covers only a proportion of the children in the pre-school age group.

3.05 There are few pre-school centres with large groups of migrants; 66 per cent have less than 6, and 83 per cent less than 11. The children are widely distributed:

- 33 per cent are in centres with up to 5 migrants.
- 27 per cent are in centres with from 6 to 10 migrants.
- 40 per cent are in centres with more than 10 migrants.

Only 15 per cent of the centres have no migrant children.

3.06 Most centres report that the children are doing well.

- 12 per cent state that migrants enjoy pre-school activities more fully than Australians.
- 84 per cent report no difference.
- 4 per cent say migrants enjoy them less.

There are, however, exceptions:

"We have only one migrant child. She enjoys toys and manipulative equipment to the same extent as others but, as she does not know much English, she does not enjoy stories and singing - although she does enjoy rhythm.

Owing to the language barrier, she mostly plays alone."

(This and other quotations are from replies to the Committee's inquiries)

3.07 Initially, there are language difficulties with most European children. This problem is generally short-lived.

"At first, because of the language barrier, migrant children are shy and do not mix, but once they have mastered the language (which does not take long), I find they conform and enjoy their activities as enthusiastically and vigorously as Australian children."

However, the parents' co-operation is needed:

"If a foreign language is continually spoken in the home, the children take longer to learn English."

3.08 Lack of English contributes to a feeling of insecurity in some children, leading, in a few cases, to undue aggressiveness and emotionalism.

"Children are more aggressive due largely to language difficulties."

"There is a language barrier, and migrants tend to become very excited and disturb other children."

3.09 With newcomers, there are sometimes difficulties with diet and clothing. However, the children soon adapt themselves to Australian food. The centres sometimes find migrant parents slow to dress their children suitably for the Australian climate. In a few cases, extremes of dress cause social problems for the children.

3.10 Migrant parents are not as active in pre-school affairs as Australian parents.

- 11 per cent of the centres say migrant parents are more active than Australians.
- 44 per cent report no difference.
- 45 per cent state that they are less active.

Several reasons have been suggested:

- language difficulties resulting in apparent lack of interest, and preventing full understanding between parent and teacher;
- shyness, not always confined to Europeans;
- working mothers where families are establishing their new homes;
- reluctance of some husbands to permit their wives social interests outside the home or national group.

Some of these factors, of course, apply equally to Australian families.

3.11 Even where the children have difficulty with English, and their parents are not active in pre-school affairs, the children gain greatly from attending the centres:

"The children enjoy kindergarten very much, and it is a tremendous help for them in overcoming the language barrier and in preparing them for school life."

3.12 Most migrant parents appear to make good use of baby health centres and school health services:

"It has been the experience of Sisters of the Child Health Service that there are few problems associated with the assimilation of migrant children.....As far as the school Health Service is concerned, there is a far higher attendance at school medical examinations of migrant mothers of foreign origin than British (including Australian) origin. These foreign mothers are most appreciative of the services provided by the doctors and nurses in the schools, and co-operate very readily in adopting any recommendations about their children."

3.13 After making a survey of their Infant Welfare Centres, health authorities in one State told the Committee:

"It would appear that the response of migrant mothers to the infant welfare service is better than the overall response for the State."

In this State, 89 per cent of all mothers respond to invitations to attend Infant Welfare Centres. The invitations are made when the birth of their children is notified.

"The causes of non-response by migrant mothers were similar to those for non-migrant mothers, and language was not apparently a pre-eminent factor in response."

3.14 There is sometimes difficulty because of mothers' lack of English and apparent diffidence. However, in most cases they can be

encouraged to attend centres and other mothers can interpret for them. In addition, some Australian nurses are learning European languages to assist them in their work, a step which the Committee warmly commends.

3.15 The work being done in this field is indicated by the following reply:

"Language has been a problem in advising migrant mothers. The sisters have sought to obviate this in a number of ways. One is the use of interpreters who can speak English, either the husband, a friend or any older child. (Some) husbands frequently attend Centres with their wives. (This is quite unlike non-migrant fathers who rarely attend centres.) The Commonwealth Bank also provides an interpretation service which is sometimes used and some municipalities have provided interpreters.

In addition, the Department has translated leaflets on various aspects of child care into nine languages - Italian, Polish, German, Dutch, Greek, Maltese, Hungarian, Finnish and Yugoslav. The sisters can obtain from the Department of Health leaflets in the language appropriate to the nationality of mothers attending the centre."

3.16 Difficulties mainly concern children whose parents live in national groups where, in consequence, the mothers' knowledge of English tends to be poor. However, these are in the minority:

"Overall, the difficulties sisters experience with migrants are surprisingly few. There is apparently not as much resistance to adopting new methods of child care as could reasonably be anticipated and, where a migrant parent has some English, problems are easily dealt with.

Medical advice is sought when recommended and in this, migrants compare more than favourably with non-migrants."

Migrant Centres

3.17 Children up to 7 years receive full-time care at creches while their mothers are in hospital or during other emergencies. There are

pre-school play centres for children from 3 to 5 years of age. Medical services are also provided.

3.18 Parents and friends are encouraged to visit the pre-school centres. Parents' meetings are held each month. In addition, pre-school teachers visit the parents to establish the close parent-teacher relationship necessary for the children's progress.

3.19 Parents with this experience are likely to continue to use pre-school facilities after leaving Migrant Centres.

"Nearly all European mothers willingly attend the Infant Welfare Centres. When a mother leaves the migrant hostel, she has already adopted to some extent (our) pattern of child care. Her address is forwarded to the sister in charge of the Infant Welfare Centre in the municipality of her new home and the sister visits the family and invites the mother to attend her centre. If necessary the sister may use an invitation printed in the mother's own language."

Section 4 - School Children

Good progress is being made by most migrants in Australian schools. The work of the teaching profession in this field deserves greater appreciation by the community.

In scholastic performance migrants, as a group, surpass Australians. They differ little in social activities. There is mutual acceptance, and few instances of national segregation. In leadership, however, migrants tend to lag behind Australians.

The children of refugee parents are outstanding in scholarship, leadership, social activities and sporting ability.

Problem cases are relatively few. In most instances, family background - particularly parents' failure to speak English in the home - is an important contributing factor.

Although interested in their children's progress, too few migrant parents take an active part in school affairs.

Australian youngsters, in their spontaneous acceptance of the newcomers, have set a high standard for adults to follow.

4.01 In any examination of the progress and conduct of migrant children in the Australian community, the field of education is necessarily important. This is not only because most of the children covered in the Committee's investigations are of school age, but because education, in the broadest sense, is vital to their future social and economic welfare.

4.02 As little was known on this subject, the Committee decided to undertake an Australia-wide survey. Without exception, education authorities agreed to co-operate. Following extensive discussions, it was decided to base the survey on a sample of 1,000 class teachers. There are four principal reasons for this decision -

- the information available enables a precisely drawn sample to be established;
- the class teacher is the person directly concerned with the school child;
- the large number of children on whom information can be obtained in this way: over 45,000, including 5,000 migrants;
- accurate results can be obtained from a sample of this kind.

4.03 There are three main groups involved in the field of education in Australia: the State Departments of Education, the Catholic education authorities and the non-Catholic private schools. Working with them, the Committee approached a representative cross-section of teachers approved by the education authorities. (Except in Queensland State Schools. Following discussions with the Committee, the Queensland Department of Education made a survey of its schools. Preliminary results from this have been used by the Committee in addition to its own survey.) Questionnaires were mailed in October, 1959. More than 90 per cent of the teachers responded. This exceeded all our expectations and is a tribute to the enthusiasm and interest of the teaching profession.

4.04 The close liaison between education authorities and the Committee and the voluntary co-operation of school teachers throughout the Commonwealth have been vital factors in the success of the survey.

Distribution of Migrant School Children

4.05 No distinction is made by schools between Australian and migrant children. Total enrolments in 1959 exceeded 2,200,000.

4.06 Of the classes surveyed, 20 per cent are reported to have no migrant children. As some children have so adapted themselves to Australian conditions as to lose their identity as migrants, this figure may be an overstatement.

"Those who have come out in early childhood settle down very quickly and, in many cases, it is difficult to distinguish these children (both British and non-

British) from the non-migrants."

(This and other quotations are from teachers' replies to the committee's surveys.)

"Until your questionnaire came along I did not realize that I had migrant children in the classroom. There is no differentiation between children, Australian-born or otherwise. The children themselves are one."

4.07 Australia's population growth is heavily concentrated in the cities; in the last inter-censal period (1947-1954) 72 per cent of the increase was in metropolitan areas. However, there are relatively more migrants in country districts. This is reflected in school enrolments of migrant children -

- 64 per cent are in metropolitan schools.
- 12 per cent are in large provincial centres.
- 24 per cent are in rural areas.

4.08 Most of the migrant children are fairly widely dispersed in the school community and in relatively small numbers -

- Of the classes with migrant children, nearly 60 per cent have fewer than 6, and 82 per cent have from 1 to 10.
- 59 per cent of the migrant children are in classes containing 1 to 10 migrants.

4.09 There is a substantial migrant element in less than five per cent of the classes surveyed.

Aim of the Survey

4.10 There are four main aspects -

- whether these children have adjusted themselves completely to Australian school life;
- their scholastic record;
- the extent to which they have displayed qualities of leadership;
- the extent to which they are participating in the social life of their schools.

4.11 There is a number of subsidiary but

important questions, including the extent to which lack of English handicaps non-British migrants, home environments, parents' attitude toward education and parents' participation in school social activities.

Adjustment to Australian school life

4.12 In 80 per cent of the classes surveyed, the teachers report that there are no migrant children who have not adjusted themselves satisfactorily to Australian school life. This is supported by evidence obtained from 97 schools by Mr. N. L. Haines, Inspector of Primary Schools of the South Australian Education Department, and Chairman of a Committee of Enquiry into Migrant Education.

4.13 Fewer than 10 per cent of the children are not yet accustomed to Australian school life. Of these, about three-quarters are recent arrivals; the remainder are experiencing some difficulty.

4.14 Teachers were asked to indicate the average time taken by the children to settle down in Australian schools -

- 37 per cent said less than one year.
- 41 per cent said from one to two years.
- 22 per cent said more than two years.

Where special English classes or similar arrangements are made, the period of adjustment for European migrants is short, in some instances less than six months. (See later section on Knowledge of English.)

4.15 Another obvious factor is inherent ability. The age and level at which migrants begin their schooling here also influence the time taken:

"It is noticeable that younger children are more readily absorbed into the school environment. Those entering in later years of the school course have big educational adjustments to make as well as social adjustments."

4.16 While giving due weight to these factors, teachers state that most of the children are quick to settle down. The following statements are

typical of many:

"Migrant children assimilate with the others very readily. In most activities, they are indistinguishable from Australian boys."

"In general, we have found that the migrant children adapt themselves very quickly to Australian conditions and settle down happily here."

"Personal experience with migrant boys over the past ten or twelve years has left a generally very satisfactory impression. I have found them readily adaptable to our school system and good mixers with the Australian boys."

4.17 The friendliness of most Australian children helps:

"The children are accepted by the rest of the class as equals in every respect."

"The Australians accept them naturally, and on equal terms."

"On the whole, Australian children have no antagonisms and welcome those who are willing to co-operate and join in school activities."

4.18 This attitude is a natural consequence of large-scale immigration over many years - these children have grown up with migrants - coupled with children's innate sense of equality.

"The rate of assimilation of migrant children into Australian school life seems to have speeded up in proportion to the increasing number of migrants arriving here. Migrant children are no longer 'rare birds' and are accepted as readily as their Australian fellows."

4.19 There are relatively few problem cases. Less than three per cent of migrant children are experiencing serious difficulty. Generally, these are of lower ability. It is this factor, rather than their migrant background, which is important. There are others, with ability, who have not settled down satisfactorily to Australian school life, but these appear few in number.

Scholarship

4.20 Migrants have an excellent record of scholarship. An analysis of the class records shows -

- in 51 per cent of the classes, their performance is better than that of Australian children;
- in 13 per cent of the classes, there is no difference between the two groups;
- in 36 per cent of the classes, they are lagging behind Australian children.

4.21 In all except congested inner city areas, the performance of migrants, as a group, is clearly above average. However, it is noticeably better in country areas and in established suburban areas than elsewhere. (The survey analysed the distribution of migrant schoolchildren between five areas: inner city, outer city and other city areas, large provincial centres and country [all other] areas.)

4.22 Similar views to the following have been expressed by a number of teachers:

"It has been most interesting for me to compare the different attitude and approach to work quite evident between the migrant children in the overcrowded industrial area where I taught last year, to the migrant students from this less industrial, more 'middle-class' area.

Here, the children are keenly interested, alert, intelligent and eager to provide good competition for their Australian classmates - and encouraged in their school work and learning by their parents.

The case was exactly the opposite in the inner industrial area school. The migrant students were given special tuition and encouragement in English and other subjects to stimulate an interest in school life. But the children remained disinterested and were anxious to leave school as soon as possible.

Of course there were, and are, exceptions in both cases and there are many factors responsible for the two different attitudes. But it is interesting to note that in each case these attitudes are a reflection of those of the Australian students in both schools."

4.23 The size of classes apparently affects migrants' scholastic record, which is best in medium size classes (30 to 39 pupils), not quite as good in large classes (40 or more pupils) and lowest in small classes (under 30 pupils). Migrants have a better record than Australians -

- in 47 per cent of the small classes;
- in 56 per cent of the medium size classes;
- in 51 per cent of the large classes.

The Committee hopes to obtain further information on this subject.

4.24 As the number of migrants in a class increases, their scholastic record is less outstanding. They have a better record than Australians -

- in 53 per cent of classes with 1 to 5 migrants;
- in 50 per cent of those with 6 to 10 migrants;
- in 48 per cent of those with more than 10 migrants.

A number of factors could contribute to this -

- there are large classes, with many new arrivals, close to migrant centres;
- in areas of heavy permanent migrant concentration, social and home environments are contributing factors.

4.25 In the last few years of secondary education, the proportion of classes reporting superior performance by migrants increases sharply. Teachers say the parents are keenly interested in their children's progress, and encourage them to study. If the children prove unwilling or unable to work satisfactorily, the parents are, in many cases, not prepared to keep them at school. Most of those remaining are therefore able and diligent.

4.26 Migrants have a better record than Australians -

- in 55 per cent of the 7-9 age group;
- in 46 per cent of the 10-14 age group;
- in 67 per cent of the 15 and over group.

The most difficult years are clearly between the ages of 10 and 14. They have a poorer record than Australians -

- in 33 per cent of the 7-9 age group;
- in 40 per cent of the 10-14 age group;
- in 24 per cent of the 15 and over age group.

4.27 Even in the "difficult" age group (10 to 14 years), migrants' scholastic achievements are, on balance, above average. A striking case is 21 years old Italian-born Sergio Giudici who, when he came to Australia eleven years ago, spoke no English. He is the Tasmanian Rhodes scholar for 1960.

4.28 Classes where migrants' scholarship falls below Australian levels also show fewer leadership achievements and less participation in social activities. In addition, the parents are less active in school affairs.

Leadership

4.29 Leadership qualities are important, not only for the personality of the child, but to the extent that they indicate acceptance by other children. It is a difficult quality to measure.

4.30 The Committee has obtained information covering the number of migrant and Australian children holding various school positions. In assessing this information, it is necessary to bear in mind that migrant children are generally a minority in their classes. The extent to which they hold positions of leadership reflects both ability and popularity with the teaching staff and with Australian children.

4.31 Further, a large number are comparatively new arrivals. Not only are they still adjusting themselves to Australian school life but, being newcomers, they are relatively unknown and therefore unlikely to be elected on popular vote.

"In selecting leaders, both Australian and migrant children generally elect the ones whom they can trust to do a good job, i.e. it is a matter of choice by merit, not by any form of prejudice as to whether an Australian or a migrant is elected. But it takes time

to win merit."

4.32 Of the teachers supplying information on this point, 41 per cent state that migrants have a better-than-average leadership record. Against this, nearly 54 per cent report a leadership record below that of similar groups of Australians. Only 5 per cent say there is no appreciable difference between Australian and migrant children.

4.33 Teachers stress that it is a matter of personality, rather than nationality, which determines whether or not migrant children fill positions of leadership. Typical comments were:

"Nationality makes no difference. We have had Chinese, Austrian, Estonian, German, Greek, &c. children as Prefects."

"Migrants are wholeheartedly accepted as leaders where they prove their worth."

"I do not think children show any discrimination. They seem to elect those best suited for the positions regardless of nationality."

4.34 Apart from the general question of personality, keenness and ability at sport appear to be major factors.

4.35 There is also an apparent relationship between leadership and the scholastic record of migrant children. Although, in all groups, migrant children are, on balance, below-average in leadership, the margin is very slight in the case of classes where the migrant children's scholastic record is above average.

4.36 The size of classes apparently has little bearing on their leadership record, but the number of migrants in the class has. Migrants have leadership achievements equal to or better than Australians -

- in 34 per cent of the classes with one to five migrants;
- in 62 per cent of the classes with six to ten migrants;
- in 63 per cent of the classes with more than

ten migrants.

Increased voting power does not seem to be the answer. In most classes, the migrant children are in the minority. In addition, teachers state that there is no discrimination either by Australians or migrants in elections.

Participation in Social Activities

4.37 There is little difference between most migrant and Australian children in school social activities -

- in 3 per cent of the classes, migrants are more active socially than Australians;
- in 75 per cent of the classes, there is no difference;
- in 22 per cent of the classes, they are less active.

4.38 The classes where migrant children have not yet settled down to Australian school life (paragraph 4.13) appear to account for many of the cases where migrants are less active in the social life of the school than their Australian class mates. However, some parents have reservations about permitting their children to take part:

"As the migrant children grow accustomed to our ways they are as anxious as Australian born children to join in school activities. The younger children are often prevented by their parents from joining in school sports, picnics, annual ball or concert."

"Parents and children attend functions as a family, and often older children are not permitted to attend if even very young sisters and brothers cannot be present."

"When any function such as a dance was held, few attended. However, when we ran concerts the response was excellent."

4.39 In the older age groups, particularly from about 15 onwards, there is very little difference between migrant and Australian children.

4.40 It is also noticeable that relatively fewer

cases of below-average participation in social activities are reported in outer city areas, large provincial centres and, in particular, country areas, than in older and middle-class metropolitan areas.

4.41 The size of classes does not seem to be an important factor. However, as the number of migrants in a class increases, their participation in school social functions lessens. Teachers say that there is no difference between migrants and Australians -

- in 80 per cent of the classes with 1-5 migrants;
- in 73 per cent of the classes with 6-10 migrants;
- in 63 per cent of the classes with more than ten migrants.

They have not commented on this, and the Committee has not established the reasons for the trend.

Parents' participation in school activities

4.42 Most migrant parents take too little part in school activities -

- 6 per cent of teachers say they are more active in school affairs than Australian parents;
- 32 per cent say there is no difference;
- 62 per cent say they are less active than Australian parents.

Many teachers have commented on this:

"Migrants take very little part in the social life of the school. They do not assist to any great extent in raising money for school amenities."

"None of the parents of my children attend school functions."

"Parents seem to consider they are not welcome at school functions. If they attend, they try to keep in the background."

"Migrant parents are rarely seen at school functions."

4.43 The position varies in different areas. In

inner city areas and country districts, they are more active in school affairs than elsewhere. They are least active in large provincial centres.

4.44 Teachers have suggested many reasons for the parents' apparent apathy.

"Mothers, especially, find the language too great a barrier."

"In many cases, both parents are working. This, plus language difficulty, prevents them joining in school functions."

"Some attend, but others are poorer, and have no way of attending."

"Many parents seem reluctant to participate, due to shyness, but are willing workers when encouraged to join school functions."

"Mothers' Club meetings are held during the daytime. Migrant mothers either work or have very young children."

The reasons most frequently suggested are -

- diffidence and shyness;
- lack of knowledge of English;
- unfamiliarity with Australian pattern of parent-participation in school affairs;
- wives traditionally have little social life outside the home;
- working wives and young families;
- economic factors - finance, lack of transport, particularly in newer suburbs, and preoccupation with establishing new homes.

4.46 Parents are relatively less active in school affairs than their children. In cases where there is no marked difference between the activities of migrant and Australian children, nearly 60 per cent of the migrant parents take less part in school activities than Australian parents. This applies to families who have been here for some time as well as to new arrivals, but there is a tendency for parents to take an increased interest in school affairs after they have settled down in Australia.

4.47 European parents show a tendency to attend Education Week functions and school sports rather than Parents' and Citizens' meetings where they might be expected to take part in discussions. Some teachers say that, even where the parents are reluctant to participate in school activities, they display a keen interest in their children's progress.

"Parents - mothers in particular - decline invitations to join clubs or social activities but take keen interest in their children's work."

"Parents, where possible, visit school during Education Week, and are interested in the progress of their children."

4.48 The extent of parents' participation in school activities reflects, fairly closely, their assimilation in the community, and seems to be increasing:

"The attendance at school functions and activities of parents of migrant children increases year by year."

Knowledge Of English

A. Children

4.49 Of the children from non-English speaking countries -

- 43 per cent have a good knowledge of both written and spoken English;
- 33 per cent have a satisfactory knowledge of both written and spoken English;
- 24 per cent have a poor knowledge of either written or spoken English, or both.

4.50 The importance attached to English by teachers varies -

- 38 per cent say it is the most important single factor;
- 30 per cent consider it very important;
- 32 per cent regard it either as one of several important factors, or not very important.

Those with a large number of migrants in their classes, and those who consider migrants take

some time to settle down to Australian school life, place great stress on English.

4.51 The scholastic achievements of migrants in their classes seem to influence teacher's views. Those whose migrant students are doing well are inclined to discount the importance of English.

4.52 Education authorities are doing considerable work in developing methods of teaching migrant children English. At one stage, separate classes, covering all subjects, were formed where the number of migrants justified it. This approach is said to have failed because -

- it slowed down integration of migrants with the rest of the school;
- it was difficult to provide satisfactorily for the wide range of mental ages;
- the strain on teachers was too great.

4.53 More recently, special classes have been formed in some schools to provide intensive training in English to enable the children to take their place in their normal classes as soon as possible. One headmaster states that, with this method, children who arrive speaking no English can take up normal schooling after about six months:

"Non-British children unable to speak English are given special instruction for two periods of 1 1/2 hours each daily during the first three months after their arrival. Thereafter they attend for one daily period of 1 1/2 hours. They are grouped according to age and scholarship attained at home (regardless of nationality) and all pupils are taught to regard this class as an adjunct to their own grade and not a segregated unit."

This teacher states:

"Concentrated English lessons administered by a competent teacher with planned aids have worked wonders in some cases. In all instances very pleasing progress was shown. Late admissions to the class alone now need a continuation of the intensive teaching. The class is a focal point in the assimilation of these children. Aids should be freely available."

4.54 Where the number of migrants is too few to warrant special classes, teachers sometimes find it difficult to devote as much time as they would wish, to personal tuition. To meet this situation, special assignments are being prepared by some Education Departments. Teachers have requested this:

"Some previous teaching in English is vital before placement in ordinary classes. Specially graded material for children of higher ages - eleven years to fourteen years interest level - should be distributed to schools from some central body."

4.55 Conflicting views have been expressed. Some teachers consider that any special classes tend to set migrant children apart from Australians, and hinder mutual acceptance. Instead, they favour "pairing" the new arrival with a child of the same nationality who has learned English, or with an Australian.

4.56 While the magnitude of the problem should not be overstressed, the difficulties faced by some of these children - and their teachers - cannot be overlooked. Contributing factors mentioned by teachers are -

- the innate ability of the children concerned;
- home and social environment, particularly non-English-speaking homes;
- the age at which the children begin their Australian schooling.

4.57 The following comments are typical of teachers' views: -

"Children who arrive under Grade 3 learn the language and take their place in the grade fairly quickly. Children coming into Grades 4, 5 or 6 with no English usually take six months (and this is agreed amongst other teachers) before they begin to participate consistently, regularly and with understanding."

"If the children can get special help in the early stages and are not segregated in a special class they will usually make good progress."

4.58 The Committee has attempted to assess the

extent of the problem. The basic points are -

- 24 per cent of the European children have a poor knowledge of English;
- 10 per cent have not adjusted themselves satisfactorily to Australian school life. These include (paragraph 4.13):
 - new arrivals (about 7 per cent),
 - "problem" cases (about 3 per cent);
- 14 per cent, therefore, although weak in English, appear to be on a similar footing to those Australian children whose progress in English is below average.

4.59 Difficulty with English is, of course, an inevitable feature in the case of European migrants, but, for the most part, it appears to be relatively short-lived. Teachers have shown themselves able to help most of the children reach satisfactory standards fairly quickly. The Committee feels that their work and success in this field deserve fuller appreciation by the community generally.

B. Parents

4.60 European parents, in addition to speaking their native tongue, should use English in the home. This is most desirable in cases where the children have not settled down to Australian school life. We recognize that the community has much to gain if migrants, and their children, retain as much as possible of the tradition, culture and language of their homeland. For these reasons, bilingual families are desirable.

4.61 Teachers point out that children are quick to adapt themselves to Australian school life when at least one parent has a reasonable knowledge of English and where parents persevere with English. On the other hand, where English is not spoken in the home, the child is handicapped.

"The language question with the parents, especially the mothers, appears to be one of the biggest contributing factors to any differentiating between migrant and Australian born children we can and must do more for the parents of these children."

"Once the language barrier has been broken down migrants can mix and be one with Australians. Until then they seem to keep fairly aloof from each other."

For this reason, the Committee is disturbed because some parents insist that their native language only be spoken in the home.

4.62 It has not been possible to establish the extent of this problem. However, it is a serious matter for many of the children concerned, both in their progress at school and their participation in social activities. Australians must accept some measure of responsibility for this:

"We can, and must, do more for the parents of these children. If English were spoken in the home, it would make a very great difference to the all-round parity of these children."

Migrants tend to wait for Australians to make the first move:

"It is not polite to go visiting unless asked," whereas Australians are less formal, and take it for granted that friends and neighbours will call in. Increased social contacts for these families with Australians would considerably aid the steps taken by the Commonwealth Government to provide free classes and would encourage them to learn English.

4.63 Some migrant parents say that, if they are not working in a predominantly Australian group, it is difficult for them to learn English satisfactorily. While there are individual problems of this kind, the normal working life of the migrant husband ensures that in most cases he has a reasonable opportunity to learn English on the job, as well as in the special classes available to migrants. Much the same applies in the case of most working wives. The non-working European wives have least opportunity of learning English:

"Parents speak their own language at home because the mothers do not understand English."

"It seems fairly apparent that the adults, particularly

the women, do not make overmuch effort to speak English at home."

"Where possible the housewives (mothers) should be strongly urged to attend English classes. Children cannot assimilate if they are forbidden to use English in the home because the mothers and grandmothers do not understand it."

4.64 There are limits to what the Commonwealth Government can do in this field. Facilities are provided, and migrants are encouraged to use them. Compulsion is not advisable. Where possible, help at the personal level, by Australian parents whose children are growing up with migrant youngsters, is desirable. This is in no way inconsistent with the tolerance and understanding which the community has maintained towards newcomers, and which has made large-scale immigration possible and successful.

Comparative Progress

4.65 Some migrant children are in classes one or two below Australians of the same age. There are several possible reasons for this -

- some of the children are newcomers who have not yet adjusted themselves to Australian school life;
- some are handicapped because they lack sufficient English;
- different curricula and interruptions to schooling.

4.66 On the other hand, migrants, as a group, have an excellent scholastic record. Some teachers state that, while migrants are among their best pupils, some are a year older than most of the class. The Committee has not been able to establish how general this is but, in any event, feels that scholastic achievement is the more important factor.

4.67 There is some retardation in the case of most newcomers, but generally this is of short duration. It tends to be longer in the case of older children, particularly those who lack ability. This sometimes leads to trouble:

"They are older than the other children in the grade and usually much stronger. This leads to a considerable amount of social maladjustment."

However, the problem tends to become acute only where, in addition to the child's lack of ability, the family background is unfavourable.

National Groups

4.68 The existence of national groups in schools hinders the children's integration in the school community and their progress. Some teachers suggest that the existence of these groups can help newcomers during their early period of adjustment, but the balance of opinion is that they are prejudicial to the children's welfare.

4.69 Typical comments are:

"Migrant children are well liked but they tend to group with other migrants and in some ways to exclude themselves from social contact with other children."

"There is a tendency for the migrants to set up language groups but on the other hand it is very helpful for the newcomer to be helped over the first few days by someone who speaks the same language."

4.70 To some extent, the tendency to form national groups seems to result from, as well as to perpetuate, language difficulties:

"Migrant children with good academic ability tend to mix extremely well with their Australian born associates in all fields whereas those who cannot cope with their school work often take refuge in national groups."

4.71 Children who have adjusted themselves to Australian school life, are able substantially to assist newcomers of the same nationality:

"Where other children of the same nationality have been assimilated, it is much easier to break through the shyness and the child learns quicker to express her own needs herself because of urging on by her compatriots."

4.72 The existence of national groups does not appear to be a major problem. However, to the extent that they are prejudicial to the welfare of the children concerned, action is needed either to counteract this tendency or turn it into more desirable channels. Some teachers actively encourage the children to take part in a wide range of outside activities. They stress that this is particularly important for the older children, who face more difficulties and are more likely to form national groups within the school.

Housing

4.73 Few teachers mention housing as a factor affecting school progress, but they are comparing migrant and Australian children from the same area with, for the most part, similar housing standards.

4.74 Some migrant families move frequently during their early years in Australia. This results in broken schooling and makes it more difficult for the children. The record of migrants generally suggests either that this problem is confined to relatively few, or that it has been overcome.

4.75 Teachers state that the children of families who have been in hostels for a long time generally have poor school records. They say the parents concerned are unambitious and uninterested in their children's welfare.

Sport

4.76 Integration in a school community is helped considerably by ability or enthusiasm in sport. For the most part, migrant children are taking their place in school sporting activities:

"It was very pleasing to note the number of successful migrants at a recent Sports Meeting. The applause for these contestants was possibly just a little more pronounced than for Australians."

4.77 The importance of participation in sport is indicated by the following comment, representative of many:

"In our district where there is a junior soccer and sports association, migrant and Australian children have been brought very close together since its formation. Many migrant boys who were not thoroughly assimilated have made excellent progress."

Refugees

4.78 It was the Committee's intention not to draw any comparisons between nationalities or creeds. However, some of the features emerging are so significant, as to warrant waiving this decision in the case of refugees.

4.79 Since World War II, Australia has played a leading part in accepting refugees. The decision to bring large numbers of these people to Australia was based on humanitarian grounds and was accepted as such by the Australian community.

4.80 One feature which has emerged clearly is the progress being made by the children of these refugees. In scholarship, leadership, social activities and sporting ability, they have an outstanding record. The Committee did not deliberately seek this information. It was volunteered by teachers throughout the Commonwealth.

4.81 Commenting on their exceptional ability and energy, teachers suggest that refugees, as a group, include many of the best of their nations - in terms of ability, enterprise and citizenship - and their family life is such that the children receive every possible encouragement. As one put it, "this would explain, through hereditary and environment, the superiority of their children. The best may have been forced out of some countries." Australia's experience is not, of course, unique. There are many historical parallels.

4.82 Teachers have made it plain that the interest, encouragement and assistance of their parents has been one of the major factors underlying their success.

4.83 Australia is fortunate in having these

children who will, as they leave school, contribute substantially to the nation's future progress and development.

Section 5 - Young Workers

There seem few problems in this field.

Young migrant workers are well-regarded by employers, unions and apprenticeship and other bodies.

English is rarely a problem. Most of the European youngsters entering employment on arrival here learn more quickly, aided by Australian work-mates, than older migrants.

There is little evidence of national groups.

Young migrants working for Australian - native-born and naturalized - employers appear to settle down more easily than those working for recently arrived migrants.

Family life is important. Those without family ties in Australia are sometimes "problem" cases.

The Committee hopes to obtain further information concerning the types of jobs migrant youngsters are entering, but the position appears satisfactory.

5.01 The young migrant entering employment is at the threshold of the social and economic life of our community. Some have been prepared for this by Australian school training. Others are newcomers, whose first experience of life here is on the job.

5.02 Employers' and trade associations - including the Associated Chambers of Commerce, the Associated Chambers of Manufactures, the Australian Council of Employers' Federations, and Retail Traders' Associations - together with the Australian Council of Trade Unions and its affiliated unions, apprenticeship authorities throughout Australia and the Department of Labour and National Service have co-operated with the Committee in its investigations. As no distinction is made between migrant and

Australian youngsters, very little statistical data has been available. This Section is therefore based on the views and judgments expressed to the Committee; the substantial unanimity of these views has made the task easier.

5.03 Employers, unions and Government officials all consider that migrant youngsters settle down in employment quickly and well. There are isolated exceptions, but these seem to result from personality differences. Employers state:

"The behaviour, attitude towards work and general ability of the young migrant appears in all cases to compare very favourably with his Australian counterpart."

They add:

"There is absolutely no discrimination shown by Australian workers."

Similar comments have been received from both city and country areas. One company wrote:

"This Company has been pleased to employ a number of young migrants in various towns throughout the Commonwealth. In nearly every case Managers have reported very favourably on their industry, and aptitude for Retailing.

"They have mixed easily, and young Australian people have been happy to work with them. Their knowledge of one or more foreign languages has been of great assistance in those centres where a number of New Australians have settled."

5.04 Youngsters seem to adjust themselves more easily than older migrants. Employers comment that:

"There is no problem at all of acceptance and absorption among junior migrants. Their attitude to their job is good and mostly they are hard working and industrious. Although this survey has to do with children only, it may be appropriate to make a few remarks on adult European migrants in our experience. Most of them work excellently and greatly value their jobs. They know that working

conditions are good... labour turnover is small by comparison. Integration is not so good as with children, they tend to mix less with Australians and move amongst those of their own kind. Some are slightly withdrawn, probably due to a feeling that they have not been able to enter completely into Australian life, therefore they tend to remain in national groups. Where facility with English permits it we regard applicants on the same basis as Australians, namely their ability to do the task."

"The language difficulty is a common problem to both groups, but because of his readier willingness to mix with other employees, the junior worker tends to overcome this barrier with greater ease."

The implication that older migrants find some difficulty in settling down requires investigation. Although it lies beyond our terms of reference, we wish to draw attention to this.

5.05 Unions confirm the harmonious relations between young migrants and their work-mates:

"In the main, they get on well with their fellow workers."

Apprenticeship authorities also endorse this view:

"No instance of ill-feeling between apprentices attributable to nationality, has been brought to my notice. Reports of Apprenticeship Supervisors and Technical Schools also indicate that they work together harmoniously in employment and at school."

5.06 Staff training programmes and company social activities help young migrants. On these points, one large company writes:

"We have been notably successful in bringing these young people into the various aspects of the Store's life. They are members of our training groups and have been just as successful in obtaining certificates and diplomas as Australian-born children."

and

"With regard to migrant children's absorption into

Store activities we have had two Greeks, an Italian and two Germans who have taken an active part in our Teenage Club, some actually holding office.

They have participated in talent quests and concerts with as much interest and enthusiasm as our Australian members. We have two Dutch girls in our choir. A Greek boy is captain of our men's basketball team and Club President. A Dutch boy plays in the team."

5.07 It has been suggested that youngsters whose families are in Australia settle down better than those who come here alone. There have been instances of difficulty with "solitary" youngsters. Employers say:

"There would seem to be a distinction between child migrants whose families are in Australia and those who emigrated on their own... One large company employing quite a number... reports that they are not as stable as other classes of migrants, and that a much larger percentage of them have not settled in to make good workers and good citizens."

This is in line with the opinions expressed by teachers and others on the importance of family life in aiding children to adjust themselves to life in Australia.

5.08 Lack of English does not seem to be a serious factor. A union sums up the situation in these words:

"Migrant youths appear to have little difficulty in obtaining a working knowledge of the English language, and are generally anxious to improve their education in this respect."

An employer, while agreeing, adds a note of caution:

"Our firm's migrant employees have adopted the Australian way of life and are fitting into the community excellently.

Broadly, the only migrants who will not be assimilated are those who have not learnt to speak English fluently, and accordingly mainly associated with their fellow migrants."

Australian youngsters can, and do, help. An apprenticeship authority writes:

"In some cases, their English is limited... but I have found that, in the main, this is only an obstacle for a very short period. They usually manage, once they mix with Australian lads, to learn English quickly."

5.09 Employers generally appear to have a high regard for young migrant workers. This was not always so. Some were, for a time, reluctant or unwilling to employ them. One large retail organization states frankly:

"For some few years, we were reluctant to depart from our policy of employing only Australians because we were not in a position to judge the reaction of our customers... As time went on, we changed our policy.

We found migrants to be excellent workers... In most of our branches today, will be found either migrants or the Australian-born children of migrants."

This company now has a number of migrant executives, and has selected migrant youngsters to undergo special training.

5.10 From the inception of the immigration programme, trade unions have welcomed migrants as members. They do not differentiate between Australian and migrant youngsters but, recognizing the special needs of migrants, some have appointed staff to work with them. Union officials have a good opinion of migrant youngsters.

5.11 The favourable attitude of employers, unions and work-mates does not necessarily mean that migrants are entering the jobs most suitable for them. The Committee hopes to investigate this aspect closely. There are no indications, however, of major problems in this field. Many migrant youngsters have entered apprenticeships, and generally they and their parents appear to realize the need for training.

5.12 Apprenticeship authorities are satisfied with the conduct and progress of migrant

youngsters:

"As Chairman of the various Apprenticeship Councils, I can say that very few complaints from employers regarding migrant apprentices have been submitted to Apprenticeship Councils, and the implication is that migrant apprentices are apparently adapting themselves satisfactorily to Australian working conditions."

"They are usually good workers and good College attenders."

"Their integration into the Australian way of life is proceeding satisfactorily and, generally, the apprentices have proved satisfactory."

"They cause little, if any, trouble in respect of attendance at technical classes... We cannot recall having received a single firm complaint from an employer concerning a migrant apprentice's ability, lack of initiative, or endeavour."

5.13 Unions consider these youngsters able and diligent:

"The migrant apprentices appear to realize that proper attention to their training will give them greater opportunities after the completion of the apprenticeship."

The Unions also say that there is no noticeable difference between the behaviour of migrants and Australians, that they try hard to learn English, and do so quickly. Employers express similar views.

5.14 Migrants seem to win their fair share of "Outstanding Apprentice of the Year" and similar awards. Thus, of 66 awards made in the past two years in one State, 10 were to migrants. The proportion - 15 per cent - is in keeping with the proportion of migrants in the juvenile work force and supports the views of apprenticeship bodies, employers and unions.

5.15 Young migrants seeking to resume, in Australia, apprenticeships commenced overseas, are a special case. Provision is made to meet this situation. The Committee has, as yet,

insufficient evidence to determine the extent to which difficulties may arise. The Commonwealth Employment Service reports:

"(They) can frequently be placed in resumed apprenticeships provided that they achieve a sufficient standard of English to attend technical schools and produce documentary evidence of a kind which can convince a potential employer as to the adequacy of their earlier training."

5.16 The following comment by one large company regarding the attitude of migrants towards skilled employment parallels the views of some teachers (paragraph 4.22).

"About half the young migrants employed by this organization are in our Workrooms. The Personnel Officer informs us that... there are two distinct groups, children of tradesmen who are anxious for their children to be taught a trade, as they themselves have been, and children of unskilled people, who take any form of job available. The children of the former group have notably better attitudes and do a much better job than those of the other group... There is no doubt about their being perfectly acceptable to Australian workers."

Section 6 - Social Aspects

A fuller social life, combined with parental guidance, provides the soundest possible basis for integration and successful citizenship.

There are many organizations, open without discrimination to migrants and Australians alike, which can assist them. But too few migrants are members. The others, and their parents, need more active encouragement to join.

Some migrant families appear to concentrate overmuch on the material aspects of life. However understandable this may be they, and their children, would gain much from more active participation in community affairs.

6.01 Among other matters, the Committee has been asked to report on the cultural, sporting and social activities of migrant children, and their general participation in the life of the community. Information has been obtained from a representative cross-section of the many organizations catering for children. The views of others, which it has not been possible to approach during these initial investigations, would also be welcomed.

6.02 The number of organizations involved, their diversity of interests, and the fact that no discrimination is made by them between migrant and Australian children, have made this a difficult field of enquiry.

6.03 It seems clear that migrant children are not participating in the social life of the community to the same extent as Australians. Few of the organizations able to supply the information report a substantial migrant membership.

6.04 Relations between migrant and Australian club members are generally good, and there is little evidence of friction or racial segregation. Personality is the determining factor:

"Integration is not a problem... Most migrants are

hard to distinguish from native-born."

"At no time have I observed any discrimination."

"It is generally thought in the Clubs concerned that no matter from what part of the world these lads have come, they still tend to show the same enthusiasm as the Australian youths, but this, however, depends on the individual."

"Their behaviour is good, they mix well, and are keen to learn."

"The large majority are readily accepted... No discrimination is made."

Many have outstanding leadership records.

6.05 Too few, however, are members. This may reflect the inevitable difficulties of settling in a new country, and possibly overemphasis on material aspects. The Committee has some evidence of this. However, there are other factors. Newcomers are not quite on the same footing as Australian children. They are pre-occupied with other matters and their initial lack of interest may be greater. Because of their own problems, many organizations are not actively seeking new members. This may explain small migrant memberships.

6.06 These children need encouragement to join in community activities. Excellent work is being done by some, an example which could be followed by others -

- one is working on a nation-wide "migrant children" project;
- another, with the help of foreign-language newspapers, is enrolling migrants;
- members of one club have invited migrant children to stay with them in their homes during school holidays;
- children at migrant centres have been entertained, and encouraged to join clubs;
- children of twelve nationalities at an orphanage have been "adopted" by Australian youngsters;
- special clubs have been organized at some hostels;

- new pupils and their parents are invited to join social activities outside the school;
- club members participate in naturalization ceremonies;
- migrants of eligible age in one State are invited to join the club;
- Good Neighbour Councils are used to encourage migrants to join;
- one body is undertaking a nationwide campaign to encourage migrants to join in their activities

6.07 The Committee recognizes that some organizations lack the resources to cope with any substantial increase in membership. The situation faced by these is indicated by the following:

"Long waiting lists in most of our branches prevent more children from joining."

"Our time is very fully occupied with the existing membership. No effort has been made for some time to recruit members from any source."

However, migrants can provide leaders, as well as members. One organization points out:

"About 8 per cent of our leaders are migrants, and they have been of great assistance."

If approached, many more migrants would doubtless be prepared to work with these organizations in various ways. So far as the Committee is aware few, if any, organizations are actively seeking migrants as leaders.

6.08 The attitude of migrant parents is also important. It seems that, either from inability or ignorance, many have not seriously considered encouraging their children to join the various associations and organizations where they would mix with Australian youngsters. Whilst establishing themselves, some are reluctant or unable to undertake the additional financial obligations involved in these activities. Others, although able to do so, are unaware either of the existence of the organizations, or the advantages of membership.

6.09 Even where there are obvious practical advantages, the parents seem reluctant to take the initiative. The following comment is significant:

"Most of the parents want their children to join after an approach has been made to them."

6.10 Closer contact between club officers and parents helps:

"Visits... to the homes of migrant members who join voluntarily does much to engender an atmosphere of friendliness, and of confidence in the sincerity of the Australian friends. (This)... leads other migrant children to join the clubs, and their parents to play their part on the adult advisory committees."

For similar reasons, the position in country areas appears to be good:

"In country areas, contacts are easier, as migrant families join in community activities, and the children naturally join in with what Australian children do."

6.11 Inevitably, there are difficulties, principally because of diffidence, language problems, and different patterns of social behaviour. The views of these organizations are similar to the opinions expressed by school teachers:

"The language barrier makes it difficult... to explain fully to the parents the advantages their children could derive from membership. When this difficulty has been overcome, almost all migrants are warmly friendly people, who are anxious that their children gain the fullest benefit."

"The parents, particularly the mothers, take little or no part in club activities, and are very much inclined to be protective or unduly restrictive where their children's leisure is concerned."

A number of organizations, commenting on this, offered explanations similar to the following:

"This is mostly due to language difficulty; organized leisure activities is something new to them, and they

have little social life, their interests are centred in the home."

6.12 In some instances, parents are reluctant to have their children participate in activities outside the home:

"A number of parents do not like their children attending social activities in mixed clubs unless the parents are also present. However, this attitude appears less common as the parents become accustomed to Australian conditions."

Some migrant groups do not normally allow daughters the same degree of social freedom as Australian families. While this is reflected in a lower incidence of delinquency, it also deprives the children of substantial social benefits.

6.13 The decision must rest with the parents; but the Committee believes that social life, combined with parental guidance provides the soundest possible basis for successful citizenship, without weakening family relationships.

Section 7 - Delinquency

All children face the problem of adjustment to the life of the community in which they live. Some of those who fail, or falter, become delinquents.

Inevitably, migrant children face more problems than most, but the rate of delinquency amongst migrants is, on the evidence before us, the same as or lower than for children generally.

Aided by close family relationships, most take up successfully the challenge of life in a new country.

7.01 World-wide attention is being given to the problem of juvenile delinquency. The subject has also received considerable publicity in Australia. The Committee has studied the reports of recent enquiries. (Notably the Committee on Youth Problems in Queensland [1959] and the Juvenile Delinquency Advisory Committee in Victoria [1956]. The Committee has also had the privilege of studying a report by Mr. Justice Barry on "Certain Aspects of Juvenile Delinquency in Australia" prepared for the Second Congress on Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders [United Nations] to be held in 1960.)

7.02 Although juvenile delinquency should not be overstressed, its effect on the community, as well as on the individual, is important. It is common experience in many countries that a large proportion of crime is committed by juveniles.

7.03 There is no single cause nor is delinquency confined to any one section of society. There is, however, a fairly common pattern of unsatisfactory family relationships, and failure to adapt to the life of the community. A sense of security and family affection are the most efficient preventives. Even in these circumstances, the desire of children to conform to the accepted pattern of behaviour of the group can lead to delinquency.

7.04 Authorities suggest a close relationship between juvenile delinquency and mental illness amongst children. Australia's immigration selection procedures thus provide a safeguard against juvenile delinquency in the case of migrant children.

7.05 It has been suggested that the special problems which migrant families face in settling down in a new country, could lead to delinquency amongst the children. However, "families with problems" do not necessarily lead to "problem families."

7.06 It is not possible to arrive at firm conclusions by an examination of recorded delinquency:

"In the ordinary course of administration, all States compile some statistics and gather some information concerning criminal and sociological matters, but their systems are not identical and suffer in any event from the defects that always limit the usefulness of criminal statistics. The Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics publishes valuable material relating to public justice, and to demographic, educational and economic matters, but with criminological subjects the ambit of its operations is restricted by a variety of factors, such as absence of uniformity in the statistical and classification methods of the States and some differences in legal terminology. As a result, a notoriously difficult task is made even harder, and the scantiness of accessible materials greatly increases the obstacles in the way of presenting verified conclusions." (Mr. Justice Barry, "Prostitution: Report from Australia". British Journal of Delinquency, Vol IX, No. III.)

Recorded delinquency rates vary so widely that it is not possible to arrive at reliable overall figures. There is, therefore, no firm basis against which to measure delinquency among migrant and first generation children.

7.07 We had hoped to overcome this problem by making detailed State by State comparisons of juvenile delinquency among migrant and Australian youngsters. Despite the efforts of police and child welfare authorities, who

devoted considerable time to analysing their records, the results were inconclusive -

- it was difficult to determine reliable juvenile population figures, by States, for migrant and Australian-born children.
- statistics of juvenile delinquency among migrants, extracted from police and child welfare records, were so low in some States that we were doubtful whether all cases involving migrants had been identified as such.

Further evidence was therefore sought. Following extensive discussions with Police Commissioners and, in addition, Child Welfare and other authorities, a special survey of juvenile delinquency among migrants was undertaken on the Committee's behalf by police throughout Australia. (Paragraph 7.09.)

7.08 Police and other authorities consider that there is no particular problem so far as migrants generally are concerned:

"Young migrants do not present any special problem to my Department in the matter of their general behaviour. There is no evidence to suggest either a notable increase in the overall incidence of delinquency, measured against the total juvenile population, or any marked divergence between Australian-born and migrant children as a whole. I have come to these conclusions after consultations with those of my officers most closely concerned with juveniles, and after examining the records held in my Department."

"It is the considered opinion of both myself and officers of this department, that the behaviour of migrant children and local children conform to a standard pattern, with little or no distinction between them."

"It is apparent that, generally speaking, migrant children are well-behaved and, in fact, as indicated in the summary of committals to Institutions, the percentage of children of that group committed to Institutions during the period from 1st July, 1957 to 30th June, 1958, is much lower than their percentage of the total population."

"There is a general consensus of opinion that migrant children give very little trouble to the Police and that the percentage of such children appearing in Juvenile Courts is very small."

"From a perusal of the data, it would appear that the conduct generally of migrant children compares most favourably with that of non-migrant children."

The results of the Committee's special survey confirm these views.

7.09 Working from a representative cross-section of all migrant children who have arrived in Australia during the past thirteen years, police have provided the Committee with detailed statistics concerning delinquency amongst juvenile migrants -

- Charges laid average one a year for every 102 migrants. Australia-wide figures for all juveniles are not available for comparison (7.06). Victorian experience, however, is a useful guide:
 - in addition to a substantial metropolitan population (delinquency occurs mainly in cities), Victoria has large provincial centres, numerous country towns, and a variety of rural settlements, ranging from large farms to closely-settled irrigation centres;
 - there is a large migrant element in Victoria;
 - from information made available to the Committee, it appears that Victorian experience of juvenile delinquency is "average" rather than extreme;

The Victorian figures (Report of the Juvenile Delinquency Advisory Committee show an overall average of one charge annually for every 80 youngsters (Australian and migrant combined);

- charges mainly concern offences against property and against public order;
- relatively few migrant children are involved; but of these, the number charged who have two or more convictions seems to be high.

The committee hopes to continue these investigations. The evidence available however,

suggests -

- delinquency amongst migrants tends to be lower than for juveniles generally;
- a small minority of children, each with several convictions, is responsible for much of the delinquency amongst migrants.

7.10 It has been suggested, on the basis of American experience, that Australia will face a serious delinquency problem because of migration. The Committee does not agree, and is supported by the considered opinions of experienced police and welfare officers.

7.11 There seems little reason to accept American experience as a precedent -

- there are substantial differences between Australia's immigration programme and American immigration at its peak. We refer particularly to:
 - the planning of Australia's immigration programme. Annual targets take into account:
 - economic conditions,
 - the types of workers for which there are good employment prospects,
 - worker-dependent ratios,
 - the balance of the sexes,
 - the balance between migrant intakes from various countries

- migrant screening and selection techniques to ensure that, in the interests of the community and the would-be migrant, only those likely to settle down successfully are selected.

- racial concentrations in Australian metropolitan areas - delinquency is primarily a city problem - are relatively smaller than in America;
- there is no element in Australia's migrant intake remotely comparable to the inflow of backward groups into New York;
- Australia does not have the racial problems

faced by America with polyglot, high-population areas with depressed conditions.

7.12 It is argued also that migrant children face a clash of two cultures. Against this, however, should be set advantages of strong family ties - perhaps the greatest single factor preventing delinquency. The relationship between home environment and delinquency has caused the Committee serious concern. Unless young migrants' home lives are satisfactory, there are grave dangers of anti-social behaviour patterns emerging. In the case of youngsters whose parents do not speak English in the home, their school progress seems likely to be retarded. (4.68.) This encourages the formation of national groups and tends to result in "difficult" children. Children from homes such as these usually have very close family ties, which lessen the likelihood of delinquency. However, the full advantage of this is not realized if the child's integration in the life of the community outside the home, whether at school or work, is handicapped by the parents' attitude:

"There seems to be no friction where there is reciprocity in learning languages. Parents learning English, children learning the mother tongue of the parents, and no strict rulings as to when the languages are to be spoken. However in many families there is not this reciprocity, parents refuse to learn English and they rigidly insist on the mother tongue being spoken in the home. This means that the children are living within two separate cultures. One the home, two, everything outside the home. Some children manage this situation exceedingly well, but many cannot adapt to both spheres, consequently they feel drawn towards one and then the other which creates all the tensions arising from divided loyalties."

7.13 Another feature of home environment which concerns the Committee is the attitude of some of the long-term residents in hostels. Police and teachers alike stress that an unduly high proportion of children from families who have lived for some time in hostels are actual or potential delinquents. In most cases parental guidance, and in some instances parental affection, is lacking. Many of the parents

concerned are, according to statements made to members of the Committee, apathetic and uninterested in the welfare of their children. The following is typical of these views:

"These migrants seem content to remain in the hostel... the migrants who are keen to improve themselves generally leave the hostel and the school within a few months. Migrants who are building their own homes are much more stable."

Another teacher states:

"Interest in the school has been shown by only one migrant family connected with the class. This family has built its own home and doubtless feels roots have been put down in the community. Such is not the case with the people living at the hostel. Another point concerning the hostel is that children living there tend to keep very close together."

This segregation is apparently voluntary:

"Acceptance of the children by their Australian counterparts is good."

7.14 The Committee feels strongly that, in the interests of their families, migrants should not remain in hostels for long periods of time. However, as these parents seem less interested in their families than the majority of migrants, it is doubtful whether a change of residence would eliminate the problem. It appears likely that family life, rather than hostel residence, is the major contributing factor.

7.15 In fairness to migrants and to hostel dwellers generally, the Committee stresses that its comments relate to a small minority. However, the danger to the community of anti-social behaviour from even a small group merits attention.

7.16 Teachers are in a unique position to observe tendencies towards delinquency, and to assist parents to overcome them. Children who fail to cope satisfactorily with their school work, tend either to form national groups or to become truculent and generally "difficult". Few teachers report acts of delinquency but some

express concern that difficulties at school may adversely affect social behaviour.

7.17 The relationship between the teacher, the child and the parent needs to be developed. The Dewar Committee stated:

"It was suggested that the special position in which clergy and teachers are placed to influence children, and the special knowledge they acquire of the home environment, could, in cases of child maladjustment, be co-ordinated and reinforced by the provision of trained welfare officers and the rapid development of a system of social workers." (Committee on Youth Problems in Queensland [1959]).

Many migrant parents have too little contact with their children's schools. Efforts are needed on both sides to bridge this gap.

7.18 Young migrant workers, like the older school children, are in the age groups where delinquency is most likely to occur. The school children are helped, to some extent, by the co-operation of teachers and parents, although this is not as close as it should be. The young workers, however, are less fortunately placed. There are few contacts between employer and parent.

7.19 Employers, however, do help. In small establishments the relationship between employer and employee tends to be close. Large organizations have, as a rule, extensive personnel organizations which can help young workers adjust themselves to their new conditions. Young migrant workers in the broad range of medium-sized firms receive less assistance.

7.20 The trade unions also help. Some union officials favour the development of social activities, such as sporting teams and clubs, to aid young workers. Migrants stand to benefit greatly from any moves of this kind.

Section 8 - Further Investigations

The Committee's field of inquiry is extremely large and, despite the extensive investigations we have undertaken and the generous assistance given us, further work is required.

This is, therefore, our first report, and we may have occasion to amplify or add to our recommendations.

8.01 One of our aims has been to present, as early as possible, the results of the extensive investigations which we have undertaken to date, and our findings and recommendations based on those investigations.

8.02 The Committee hopes to undertake further investigations into a number of subjects, including -

- ways of aiding migrant children's adjustment to Australian school life;
- the possibility of greater participation, by migrant parents and their children, in the social life of the community;
- ways of encouraging European mothers to speak English;
- factors affecting delinquency;
- migrant children in institutions;
- young migrants seeking to resume apprenticeships commenced overseas.

8.03 The views and suggestions of interested authorities and individuals, both in Australia and overseas, will be welcomed. They should be addressed to -

The Chairman,
Committee on Migrant Children,
Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council,
Canberra, A.C.T., Australia.

