



## WHEN CHILDREN

REMEDIOS

Only last Monday, two G. I.'s brought over to Philippine Red Cross headquarters an eight-year old youngster who had spent a night and a day at Fort McKinley begging for alms. When questioned Ernie, as he said he was called, talked volubly about being from Imus, Cavite, how he had successfully begged for four pesos and a new T-shirt and how he desired to be helped to enter school that he may grow up educated, and not likely to be fooled by anyone.

We listened to his well chosen answers couched often in appealing language calculated to touch the sympathies of normal individuals, but inside us, we also realized the beginning of a tragic but now too familiar pattern to many—the pattern for Juvenile Delinquency. For this boy unless redirected and guided, was bound for where he had started so auspiciously—to Lost Boy's Town on the Highway, Juvenile Delinquency.

In the crowded busy lives of modern people, of modern parents in particular, there stands one rampart to which they rightly cling to safeguard the molding of their children's minds and character—this is the Teacher working in the most potent corner of modern society—the classroom.

When children now go astray or commit something wrong at home, the question asked now is not anymore "Is this what your parents are teaching you?" but "Is this what you are being taught in school?"

Verily the whole responsibility is now irrevocably in the hands of our teachers—and rightly so because there are none so capable and trained as they. And among the most important of these responsibilities must also be added that it is in their hands to curb and remedy juvenile delinquency—which we attribute together with many of our present ills to the aftermath of war.

To the average layman the common view is that juvenile delinquents are bred from out-of-school children. But you will be surprised to hear that many of our juvenile delinquents have started schooling and drifted to this unwanted path.

Why has this happened?

The development of desirable behavior patterns is a slow and diversified process and is influenced by the home, school, church, community, and many other factors in our complex living. The role of the school in this matter assumes prime importance in view of the fact that it guides the child, outside of the home, more hours than any other agency throughout the day.

To teachers these challenging questions may well be brought to for consideration; in the answers to these questions lie either the intelligent curbing or the unintentional fostering of juvenile delinquents among the children they teach.