

## 24. RUMANIA

Area in sq. miles . . . .	160,000
Population . . . . .	18,000,000
Capital . . . . .	Bucharest
Population of Capital . . . .	800,000

Rumania does not seem to have a probation law, but the Social Relief Department undertakes such work through its officers in an official capacity. Criminal responsibility of children under twelve years is nil, twelve to eighteen partial.

The projected law embraces the establishment of juvenile courts and would appear to be based on the Belgian model.

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No official report has yet been received.

The following notes are taken from a report published in the "B.I.P.E." for October 1923.

## SOCIAL RELIEF AS A PUBLIC INSTITUTION IN RUMANIA

The recognition of social relief as an official institution is of recent date in Rumania. It was especially rendered necessary after the Great War in view of the widespread distress that this catastrophe had entailed. Up to then necessitous cases had had to depend for relief on private charity alone.

In the programme of work to be undertaken by the new official organisation the foremost place was given to infant and child welfare, together with the protection of young people. Through the medium of this new organisation large grants from Government funds have been made to charitable organisations which are interested in child welfare throughout the country and of which large numbers are in active operation.

Pending the final drafting of the new laws which is already being carried out, practical measures which were urgently needed have been adopted.

The pupillary council sees to the legal, moral and material protection of children, and exercises authority in these matters. There is a pupillary council in every town arrondissement. The pupillary council administers the property, superintends the training and education, chooses the

guardian, supervises the guardian in the discharge of his or her duty even in the case of a natural guardian, for example, the mother. The pupillary council also looks after children whose parents are alive, but are prevented from seeing to the upbringing of their children, by reason of illness, stress of circumstances, arrest, etc. An appeal may be made from the decisions of the pupillary councils in the first case, to the Urban and Rural Administrative Commission, thence to the Minister of the Interior.

*Propaganda Work.*—In order to acquaint the public, both in towns and country districts, with the counsels, examples and precepts which have a bearing on social service, the Central Direction of the Social Relief Department has established a propaganda service in connection with the direction of child welfare and women protection work. The publications have been printed and distributed free of cost, e.g.—

“Advice to Children.”

“Child Welfare.”

“Alcoholism.”

“Tabulated Advice.”

“The Mother’s Ten Commandments.”

“Calendar for 1923,” etc.

*War Orphans.*—The Society for the Protection of War Orphans was founded in 1917, thanks to the initiative of Mme. Olga Sturdza, who was its first president. The aim of this society is to train and educate as many war orphans as possible by finding room for them in orphanages, or by helping them should they remain in their own homes or with friends, or by entrusting them to the care of trustworthy and respectable persons who give a written undertaking to bring them up at their own expense under the supervision of the committee.

*Legislation.*—In the Bill which has been introduced into our Parliament provision has been made for the three following fundamental principles relating to child welfare :

- (1) Physical protection and training of children.
- (2) Moral protection and training of children.
- (3) Social protection and training of children.

The first principle includes medical attendance for the newly born infant ; the spreading of the knowledge of child care amongst all the different classes of society ; an efficient

organisation to secure the protection of foundling children, whether maintained or not by the commune ; the protection given to female workers during their pregnancy and after their confinement ; the improvement of canteens, school colonies, crèches and other institutions for children ; the provision of bathing accommodation in schools and other establishments and all efforts to popularise gymnastics and a knowledge of hygiene in schools.

The second principle includes the meeting together of families for instructive purposes, close co-operation between the school and the Church ; the regulating of pornographic editions, cinema shows and unbecoming behaviour in the streets.

The third comprises the reform of the laws relating to enquiries to determine the paternity of a child. Measures have already been taken in that direction in Transylvania. Moreover, this principle includes the reform of the Penal Code relating to the punishment of delinquent minors, the introducing of an educative correctional system, and the establishment of juvenile courts.

The protection of children who are ill-treated by their parents and the regulation of child labour in factories and certain other trades are guaranteed by the establishment of State guardianship.

*Reformatory Schools.*—The law for the suppression of vagrancy and mendicity which was framed in 1921, and very shortly afterwards came into operation, has produced most satisfactory results. A special chapter deals with juvenile vagrancy. Children under eighteen who are proven to be habitual beggars or vagrants, or exercising a calling incompatible with their age or aptitudes, are put at the disposal of the Social Relief Department. The case having been previously heard and decided, and an order of the Court obtained, such children are committed to a reformatory until either they come of age, are married, or have to begin their time of military service.

The Social Relief Department may entrust such children to be trained to a philanthropic institution subventioned by the State, a formal undertaking having previously been given that such training shall be under the supervision of the Department and of the tribunal having cognisance in the matter.

A child may be committed to a reformatory at the request

of his parents or guardians under such circumstances as are specified by Article 329 of the Civil Code.

During the period of their committal to a reformatory until they attain their majority, the Social Relief Department is entitled to apprentice these children, at the same time providing for their keep and maintenance and supervising their work.

After having been arrested in conformity with this law, and all the necessary formalities having been complied with, vagabond and mendicant minors are drafted off to the settlements founded by the Social Relief Department—viz. Raducaneni and Bohotin in the arrondissement of Falciu. In these settlements, in addition to elementary educational classes, the minors are enabled to learn a trade.

The General Child Care Society, of which a branch has been founded at Braila, devotes itself to children who are morally neglected. For some considerable time a reformatory school has been in existence at Gherla in Transylvania, for vagrant and mendicant minors.

The training of pupils sent to these institutions lasts from twelve years of age up to eighteen.

The minimum time which is fixed for the training of a pupil, should the minor behave himself well, is one year. Otherwise it may last until he comes of age.