

BOYS HAVE BONFIRE WITH LIVE AMMUNITION

600 Rounds Stolen

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A REMARKABLE story was told in the Christchurch Juvenile Court last Tuesday of how two small boys stole some Army ammunition, broke open some of the cartridges, threw cordite on to a bonfire causing explosions which blew them over, and hid other live bullets under leaves and bushes.

The two boys, aged 12 and 9, were severely reminded of the great seriousness of what they had done. Both had previously been before the Court on charges of theft.

P.C. King received a report from the officer-in-charge that 600 rounds of ammunition, valued at £5, had been stolen from Army vehicles on the 30th December. After making enquiries, he saw defendants and five other boys who denied having taken anything.

The defendants admitted that they had stolen some ammunition and had a bonfire where they had exploded some of the cartridges. The cordite had been taken from some of the bullets and thrown on the fire. During the explosions which followed several of the boys had been blown over. Eighteen live bullets were produced from under some bushes and leaves, these being given into the possession of P.C. King. The 12-year-old boy also handed over ten more bullets which had been hidden in another place and both boys had numerous bullet noses in their pockets.

Inspector W. P. Thomas stated that the boys had previously been bound over, one on the 3rd March, 1942, for theft of money, and the other during July for stealing a bicycle.

The elder boy's record was not good and he appeared to be the ringleader who enticed his younger brothers into mischief. He was altogether a bad example to smaller boys.

The magistrates decided that owing to the absence of the father, who was in the Merchant Navy, the boy had lacked sufficient control and they gave him one more chance. The seriousness of the case was pointed out to them, also that they might have been the cause of other people being killed.

The Chairman, Mr. E. J. Slinn, warned the elder one that if he came to the Court again during the next probation period of two years he would undoubtedly be sent away. His brother was also placed on probation under the care of the Probation Officer, Mr. Lawrence.

The magistrates were Mrs. N. Barnes, Mr. E. J. Slinn and Mr. D. Llewellyn.