

The committed children belonging to industrial schools may be separated into two classes—(1) those who are maintained at the public cost, and (2) those who have ceased to be chargeable to the colony. Those of the former class are either resident in the schools or are boarded with foster-parents; the other class is composed of those who are at service or with friends, or are absent without leave. The following were the numbers of both classes of children at the beginning and at the close of 1884 :—

Maintained.	Jan. 1, 1884.	Jan. 1, 1885.	Decrease.	Increase.	Net Increase.
In the schools ... ..	799	675	124	...	...
With foster-parents ... ..	206	384	...	178	...
Total maintained ... ..	1,005	1,059	124	178	54
Not maintained.					
At service ... ..	100	201	...	101	...
With friends ... ..	200	163	37	...	...
In hospital ... ..	...	4	...	4	...
Absent without leave ... ..	13	19	...	6	...
Total not maintained	313	387	37	111	74
Total belonging to the schools ... ..	1,318	1,446	161	289	128

Notwithstanding the large number (313) of commitments during the year, the successful efforts of the Department and the managers in placing children out to service or with friends and foster-parents have effected a reduction of 124 in the number of committed children resident in the schools at the end of the year, while there has been an actual increase of only 54 in the number of them maintained at the public cost. The number of young persons recorded as being at service was doubled during the past year. This may be attributed partly to the greater efforts made to place out those who were of sufficient age and strength, and had reached the required "standard" of education, and to the provisions of "The Industrial Schools Act, 1882," that committed children shall remain under the legal guardianship of the manager until they reach the age of twenty-one years unless previously discharged, instead of their connection with the school ceasing at the expiration of a specified term. Owing to this provision, irrespective of any other cause, the number recorded as being at service will probably show a yearly increase for some time to come. The decrease in the number of children resident with friends is owing to very careful inquiry having been made in the course of the year regarding the character and circumstances of all those so placed out, with the satisfactory result that the Minister of Education felt warranted in recommending the absolute discharge of a very large number of them. Some of the children resident in the schools were absolutely restored to their parents, and a few young men and women were discharged because their good conduct warranted the severance of their connection with the schools. It was found necessary to discharge one young woman, whose conduct was of the worst possible description, and who proved utterly incorrigible. The total number discharged during the year was 175.

The returns relating to non-committed children maintained by the Government show that the number admitted to the several institutions during 1884 was 28, and that 67 had left during the same period; thus reducing the number of Government children from 206 at the beginning of the year to 167 at its close. Of the latter number 159 were resident, and 8 were boarded with foster-parents. Of the 67 non-committed children whose connection with the Government ceased in the course of 1884, 34 were restored to their friends, 32 were placed at service, and 1 died.

Table R shows that 341 children (313 committed and 28 non-committed) were placed in the industrial schools and orphanages during 1884; that there was at the close of the year an increase of 54 in the number of committed children who were maintained at the public expense, and a decrease of 39 in the number of non-committed children; and that consequently the net increase for the year in the number of children actually a charge upon the colony was only 15.\*

\* Fresh admissions, 341; transferred from other industrial schools, 2: total, 343. Discharged by warrant, 175; non-committed children otherwise provided for, 66; transferred to other industrial schools, 2; died, 11; number still belonging to the schools who ceased to be maintained, 74; increase of number chargeable, 15: total, 343.