

PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN.

The Department's policy is to board children in suitable private homes under the supervision of Child Welfare Officers, and its experience over a period of nearly sixty years has proved that the boarding-out system is much to be preferred to that of placing children in institutions. At the same time, the institution has its place in the work.

State wards who have completed their schooling are in general placed in employment on the same basis as regards wages, &c., as other young people in the community. In some instances, however, as, for example, when they are incapable of competing on equal terms with fellow-workers of approximately the same age and experience or have shown anti-social traits, great emphasis is laid on obtaining a home that will meet the particular needs of the individual. Information as to the occupations of young people in employment is given later in this report.

When a child takes his first situation the greater portion of his wages is banked in a Post Office account by the Department and the balance is paid to him as pocket-money, the amount of which is generally increased every three or six months until the time arrives when he draws his full wages. This system has proved of value in training young persons to appreciate the value of money. The money banked by the Department (section 37 of the Child Welfare Act, 1925) is used in paying for clothing, dentistry, &c., and the balance is paid at any time—generally after he attains twenty-one years of age—to the young man himself. The Department investigates each application and does what it can to ensure that as far as possible the money is utilized to the best advantage.

CHILDREN UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CHILD WELFARE BRANCH.

At the 31st March, 1940, there were 4,320 children under control (excluding those mentioned under separate headings below), and of these, 2,081 were boarded-out in foster-homes; 902 were in licensed situations; 522 residing under license with relatives and friends; 238 were in residence at Government receiving homes (many of these only temporarily), training-farms, and training institutions; 207 in special schools for mentally backward children; and 54 in the four Roman Catholic schools recognized under the Child Welfare Act. The remainder were in various private institutions.

TABLE 4.—STATUS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS UNDER GUARDIANSHIP OF THE SUPERINTENDENT AT THE 31ST MARCH, 1940.

Status.	Boys.	Girls.	Totals.
In residence	109	129	238
Boarded out	1,191	890	2,081
At service (includes 2 boys and 17 girls at day service) ..	589	313	902
With friends	317	205	522
In hospitals, convalescent homes, &c.	83	41	124
In refugees and cognate institutions	2	40	42
In children's homes registered under Part I, Child Welfare Amendment Act, 1927	48	38	86
Absent without leave	15	14	29
In colleges and residential schools	5	13	18
In Girls' Hostel, Wellington	14	14
In residence, private institutions (Roman Catholic) ..	25	29	54
In schools for mentally backward	142	65	207
In School for the Deaf, Sumner	1	2	3
Totals	2,527	1,793	4,320

YOUNG PERSONS IN EMPLOYMENT.

At the 31st March, 1940, there were in employment 1,207 (781 males and 426 females) State wards, representing slightly more than one-fourth of the young people (4,320) under control. Of those employed, 301 (199 males and 102 females) were residing with friends or relatives on license (section 20 of the Child Welfare Act, 1925), while the remainder (906) were supervised in situations by Child Welfare Officers. Of the males (582) supervised by Child Welfare Officers, 387 were farm hands (189 skilled in dairy-work and cheesemaking, and 198 competent to milk and carry out general farm-work); 40 were apprenticed to various trades, and of those not apprenticed 43 were factory employees, 17 clerks, 10 boot-factory employees, 8 shop-assistants, 6 labourers, 5 in Army, 4 message-boys, 4 seamen, 5 nurserymen, 4 pressers, 3 engineers, 3 office assistants, 3 stable hands, 3 warehouse assistants, 2 storemen, 2 garage assistants, 2 freezing-works employees, 2 motor-painters, 2 market-gardeners, 2 electrical engineers, 2 in Air Force, 2 mill hands, 2 porters, 1 butcher, 1 carpenter, 1 driver, 1 miner, 1 milkman, 1 painter, 1 telegraph operator, 1 packer, 1 projectionist, 1 jockey, 1 showman, 1 grocer, 1 Railway workshops employee, 1 panel-beater, 1 upholsterer, 1 Railway cadet, 1 monumental worker, 1 motor mechanic, and 1 plumber.