

Section 50 of the Industrial Schools Act provides for the placing of inmates of industrial schools in situations and for part of their earnings to be placed in trust accounts in the Post Office Savings-bank. There are some two thousand such trust accounts, representing about £60,000. Though these earnings cannot be claimed as a right, in practice they are generally paid over to the persons concerned who, after passing out of the control of the schools, are able to give evidence of good character, provided that satisfactory investments for the money are shown.

Admissions during the Year and the Reasons for Admission.

During the year 381 children were committed to industrial schools, and an analysis of the state of these children prior to admission shows that 101 were destitute, 4 vagrants, 15 residing in disreputable surroundings, 141 not under proper control, and 84 either accused or guilty of punishable offences. Of these 381, only 101 were actually in residence at industrial schools at the end of the year, so that 280 were placed out at board, in situations, or with friends on probation, either on admission or after a short period of residence at an industrial school.

INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION.

The purpose of this system is to provide supervision and protection for infants boarded out by their parents or guardians in circumstances that might lead to their neglect or ill treatment. Unless licensed as a foster-parent, no person in consideration of any payment or reward may receive or take charge of an infant for the purpose of nursing or maintaining it apart from its parents or guardians for longer than seven consecutive days. "Infant" means a child under six years of age. Besides the district agents, duly appointed officers who are qualified nurses have full power to inspect the licensed homes. If necessary the Education Department may take over the maintenance of a child, recovering the cost from the parents or guardians, and the foster-parent's license may be revoked, the children in the home being otherwise provided for as the Minister may direct. Payment of a premium on the adoption of a child brings the case within the provisions of the Act.

The number of homes licensed at the end of the year was 1,060, and the total number of children in them during the year was 1,349, a decrease of 12 for the year. Of this total, the number of infants under one year was 293; 6 children died, being 0·44 per cent. of those in the homes. Of that number, 3 died in foster-homes and 3 in hospitals or nursing-homes to which they had been removed for treatment, so that the deaths in foster-homes represented 0·22 per cent. only of the total number dealt with.

The expenditure in connection with infant-life protection for the year ended 31st March, 1919, was £1,194; for the preceding year the amount was £1,219.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

SUMMARY SHOWING COMPARATIVE COST OF UPKEEP AT SPECIAL SCHOOLS, 1916, 1917, AND 1918.

School.	Number of Pupils maintained.			Net Maintenance Expenditure.			Average Annual Cost per Head.					
	1916.	1917.	1918.	1916.	1917.	1918.	1916.		1917.		1918.	
				£	£	£	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
School for Deaf, Sumner	112	109	104	4,277	3,393	3,625	38	3 9	31	2 7	34	17 1
Special School for Boys, Otekaike	64	95	88	4,902	5,608	5,324	76	11 0	59	0 0	60	10 0
Special School for Girls, Richmond	..	48	50	..	1,756	1,092	..		36	11 8	21	16 9