

while the girls are taught household duties, which will be of great benefit to them when they return to their homes after completing their education in the day school.

The amount paid by the Government towards the cost of training twenty-nine pupils was £759, and the amount refunded to the Government in the way of parental contributions and payments by Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards was £933.

EDUCATION AND CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

The need for controlling and in the majority of cases for segregating all feeble-minded children is of the utmost importance if the physical and mental standard of the race is to be preserved, and also for the protection of society generally. In fact, the ordinary community holds no place for the feeble-minded child. The parents as a rule are utterly incapable of providing for such children, who can neither derive benefit from attendance at the public school nor can associate with the normal children of the neighbourhood. In the majority of cases it is essential for the sake of the mother and the other children of the family that feeble-minded children should be removed to an institution where they can be dealt with by officers specially adapted for this purpose. The need for the segregation of girls of this type, more especially of those who have reached the age of puberty, is of very great importance. Of the cases already examined a great many are unfitted on account of their low mentality for admission to special schools, although in certain urgent cases admission has been arranged in the absence of any other means of dealing with them.

The inmates of schools for feeble-minded children are given a very simple course of instruction suited to their limited intelligence. Instruction is largely of a manual character, since these children are able to advance very slightly in the arts of reading, writing, and counting. The object of the instruction is to quicken the intelligence and dexterity of the children, so that later on they may be able to take part in some simple occupation and help to some extent in supporting themselves, and also find some interest in occupations suitable to their limited capacities. Only in very exceptional cases, if in any, can it be expected that any feeble-minded children can be brought up to a standard approximating to that of even the less efficient members of the ordinary community. It has been found that those who most closely approach the ordinary standard of intelligence and capacity run greater risks and are subject to greater dangers even than those with a very low grade of intelligence. It should be definitely known that all statements relating to alleged curing of feeble-minded children, or to their replacement in ordinary schools under ordinary instruction, or to their becoming able to take their place in the ordinary community, are really the result of a misunderstanding of the types of cases to which progress such as the above refers. Improvement referred to in such statements has been accomplished not in the case of feeble-minded children, but in the case of merely backward children who make unduly slow progress under the ordinary methods of school instruction. There are many children of this type in New Zealand, but they are not placed in schools for the feeble-minded.

The available provision for feeble-minded children of an improvable type is not by any means sufficient to enable the Department to accommodate all the children offering. Steps are now being taken, however, to prepare the property known as the Boys' Training-farm, Nelson, for the reception of feeble-minded boys under fourteen years of age, while the Special School at Otekaike will be retained as an institution for elder boys who are capable of earning at least part of their living either on the farm or garden or in the workshop. The segregation of the younger boys from the older cases is an important step in the matter of classification, and should facilitate the matter of training so far as the younger boys are concerned.

The Special School at Richmond for the reception of feeble-minded girls has now been fully established, and good work is being done under capable management. The teaching staff has been strengthened by the addition of another teacher (two teachers in all), and through their efforts an improvement is noticeable in the comportment and dexterity of the children.