

than is generally found in the ordinary home, are quite fit to attend an ordinary public school, there is accommodation at the various receiving-homes and probation homes now fully established in each of the largest centres of population.

For boys of school age who have been guilty of repeated breaches of the law, or whose general habits and conduct are such as call for a lengthy period of discipline, provision is made in a special cottage home attached to the Boys' Training-farm at Weraroa. Such boys attend a special day school on the property, and are kept apart from the elder boys in the institution. Two officers have been appointed to supervise these young lads, one of whom, a teacher, resides at the cottage home and is responsible for the training and discipline of the boys outside school hours. With adequate provision in each of the centres of population for boys of school age who are dealt with by the Courts, and with the provision at Weraroa as described in the preceding paragraphs, the need for the institution known as the Boys' Training-farm, Nelson, for the detention and training of such boys has practically ceased to exist. Until the end of 1918 the Boys' Training-farm, Nelson, was the only available institution in New Zealand to which uncontrollable and delinquent boys from all parts of the Dominion could be admitted. The system of decentralization in respect of this work has much to commend it. Not only does it obviate the need for sending boys to Nelson from all parts of the country under police escorts, but it prevents the congregation of a large number of similar types in the one institution. From a social point of view it is infinitely better for these boys to be provided for in smaller numbers in the more homely environments of suitable cottage homes, and the fact that a boy is not removed from his own particular district tends to preserve the family ties. Another factor, too, is the saving effected—the cost of travelling, of police escorts, and of maintaining a large institution is infinitely greater than the cost of maintaining several cottage homes throughout the Dominion.

#### *Extension of the Boarding-out System.*

By the appointment of lady officials as Boarding-out Officers for such districts as Nelson, Wanganui, and Hawke's Bay a somewhat similar arrangement has been introduced in connection with the boarding-out system, which provides for the placing in selected foster-homes of destitute and dependent children who through no fault of their own are committed to the care of the State. In their respective districts these lady officers supervise not only boarded-out children committed to the care of the State, but also all infants placed in licensed homes under the provisions of Part V of the Infants Act, 1908. They are also available for assisting the police and the Magistrates in making inquiry regarding any children brought before the Courts. In all cases of commitment of children to the care of the State it is the duty of the Boarding-out Officers to provide for them temporarily, and to place them as soon as possible in suitable foster-homes in their own districts. Such a system has had the effect of considerably reducing the pressure on the Wellington Receiving-home, and of eliminating the necessity for sending children from Taranaki, Wanganui, and Hawke's Bay to Wellington as a preliminary to boarding out. The system is being developed in the direction of providing for the handling of all these unfortunate children by special lady officers instead of by the police, of keeping families together, and as far as practicable of preserving the ties between parents and children.

The system of appointing Boarding-out Officers will, as the need becomes apparent, be extended to practically all the larger centres of population throughout New Zealand.

It is also the intention of the Department to establish receiving-homes or cottage homes in several of the larger towns outside the four chief centres to provide temporary accommodation for the children dealt with by the Courts, for children returning from boarded-out homes, or for young people under the control of the Department who happen at any time to change their places of employment.

#### *Care of Children who lost their Parents as a Result of the Influenza Epidemic.*

Following on the decision of the Government that all children who lost both parents, or the surviving parent, during the recent influenza epidemic were to be