

the charge of the Education Department, a total of 245 orphan children, including Maoris, have been dealt with up to the 30th June last. In order that the guardianship of such children might be vested in the Department it was necessary, in the absence of other suitable legal provision, to arrange for formal commitment to receiving-homes under the provisions of the Industrial Schools Act. In the majority of cases, however, the Magistrates issued the necessary orders for formal admission without requiring the attendance of the children at the Courts. In all the cases dealt with the children have either been placed with relatives for payment or have been boarded out in suitable homes in their own districts. In no case has a child been admitted and detained at any Government institution or industrial school. It is gratifying to be able to state that the number of private homes available is far in excess of the number of children who have had to be provided for. The Department has endeavoured as far as possible to place these children in homes and under conditions corresponding as nearly as possible with the conditions under which they would have been reared had their parents survived. In dealing with these orphans it is recognized that commitment under the Industrial Schools Act should be regarded only as a means whereby the guardianship can be legally vested in the Department. Such a procedure will be obviated as soon as the legislation already prepared is passed by Parliament.

All these children will be visited at regular intervals by responsible lady officers, and will be kept under the care and protection of the Department and provided for until they are capable of earning their own living.

*Industrial and Special Training for Boys and Girls over Fourteen Years of Age.*

A great deal has been accomplished in the matter of placing boys and girls as apprentices to suitable trades, and of arranging for children of unusual ability to have the benefit of secondary or technical education. Considering the conditions under which the majority of these children were reared prior to their commitment under the Industrial Schools Act, it is desirable in certain cases to encourage boys to take up rural occupations, and for girls to be placed in good homes under capable mistresses.

At the Training-farm at Weraroa boys are taught milk-testing, buttermaking, cheesemaking, general agricultural work, and market-gardening. For those boys who prefer and show aptitude for a trade or mechanical work the rudiments of bootmaking, carpentering, engine-driving, and motor-car driving are taught, and after a few months places are found for such boys with outside firms. In dealing with boys who are well conducted no great difficulties are encountered, but for boys who dislike farm-work and who will not settle down to any particular trade it is necessary to extend considerably the period of training. In many instances, if boys can be kept at any particular trade at the school for, say, two years, there is every likelihood that if then placed with an outside firm they will remain at that trade until the period of apprenticeship has expired. In dealing with such boys it is essential, however, that they should be placed outside under normal conditions as soon as their conduct warrants such a step.

*Improved Methods and Results in connection with the Working of Farms attached to the various Schools.*

The improved methods of working the lands connected with the various schools (Weraroa, Nelson, Burnham, and Otekaike) have accounted for a considerable increase in revenue during the year. For 1917 the total revenue from the sales of produce (milk, butter, cheese, pigs, sheep, vegetables, fruit, &c.) was £2,049, while for 1918 the total was £6,324, showing an increase for the year of £4,275.

Considerable development has taken place at the Boys' Training-farm, Weraroa. Additional land has been stumped and cleared, and will be brought under cultivation this season. Larger and more up-to-date pigsties have been provided, and byres providing accommodation for about eighty cows are now nearing completion. With this provision it will be possible to hand-feed and shelter the milking-herd during the cold and wet winter months. All these buildings are made of reinforced concrete, and have been built entirely with the labour available on the farm. Provision has also been made for a cheese-store attached to the cheese-factory.