

1920.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION :

STATE CARE OF CHILDREN, SPECIAL SCHOOLS, AND INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION.

[In continuation of E.—4, 1919.]

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

NO. 1.—EXTRACT FROM THE FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND CHILD WELFARE.

THE functions of the special Schools Branch of the Department include provision (1) For the maintenance, education, and training of any destitute, dependent, or homeless children committed to the care of the State ; for the maintenance and guardianship of all epidemic orphans who have lost both parents ; for the training of uncontrollable and delinquent children and juvenile offenders, and for the supervision of all young persons under the age of sixteen years who are placed on probation by the Courts : (2) for the supervision of all infants and young children under the age of six years maintained apart from their parents for payment either in foster-homes or private institutions, or adopted with premium : and (3) for the education and maintenance of all afflicted children—the deaf, the blind, and the feeble-minded.

Probably the outstanding feature during the year was the extraordinary increase in the number of children who for various causes incidental to the economic conditions of the present time have been committed to the guardianship of the Department. The number of new cases actually dealt with was 864, as compared with 381 for 1918 and 358 for 1917.

This abnormal increase has thrown a very heavy burden on the receiving-homes and the organization for the boarding-out of children, and has necessitated the adoption of a system providing for children being dealt with in their own districts rather than admitting them to receiving-homes in the various centres of population. During the year agencies for providing for State children were established in Napier, Hamilton, Whangarei, and Timaru, and further establishments are contemplated in such places as Greymouth, Palmerston North, and Invercargill.

The juvenile probation system, now firmly established in each of the four centres, has also been extended to such districts as Whangarei, Hamilton, and Nelson, and in all probability will be further extended in the near future to include Wanganui, Napier, Palmerston North, Greymouth, and Invercargill. A boys' probation home has recently been established in Dunedin, so that now there is a probation home in each of the four centres of population. The function of these homes is to provide temporarily for boys who cannot be properly controlled by their parents, or who