

Numbers under Control.

At the end of the year there were 3,692 children under control (excluding those mentioned under separate headings below), and of these 160 were in residence at Government receiving-homes, probation homes, training-farms, and training institutions, and 100 in private industrial schools; 1,868 children were boarded out in foster-homes, 800 were in situations, and 488 residing under license with relatives and friends. The remainder were in various homes or institutions.

Of the boarded-out children 122 are over the age of fourteen years and are still attending primary schools, 36 are receiving higher education (16 technical and 20 secondary), and a number are apprentices partly maintained by the State.

The children over school age in employment number 622 males and 377 females (included in the total of 3,692). Of the males 465 are farm workers (100 skilled in dairy-work and cheesemaking and 365 competent to milk and carry out general farm-work), 49 are apprentices, and 108 others are employed in various trades. Of the girls there are 325 domestic workers, 25 factory employees, and 27 engaged in various employments such as shop-assistants, nurses, dressmakers, typists, &c.

Juvenile Probation System.

The functions of Juvenile Probation Officers are to assist the Courts in ascertaining the full facts regarding parents, conditions of homes, and environment of all children brought under the notice of the police, to supervise and befriend any juveniles placed on probation by the various Magistrates, and to undertake, on the application of the parents, the supervision of any children who are inclined to become uncontrollable. In addition, all male inmates of industrial schools or training-farms placed in situations, or with relatives or friends, are supervised by the Juvenile Probation Officers. There were 1,044 cases dealt with by the Courts in the principal centres of population throughout the year, and of these only 275 were actually admitted to receiving-homes or training institutions, 223 were placed on probation and supervised in their own homes, and the remainder were dealt with generally in a summary manner not calling for supervision by Probation Officers.

Infant-life Protection and Adoption of Children.

At the end of the year there were 684 children being maintained in 565 licensed foster-homes. Of these, 469 homes each had one child, 152 had two children each, and 51 homes had three each. The payments for the maintenance of each child ranged from 5s. to £1 10s. a week, but the average rate of payment was approximately 14s. 6d. a week.

Adoptions.

During the year 364 children were adopted, and in 30 of these cases premiums were received by the Department's agents and paid out at the rate of 15s. a week for each child concerned. Of the total number of children adopted, 73 were under the age of six months, 38 between the age of six and twelve months, and 165 between the age of one and six years.

CARE AND TRAINING OF AFFLICTED CHILDREN.

School for the Deaf, Sumner.

The pupils under instruction during the year numbered 129, and of these 31 were day pupils and 98 boarders.

In 1920 special day classes for partially deaf children and for stammerers were established in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin, which have been continued with highly successful results. About 229 children attended the classes last year. Provision has also been made in these centres and in Christchurch for night classes for the instruction of the adult deaf, 102 persons afflicted in this manner attending the classes in 1923.

Special Schools for the Feeble-minded.

There are two such special schools—one at Richmond for girls, and one at Otekaike, near Oamaru, for boys. The number of girls in residence at Richmond at the end of the year was 64, and the number of boys at Otekaike 152.