

receiving-homes, special schools, training-farm, &c., was 592, but all these, with the exception of 117 who require long periods of training or were regarded as unfit for placing out, were suitably provided for in the community before the close of the year. The remainder of the children were dealt with in a summary manner not calling for supervision by a Child Welfare Officer.

INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION AND ADOPTION OF CHILDREN (INFANTS ACT, 1908).

At the end of the year there were 902 children being maintained in 753 licensed foster-homes. Of these, 638 homes had one child each, 89 had two children each, 20 had three children each, 5 had four children each, and 1 home had six children. The payments by relatives for the maintenance of each child ranged from 5s. to £1 10s. a week, the average rate of payment being approximately 15s. 7d. per week.

Adoptions.—During the year 372 children were adopted, and in 40 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, 83 were under the age of six months, 39 between the age of six and twelve months, and 250 between the age of one and six years.

CARE AND TRAINING OF DEAF CHILDREN, CHILDREN WITH DEFECTIVE SPEECH, BLIND CHILDREN, AND MENTALLY-BACKWARD CHILDREN.

The pupils under instruction at the School for the Deaf, Sumner, during the year numbered 122, and of these 14 were day pupils and 108 boarders.

The special day classes in Auckland and Wellington for partially deaf children and for children with speech-defects were continued with highly successful results. About 120 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, 78 persons afflicted in this manner attending the classes for the year ended 31st March, 1928.

The education of blind children is provided for at the Jubilee Institute for the Blind, Auckland, which is a private institution recognized as a "separate institution" under the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act. Provision is made in this Act for the appointment of nine Trustees—five by the contributors and four by the Governor-General.

The Trustees are required by law to admit and maintain any blind children between the ages of six and twenty-one years that the Minister of Education directs to be sent to the institution. For the maintenance and education of such children the Department pays at the rate of £25 a year each. At present there are 20 children so paid for (13 boys and 7 girls) but this does not represent the total number of children receiving instruction. The Trustees are at liberty to admit any suitable case when the parents are able to pay the full fee.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR MENTALLY-BACKWARD CHILDREN.

There are two such special schools—one at Richmond (near Nelson) 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 85, and the number of boys at Otekaike 185. These institutions are for children who are educable to a certain degree, but who for various reasons cannot be provided for in their own homes.

SPECIAL CLASSES FOR MENTALLY-BACKWARD CHILDREN.

In order to deal with pupils who are of somewhat subnormal mentality special classes to the number of twenty have been established in connection with some of the primary schools in the larger centres. At the 30th June, 1927, there were in attendance at the special classes 305 pupils (191 boys and 114 girls). In these classes a special curriculum is offered including a very large amount of manual training and handwork occupations. For the most part the pupils react quickly to the specialized curriculum, and in some instances appear to make better progress, so far as their mental capacity permits, in the ordinary subjects of instruction. The scheme has been considerably extended during the past year, and several lines of development are under consideration. One of these is the linking-up of the work of the senior pupils with the work of the technical schools. In one centre the experiment is being tried of placing the fourteen-year-old pupils of the special