

The following is an extract from the report of the Principal at Richmond :—

At the 1st April, 1946, there were 51 girls in residence and 1 girl on holiday. At the same time last year 63 girls were in residence, the decrease being in the house-training section, as the numbers of the school section remain fairly constant with a small waiting-list. During the year there were 17 new admissions, 15 pupils were returned to relatives or friends, 1 was discharged, 4 went to board or service in other districts, 3 were transferred to the Girls' Hostel, Wellington, and 7 to other appropriate institutions.

In spite of staff shortages and changes, the work of the school has been satisfactorily carried on and, except for an epidemic of measles, the health of the girls has been good. Continued use has been made of films and the Country Library Service, and classes are taken into Nelson for cooking instruction at the technical college and also for speech therapy at the newly established clinic. The school team played with considerable success in the combined schools' basketball competition throughout the season, and the Junior Red Cross Circle supplied flowers and vegetables for the sick from their school gardens and also made toys for distribution at the hospital.

On the 21st April, 1945, the school was honoured by a visit from their Excellencies, Sir Cyril and Lady Newall, who were entertained by the girls with a short musical programme and latter inspected the school and the girls' handwork.

Schools for the Deaf.—There are two residential schools—one at Sumner, near Christchurch, and the other at Titirangi, near Auckland.

The latter school was opened during the war period in temporary premises which were the most suitable of those available at the time. It is hoped that the erection of a new school to make better provision for these children will be proceeded with in the near future.

On the 31st March, 1946, there were 238 pupils on the rolls of the two schools. It is interesting to note how the enrolments of children for the schools for the deaf have grown in recent years. At the 31st March, 1940, when there was only one school, there were 103 pupils, and in subsequent years the figures were : 1941, 117 ; 1942, 110 ; 1943 (two schools), 126 ; 1944, 175 ; 1945, 215 ; and 1946, 238.

There were 42 new admissions during the year, 18 pupils left, and 1 died. Of the 238 pupils, 133 are boys and 105 girls. Of the 42 new admissions, 34 were congenitally deaf or became deaf before reaching school age. The average age on admission was 5.9 years.

During the year 1 male and 4 female students were selected for the specialized course at the Auckland Teachers' Training College in education of the deaf and they will become available for appointment in February, 1947.

The Principal reports that the health of the children at both schools was fairly satisfactory, although at Sumner there were cases of measles, chicken-pox, and scarlet-fever, and at Titirangi the incidence of measles was very high.

REGISTERED CHILDREN'S HOMES

Eighty children's homes are conducted by private organizations registered under the provisions of the Child Welfare Amendment Act, 1927. These homes are subject to inspection by officers of the Child Welfare Branch. At the end of last year there were, according to their returns, a total of 2,685 children in residence, as against 2,790 the previous year.

It was reported that in the case of 155 children both parents were deceased, in 257 cases the fathers were deceased, and in 518 cases the mothers were deceased. It is understood that in many other cases the parents were separated or were missing.

In some of the homes necessary improvements to buildings have been held over owing to war conditions. The authorities are, however, fully alive to the position and intend to proceed as soon as circumstances permit. Officers of the Health Department gave valuable assistance in many cases with recommendations regarding dietary and other matters affecting the health and general welfare of the children.

PLACEMENT IN FOSTER-HOMES

If for any reason a child cannot be brought up by his own parents in his own home, then the Department considers that the next best thing is for him to live in some one else's home under reasonably natural conditions, and only as a last alternative or in exceptional circumstances should he be admitted to an institution.