

During the summer the girls played tennis and rounders and had swimming sports and instruction. Basketball was played during the winter against outside teams. Instructresses from the Physical Welfare Branch held weekly classes at the Centre.

As a practical demonstration in the art of hostessing, the girls, at their own request, entertained all the children of the St. Saviour's Orphanage. Sub-committees were arranged to draw up programmes for the entertainment of the visitors and to prepare and serve afternoon tea.

The health of the girls has been very good. Each girl on admission has a medical and dental examination and is examined regularly thereafter.

Fareham House, Featherston.—This home provides for older Maori girls who require training before placement in the community. Accommodation has been limited owing to building alterations not having been completed, and continuous staff shortages and changes in staff have militated against any extension to the programme of activities. Nevertheless, the results have continued to be very satisfactory.

Twenty-seven girls have received training at the home during the year. Eleven of these have been placed in situations where their supervision is continued under a Child Welfare Officer, 5 have been transferred to other institutions, and 11 remained in residence at the 31st March.

The programme of training includes domestic work in all its branches, dressmaking, indoor crafts, gardening, and small farming. The girls were again successful at the Wairarapa Show, where they gained seven prizes in the cookery section.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Schools for Backward Children.—The Special School for Boys at Otekaike, near Oamaru, and the Special School for Girls at Richmond, near Nelson, provide for children who, being mentally retarded, cannot for one reason or another be taught at the ordinary school or provided for in a special class. The curriculum in these schools is designed to meet the needs of the pupils, and handwork in a wide variety of forms is given prominence.

The manager at Otekaike reports as follows :—

At the 31st March, 1947, the number of boys in residence was 115; of these, 86 were in the day school and 29 in the industrial section. Thirty-three new pupils were admitted during the year, and 41 boys left the institution. Of those who left, 37 returned to active life in the community and 4 who were found to be unsuitable for special-school training were transferred to a custodial home.

The average chronological age of the boys in the day school was 13 years, average mental age 9 years 1 month, and the average I.Q. was 70.2, and in the industrial group the corresponding figures were 17 years 6 months, 10 years 5 months, and 65 respectively.

Despite shortage of staff, the training and recreational activities have proceeded much as usual. Again we are indebted to the members of the Oamaru Branch of Toc. H. and several visitors for providing entertainment for the children. The health of the inmates during the year was good.

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

At the 31st March, 1947, there were 57 girls in residence. At the same time last year 51 girls were in residence and 1 was on holiday. During the year there were 22 new admissions, 6 pupils were returned to relatives or friends, 6 went to board or service in other districts, 2 were transferred to the Girls' Hostel, Wellington, and 3 to other appropriate institutions.

Despite acute shortage of staff at times, the general activities of the school have been carried on as usual and, on the whole, the health of the girls has been good. A basketball team played in the inter-school competition at the end of the season; the girls acted as hostesses to visiting representative players and matches were played at the school. Regular instruction aided by the use of films was given in tennis and swimming. The Country Library Service and the Nelson Library Institute have continued to supply the school with reading matter.

The girls are taken into Nelson for cooking instruction at the technical college and also for training at the speech therapy clinic. First aid, dressmaking, and needlework classes have been formed, and in the school section of the Richmond Show our girls gained the highest aggregate points in the handwork section. At the end of 1946 a very successful entertainment and sale of handwork was held.

At various times during the year the girls were entertained by different local organizations and friends of the school. Every opportunity was taken to afford the girls contact with the public, and outings to the beach and pictures and shopping expeditions were arranged at regular intervals.

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