

At Titirangi there were 97 pupils (48 boys and 49 girls) in residence at 31st March, 1948. There were 2 new admissions during the year and 7 children left. The poliomyelitis epidemic seriously interfered with school activities in the early part of 1948.

During the year twelve new class-rooms in two blocks of six, together with a dormitory block, were erected. The buildings contain several modern and special features which should make possible a higher standard of work to that attainable under earlier conditions. Further additions and renovations to the buildings and grounds are being undertaken and will make available greatly improved teaching and recreational facilities.

REGISTERED CHILDREN'S HOMES

Seventy-eight 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 Branch. At the end of last year there were, according to their returns, a total of 2,418 children in residence, as against 2,570 the previous year.

It was reported that in the case of 99 children both parents were deceased, in 236 cases the fathers were deceased, and in 426 cases the mothers were deceased. It is understood that in many other cases the parents were separated or were missing.

In some of the institutions where building or improvement projects are in hand the controlling authorities have of necessity been required to postpone full or even partial implementation of their plans for the time being until the general building situation improves.

PLACEMENT IN FOSTER-HOMES

As indicated in the paragraph on child welfare institutions and in earlier reports, difficulty has been experienced in securing and keeping available a sufficiency of suitable foster-homes. Since the boarding-out system is one of the essential features of child welfare work in this country, considerable attention has been devoted to measures designed to improve the situation or, at least, to arrest the decline.

At the 31st March, 1948, there were 1,747 children placed in foster-homes.

EDUCATION

With very few exceptions, State wards attend the ordinary schools in the community. Where justified, they are encouraged to continue with post-primary schooling, and when further education appears warranted the Department assists them to attend the University Colleges.

At the 31st March, 1948, 332 of the children placed in foster-homes were receiving post-primary education and 12 Maori children were residential pupils at Maori colleges.

PLACEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT

At the 31st March, 1948, there were 1,063 (719 boys and 344 girls) State wards in employment. Of these, 59 (57 boys and 2 girls) were apprenticed to various trades, and, of the total number, 266 (149 boys and 117 girls) in the early stages of their employment were receiving assistance from the Department with their board, clothing, books, fees, &c. Boys were employed as follows: farm hands, 336; factory hands, 99; shop-assistants, 28; labourers, 37; and the remainder, 219, in various other occupations. Girls were employed as follows: domestics, 126; factory hands, 77; shop-assistants, 48; clerical workers, 35; nurses, 31; and the remainder, 27, in various other occupations.

Where possible, the services of the Department's Vocational Guidance Officers are used in an endeavour to ensure that State wards requiring to be placed in employment go to suitable and congenial positions.