

at the school, the highlight being a dance at which over one hundred visitors were present. In December a garden party was held, when buildings and grounds were open to the public, who were guided and hostessed by the girls. Folk and ballet dancing, physical and singing items, were given on the lawn while the girls' dressmaking, knitted articles, and needlework were on display.

The majority of the girls returned to their homes or were boarded with friends for the Christmas holidays. Girls leaving the school were placed at domestic work, hospitals, dressmaking, home-made cake baking, and bookbinding.

Schools for the Deaf.—At Summer there were 159 pupils (92 boys and 67 girls) on the roll at 31st March, 1949. There were 27 new admissions during the year and 22 children left. Of the 27 admissions, 1 had previous training in a school for the deaf, 20 were congenitally deaf or became deaf before reaching school age, 5 were hard of hearing, and 1 was a case of acquired deafness.

Further progress has been made during the year to improve facilities and to provide additional amenities for the pupils and staff. The work done includes the completion of the swimming-bath (which also serves as a static water-supply for fire-fighting), the erection of fire-escapes, the complete reorganization of the kitchen, the laying of the new playing-field, the resurfacing of the tennis-court, the construction of new paths, the installation of a "talk-back" system, and the provision of additional furnishings for the staff quarters.

At Titirangi there were 119 pupils (64 boys and 55 girls) on the roll at 31st March, 1949. There were 36 new admissions during the year and 14 children left.

REGISTERED CHILDREN'S HOMES

Seventy-five 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 Division. At the end of last year there were, according to returns received, a total of 2,520 children in residence, as against 2,418 the previous year.

It was reported that in the cases of 104 children both parents were deceased, in 216 cases the fathers were deceased, and in 372 cases the mothers were deceased. It is understood that in many other cases the parents were separated or were missing.

PLACEMENT IN FOSTER-HOMES

In previous reports I referred to the difficulty experienced in securing and keeping available a sufficiency of suitable foster-homes. It is pleasing to report that the situation has eased during the year, particularly outside the main centres. This is probably due to a number of factors, the principal ones of which may be: (1) The gradual decline in the number of children to be placed out, (2) the sustained efforts of the field staff, (3) the publicity given to the desirability for people to make their homes and themselves available for this valuable social service work, and (4) the increases in the boarding-out rates in recent years. The boarding-out system is one of the essential features of child welfare work in this country and it is desirable that we should always be in a position to select from a reserve of foster-homes one specifically suited to the needs of the individual child to be placed. Endeavours to achieve this end will be continued.

At the 31st March, 1949, there were 1,737 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, 1949, 264 of the children placed in foster-homes were receiving post-primary education and 15 Maori children were residential pupils at Maori colleges.