

of the bulk of industrial-school children prior to their admission, and the fact that many of them are exceedingly delicate infants, are taken into consideration. The sustained prosperity of the colony is having the effect of making it somewhat difficult to find the right class of homes, especially for infants.

During the past five years much greater attention has been paid to the subject of obtaining contributions from parents towards the support of children under industrial-school control. In that time the annual receipts from this source have risen from £1,300 to £3,500, and there is every reason to expect that there will be a proportionate increase in the current year. Last year an average sum of £2 10s. 9d. was recovered from parents for every one of the 1,370 children maintained out of public funds. To bring about such a satisfactory result the closest watchfulness has been necessary. The matter of payments in support of illegitimate children, both by the putative fathers and by the mothers, has received special care. Compositions totalling £180 in two cases have been made during the year by putative fathers, one of these being secured by means of registering the maintenance order against the title of a section of rural land. As showing the importance of co-operation between the Courts, the Police, and the Education Department in this matter, it may be mentioned that in one instance where the Magistrate held the view that undue pressure was brought to bear on parents by the Department, the receipts for a year dwindled to £125 in that centre; but, upon his being succeeded by a Magistrate who strongly holds the view that every person liable to pay for maintenance of a child should be compelled to do so if of sufficient ability, the receipts have steadily risen until they now stand at £520 for the year, and are still increasing.

A separate paper (E.-3) gives details respecting industrial schools.

SCHOOL FOR DEAF-MUTES.

It cannot be too often repeated that in this institution the deaf, who would otherwise be speechless, are taught both to speak and to understand (from the motion of the lips) the speech of others, and that they are thereby admitted not only to the benefits of communication with their fellow-men, but even very largely to the conceptions involved in human intercourse. These facts are not always understood or appreciated. Every year deaf children are found who, to a greater or less extent, have passed the age at which their special instruction should have begun, and who consequently fail to attain expertness in oral communication, or more than partial mental development. Through want of knowledge of the institution, through mistaken advice, through misguided affection, or through fear of expense, the parents of these children are responsible for a loss of time that can never be made good.

The following classes of deaf children are admitted to the institution, mental soundness being in all cases a necessity :—

1. Children born deaf, or who have lost their hearing before learning to speak.
2. Children who can hear a little, but are too deaf to be taught in an ordinary school.
3. Children who have lost their hearing after having learned to speak.

The number of pupils in the institution is steadily increasing. At the reopening of the school at the beginning of the year there were 57 pupils—29 boys and 28 girls; 9 boys and 6 girls were admitted during the year, and 1 boy and 1 girl left the school. At the end of the year there were 70 pupils—37 boys and 33 girls. It will soon become necessary to provide more residential accommodation, either by extending the buildings at Sumner or by establishing a branch of the institution in another part of the country.

The ordinary expenditure on the institution for the year 1906 was: Salaries of Director and teachers, £1,593 1s. 1d.; steward, matron, and servants, £726 3s. 3d.; rent, £11 13s. 4d.; housekeeping, £827 17s. 9d.; travelling-expenses (including transit of pupils), £182 4s. 1d.; school material and material for technical instruction, £8 5s. 8d.; general maintenance of buildings and furniture, £207 4s.; clothing, £20 14s. 10d.; medical attendance and medicine, £74 4s. 1d.; water-supply, £51 7s. 6d.; boarding-out of pupils, £164 6s. 4d.; sundries, £141 12s. 4d.: total expenditure, £4,008 14s. 3d. Deducting parents' contributions, £415 2s. 5d., the net expenditure was £3,593 11s. 10d. The amount expended in 1904 was £4,176 1s. 4d. The