

NUMBERS.

The number of infants that have been dealt with in one way or another during the year is 1,181; the number for last year was 1,017. At the end of the year there were 726 on the books, being 78 more than there were at the beginning of the year. The following table summarizes the transactions:—

Particulars of Admissions to and Removals from Licensed Foster-homes during 1909.

	Under 6 Months.	Between 6 Months and 1 Year.	Between 1 and 2 Years.	Between 2 and 3 Years.	Between 3 and 4 Years.	Between 4 and 5 Years.	Between 5 and 6 Years.	Over 6 Years, and still in Foster-homes.	Total.
<i>Entered on the Books.</i>									
On the books at the beginning of the year	97	103	149	103	78	66	36	16	648
Placed in licensed homes during the year	258	83	77	30	32	15	15	..	510
Adopted with premium (exclusive of those already on the books)	18	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	23
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,181
<i>Withdrawn from and remaining on the Books.</i>									
Removed from foster-homes by parents or guardians	47	52	88	42	35	17	11	4	296
Deaths	11	8	5	1	..	..	..	..	25
Adoptions from licensed homes without premiums	6	5	8	3	1	1	1	..	28
In homes to which exemption was granted ..	6	5	1	2	3	..	..	..	17
Brought under operation of the Industrial Schools Act	7	1	9	5	1	4	1	2	30
Written off the books for various causes	6	12	8	5	2	1	2	23	59
On the books at 31st December, 1909	82	91	195	121	78	75	55	29	726
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,181

The operations of the Act depend upon the existence of monetary consideration in the arrangement for keeping the infant, and if the persons concerned deny the existence of such consideration it is almost impossible to prove the contrary. A foster-parent, for instance, recently returned her license on the ground that she intended to keep the infant without payment. Her statement was confirmed by the infant's mother. No good reason appeared for this benevolence, but no other evidence was obtainable, and the infant is consequently no longer under supervision. That no suspicion of improper motive attaches to this case does not affect its value as an illustration.

FOSTER-HOMES.

The 726 infants on the books at the end of the year were in foster-homes as follows:—

In 435 homes each having one	435
In 84 homes each having two	168
In 24 homes each having three	72
In 6 homes each having four	24
In 3 homes each having five	15
In 2 homes each having six	12

554

Total of children 726

Twenty-two of the homes were those in which children under six were boarded out by Charitable Aid Boards.

The total number of licensed homes was 754, so that at the end of the year there were 200 licensed homes in which, for the time, no infants were boarded.

Every home is limited to a stated number of infants, but whether that number is one or more depends upon the circumstances: in view of the varying conditions of the homes it is not considered necessary to lay down any precise rule upon the subject. Wherever the circumstances appear to require it, care is taken to define specifically the number of infants of twelve months or under that may be maintained at one time in a home.

During the year there were 128 transfers of infants from one home to another. If it should become possible to extend to foster-parents the Government guarantee contemplated by the Act, many quite unnecessary transfers would be avoided, under the provision which vests in the Department the guardianship of infants for whose maintenance it has to pay.