

The adopting persons were,—

Husband and wife jointly	176
Wife alone	4
Unmarried man	2
Spinster	3
Married man	3
Widow	6
Manager, Presbyterian Social Service Association, Dunedin	21

The amount of the premiums ranged from £10 to £100.

The 41 adopted infants with whom premiums passed have been under the supervision of the Department. The remainder passed out of sight on the completion of the adoption orders. It does not appear right that this should be so, for, although the Act provides that any Magistrate may cancel an order for adoption, it is obvious, as was remarked last year, that much suffering may be endured by an adopted child before any neglect or ill treatment to which it may be subjected becomes so patent as to call for public interference. The remedy would be either to place all adopted infants under supervision or to secure that orders for adoption should not take final effect before the lapse of a considerable amount of time.

ILLEGITIMACY.

For its obvious relation to the intentions of the Infants Act the following table is given:—

Provincial Districts.							Illegitimate Births registered during 1909.	Number of Children aged 12 Months or less brought under the Act during 1909.
Auckland	..	..	..	..	..	..	316	60
Taranaki	..	..	..	..	..	..	43	8
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	..	..	52	18
Wellington	..	..	..	..	..	..	327	67
Marlborough	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	..
Nelson	..	..	..	..	..	..	40	5
Westland	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	1
Canterbury	..	..	..	..	..	..	227	79
Otago]	..	..	..	..	..	..	188	38
Totals	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,223*	276
Totals for 1908	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,105	343

* Including 9 cases of twins.

During the year, 129 registrations were effected under the Legitimation Act.

The expenditure for the year ended 31st December, 1909, was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Salaries of visiting nurses and local representatives	588	12	6
Travelling-expenses of District Agents, visiting nurses, and local representatives	222	8	6
Payments to foster-parents for board of infants	95	17	11
Legal expenses	10	19	6
Office expenses (including rent), advertising, and sundries	82	18	4
	1,000	16	9
Less recoveries	18	19	8
Net total	£981	17	1

Reports by the four District Agents are appended, and also, extracted from the Official Year-book of the Commonwealth of Australia, an interesting summary of the methods adopted in the several States of the Commonwealth for the supervision of infant life.

E. O. GIBBES,
Secretary for Education.

REPORTS OF DISTRICT AGENTS.

AUCKLAND.

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

In compliance with your instructions of the 7th ultimo, I beg to report as follows:—

During the year ending the 31st December, 1909, there has averaged 131 children in licensed foster-homes in this district. In addition to the children who through admission to foster-homes have been brought under the control of the State, there have been others under supervision, and visits and inquiries have been made relative to others again about whom letters and complaints have been received from persons interested in or concerned about their welfare. Much valuable knowledge is being acquired of infant life, and I think it will not be denied that the State is safeguarding life and health amongst a class which suffers most from the pressure of civilization.

The factors which tend, through the administration of the Infants Act, to lessen the rate of infant mortality in the homes in which infants are boarded out are the supervision of the children