

No. 1.—EXTRACT FROM THE THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

AFFLICTED AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

The number of children brought under the operation of the Industrial Schools Act in 1915 was 453, being forty-eight more than for the preceding year. The number whose names were written off the books was 305, leaving a total roll number of 3,166. Of these, 1,885 were boys and 1,281 girls. The classification of the children was as follows :—

Boarded out—						
From Government industrial schools	..	..	..	..	1,129	
From private industrial schools	..	..	..	..	5	
Total	..	..	..	..	1,134	
In residence—						
In Government industrial schools (other than reformatories)	..	..	..	..	423	
At private (Roman Catholic) industrial schools	..	..	..	..	335	
Total	..	..	..	..	758	
At reformatories (boys)	..	..	..	..	153	
„ (girls)	..	..	..	..	69	
Total	..	..	..	..	222	
In situations	..	..	..	..	543	
With friends on probation	..	..	..	..	222	
Under private guardianship	..	..	..	..	75	
Committed, but on probation	..	..	..	..	9	
In hospitals, private institutions, absent without leave, in prison, &c.	..	..	..	..	203	
Grand total	..	..	..	..	3,166	

In the total number on the books are included twenty-seven young women and five young men who are more than twenty-one years of age; and control of them is maintained under the law that provides for detention beyond that age of any young person who is shown, to the satisfaction of a Magistrate, to be morally degenerate or otherwise, in the public interest, unfitted to be free from guidance. These cases will be reviewed every four years, and by like procedure detention may be indefinitely prolonged. The power of placing out applies as though the inmate were under twenty-one. At each hearing counsel is provided at Government expense for the person concerned.

By similar provisions in the Education Act young people of feeble mind may be detained under the guidance of special schools. In this way lifelong control will be retained in case of necessity, and thus the public interest and that of young people who, without support, must surely fail signally in life are effectively safeguarded.

The number of children maintained at the public cost was 2,140. The parental contributions under orders of Court, agreements, &c., amounted to £9,535, being at the rate of £4 9s. 1d. per head of those maintained. This is an increase of 15s. 4d. per head over the rate for the preceding year.

The net expenditure for the last financial year on account of industrial-school children, exclusive of capital charges for additional buildings, works, and purchase of property (£41,948), shows a decrease of £2,728, although 148 more children were maintained.