

children appeared before the Court; at Wellington, 24; at Christchurch, 59; at Dunedin, 20: total, 440. Of these, 110 were committed to industrial schools, 32 were committed to industrial schools but placed on probation, and 137 were placed on temporary probation.

*Reduction in Numbers in Residence at Industrial Schools.*

As a result of an investigation regarding the conditions of the homes and the conduct of the resident inmates of each of the schools it was found possible to place out a considerable number either at board, with friends on probation, or in situations under supervision. Consequently the numbers in residence were reduced from 1,009 at the end of 1916 to 699 at the end of 1917, notwithstanding the fact that 358 children were committed to industrial schools during the year. As a result of this reduction it was possible to vary the function of the Auckland Industrial School from a residential school to that of a receiving-home or clearing-house.

*Reorganization of Boys' Schools.*

At the same time important changes were carried out in connection with the boys' schools. It was decided to reserve the training-farm at Nelson for boys of school age only, and the Training-farm at Weraroa for boys over school age. This change enabled the Department to close the day schools at Burnham and at the Training-farm, Weraroa, and by applying the system of boarding out direct from the Training-farm at Nelson it has been possible to close the Nelson Receiving-home. The probation system resulted in a considerable reduction in the numbers at each of these schools, and by a change in the system of classification at Weraroa it was possible to decide definitely on the closing of the Burnham Industrial School. The actual closing of this school was not accomplished, however, until June, 1918.

With a view to increasing the revenue-producing results associated with the industrial features of these institutions, considerable improvements have been effected in connection with the working of the farms attached to the training-farms at Weraroa and Nelson. At Weraroa the dairy herd has been increased, a factory for the manufacture of small cheeses has been established, the matter of growing vegetables on an extensive scale for the market has been taken in hand, and provision has been made for rearing a large number of pigs every year for the market. To enable these industries to be carried out successfully it was necessary to obtain additional land for wintering the dairy herd. Suitable land was available adjoining the school property, and the purchase was finally completed during 1918.

*Provision for Older Girls requiring Institutional Training.*

The number of girls in residence at both Caversham and Te Oranga Home was so small at the end of the year that the Department now proposes to close the latter school, and by remodelling the system of classification at Caversham hopes to be able to make ample provision for the older girls who require institutional training.

*Establishment of Probation Homes.*

The principles upon which the Department's policy is now based are very fully explained in the special report E.-1A presented to Parliament last year. The complement of the probation system is found in the probation home, which it is proposed to utilize for cases requiring short periods of detention or separation from parents, for punishing minor breaches of probation, for providing shelter and safety for children before trial either on arrest or on remand from the Courts, and for the accommodation of inmates of industrial schools and receiving-homes returning from foster-homes or travelling to and from situations. A probation home has been established at Christchurch, and provision is made in Auckland for the accommodation of suitable cases in the Probation Officer's private house. A property has been purchased in Wellington and will be available shortly for the reception of boys. The matter of acquiring a place in Dunedin is also under consideration. It is not proposed at present to detain any boy in a probation home for more than three months, so that the accommodation provided at each home is of a very limited nature.