

with the result that the revenue derived from all sources, including the cheese-making plant, is now of a very substantial nature. So satisfactory indeed has been the development in this direction that it may be claimed that the Training-farm is now self-supporting.

CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

Important changes have taken place in the system providing for the care and education of feeble-minded children. The younger boys in residence at the Special School at Otekaike have been transferred to the special school at Nelson, thus making it possible for the reservation of Otekaike for older boys who, although mentally subnormal and unfit to be at large in the community, are yet quite capable under suitable supervision of earning their keep in such an institution as Otekaike. The removal of the younger boys from direct contact with the elder boys is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. The training of the small boys at the Special School at Nelson is in the hands of a competent teaching staff, and, while it is yet too soon to look for definite results of such training, the Department has every confidence that the teachers—one of whom has had previous experience in the training of the feeble-minded in England—will work wonderful improvements in the mental, moral, and physical condition of these boys.

The question of providing special day classes in the various centres of population for backward children is now receiving consideration, and in conjunction with this movement it is proposed to establish special day classes with cottage homes attached for the training of the high-grade feeble-minded and for those who are considered unfit for the classes for backward children.

The cottage homes would be utilized for the purposes of boarding children whose parents are unable to provide for them or whose homes are in the country districts. By means of these special day classes it is hoped to cater adequately for all feeble-minded children in such a manner as will permit of the majority of them remaining in their own homes under the supervision of qualified officers, who will keep in close touch with the parents and will assist in placing the children in suitable employment when the proper time arrives. For the older feeble-minded children who cannot be adequately looked after in their own homes, or who are unfit on account of mental defect to be placed in the industrial work, or who would prove a menace to the community if allowed their liberty, the institutions at Otekaike and Nelson will be available for the reception of boys, who, under capable supervision, will be employed in farm-work, garden and orchard work, and in the bootmaking, basketmaking, matmaking, and carpentering shop. The older girls will be provided for at the Special School at Richmond, and employed in housework and laundry-work, in the workroom sewing, knitting, &c., and in outside occupations such as gardening and flower-growing.

INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION.

Important changes have been carried out in connection with the supervision of children under the age of six years maintained apart from their parents. This work is now carried out under the supervision of trained nurses who are fully qualified in the care and feeding of infants and young children. It must be remembered that the majority of infants dealt with under this system are illegitimate, and have been neglected to such an extent prior to placing in foster-homes that the greatest care is necessary in providing for their welfare. The fact that the death-rate of these children in licensed foster-homes is very much lower than the death-rate among children born in wedlock and cared for by their own parents may be taken as an indication that the system is satisfactorily administered.

EDUCATION OF DEAF CHILDREN AND CHILDREN WITH SPEECH DEFECTS.

During the year the Department has taken in hand the matter of establishing special classes in the various centres for the education of the hard-of-hearing children and for the correction of defective speech among children. Already such a class has been established in Wellington, and as soon as the school for the deaf at Sumner can spare a trained teacher a special class will be established in Auckland. It is necessary, of course, that the school at Sumner should be retained for the preliminary teaching of stone deaf children and young children who, in addition to being deaf, have little or no speech, and incidentally for the training of teachers for the deaf.