

By an arrangement with the Auckland Branch of the Y.M.C.A. a Home providing accommodation for not less than ten was established in Auckland, and to this Home the Department after careful selection admitted ten State wards, who are now receiving secondary education. For each boy so maintained a contribution is made from the Costley Trustees. On the one hand, the Y.M.C.A. is responsible for the general management of the Home and the supervision generally of the boys, while, on the other hand, the Department's welfare officer watches the progress of the boys at the secondary school.

The system is working exceedingly well, and, thanks to the personal and generous interest taken in the scheme by the Trustees of the fund and the officials of the Y.M.C.A., every opportunity is given the boys to become decent and useful citizens.

ASSISTED SERVICE, HIGHER SERVICE, AND EMPLOYMENT OF STATE CHILDREN OVER SCHOOL AGE.

An important part of the work carried out by Managers of Institutions, Boarding-out Officers, and Juvenile Probation Officers is the placing of State children in suitable avenues of employment. On the care and discrimination exercised by these officers in this work depends the future of the children, and also the question whether, when they reach the adult stage, these young charges will become assets or liabilities to the State. The Department is fully alive to the importance of this particular phase of the work, and, as a matter of fact, reviews the action taken in each individual case. As a general rule these young people are encouraged to take up rural occupations, as experience has shown that for the majority of lads who are taken from the crowded city areas life in the country offers the best chance of permanent reformation. There is a considerable number, of course, who are eminently suitable for trades and similar occupations, and for these the Department finds suitable openings. In the case of the latter considerable difficulty is experienced in boarding them in suitable homes; probably this difficulty could be got over to a certain extent by utilizing part of the accommodation at each receiving-home and probation home for the purpose of housing these young people in the early stages of apprenticeship at least.

At the end of 1923 there were 55 inmates at service receiving assistance (assisted service in most cases refers to apprenticeship). There were 36 children receiving post-primary education—30 secondary and 16 technical. In addition, there were 84 children over the age of fourteen years still attending the public schools and being maintained by the Department.

Nature of Employment at 31st December, 1923, of Boys having left School.

At the end of the year there were 465 farm workers—100 skilled in dairy and farm work, and 365 others competent to carry out general farm-work. There were 49 boys apprenticed, as follows: 12 cabinetmakers, 6 bootmakers, 5 carpenters, 4 tinsmiths, 3 plasterers, 3 blacksmiths, 2 motor engineers, 2 electrical engineers, 2 coachbuilders, 1 jockey, 1 wireworker, 1 ironmoulder, 1 printer, 1 basketmaker, 1 boilermaker, 1 plumber, 1 draper, 1 brassfounder, and 1 engine-driver. Boys otherwise employed (not apprenticed) totalled 108, as follows: 30 factory hands, 11 labourers, 9 shop-assistants, 8 clerks, 8 message-boys, 6 telegraph messengers, 6 bakers, 4 painters, 4 motor mechanics, 2 drivers, 2 warehouse hands, 2 gardeners, 2 railway employees, 1 domestic duties, 1 saddler, 1 bootmaker, 1 plumber, 1 basketmaker, 1 coachbuilder, 1 cycle-worker, 1 optician, 1 butcher, 1 grocer, 1 seaman, 1 seagrass-worker, 1 coach-painter, and 1 blacksmith.

Nature of Employment at the 31st December, 1923, of Girls having left School.

There were 325 domestics; 25 factory employees; and 27 in other employment, as follows: 11 tailoresses, 3 dressmakers, 3 shop-assistants, 2 waitresses, 2 clerks, 2 bookbinders, 1 dentist's assistant, 1 furrier hand, 1 photographer's assistant, and 1 telephone-exchange employee. This gives a total of 377 girls employed.

ADMISSIONS DURING 1923.

During the year 313 children were committed to the care of the Department, as compared with 410 for the previous year. The following table shows the new admissions classified according to age:—

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Under six months	24	16	40
Over six months and under one year	9	6	15
One year to five years	35	28	63
Five years to ten years	45	37	82
Ten years to fourteen years	48	15	63
Over fourteen years	37	13	50
Totals	198	115	313

Table 14 attached to this report shows the new admissions classified according to the causes of admission. Of the total number (313), 134 were destitute, 88 not under proper control, and 46 had been charged with punishable offences. Of the children admitted under these headings, all except 46 were placed out in foster-homes before the end of the year.

Table 17 gives particulars of the character or state of the parents at the time of the admission of the children. From this table I have selected the following figures showing (1) the number of children of drunken parents, and (2) the number of children of feeble-minded parents.