

Numbers under Control.

At the end of the year there were 3,784 children under control (excluding those mentioned under separate headings below), and of these 208 were in residence at Government receiving-homes, probation homes, training-farms, and training institutions, and 96 in private industrial schools; 1,767 children were boarded out in foster-homes, 874 were in situations, and 512 residing under license with relatives and friends. The remainder were in various homes or institutions.

Of the boarded-out children 79 are over the age of fourteen years and are still attending primary schools, 44 are receiving higher education (22 technical and 22 secondary), and a number are apprentices partly maintained by the State.

The children over school age in employment number 732 males and 359 females (included in the total of 3,784). Of the males 528 are farm workers (150 skilled in dairy-work and cheesemaking, and 378 competent to milk and carry out general farm-work), 58 are apprentices, and 146 others are employed in various trades. Of the girls there are 299 domestic workers, 20 factory employees, and 40 engaged in various employments such as shop-assistants, nurses, dressmakers, typists, &c.

Juvenile Probation System.

The functions of Juvenile Probation Officers are to assist the Courts in ascertaining the full facts regarding parents, conditions of homes, and environment of all children brought under the notice of the police, to supervise and befriend any juveniles placed on probation by the various Magistrates, and to undertake, on the application of the parents, the supervision of any children who are inclined to become uncontrollable. In addition, all male inmates of industrial schools or training-farms placed in situations, or with relatives or friends, are supervised by the Juvenile Probation Officers. There were 1,572 cases dealt with by the Courts in the principal centres of population throughout the year, and of these only 471 were actually admitted to receiving-homes or training institutions, 376 were placed on probation and supervised in their own homes, and the remainder were dealt with generally in a summary manner not calling for supervision by Probation Officers.

Infant-life Protection and Adoption of Children (Infants Act, 1908).

At the end of the year there were 704 children being maintained in 584 licensed foster-homes. Of these, 485 homes each had one child, 81 had two children each, 15 homes had three each, and 3 homes had four each. The payments by relatives for the maintenance of each child ranged from 5s. to £1 10s. a week, the average rate of payment being approximately 15s. 8d. a week.

Adoptions.

During the year 322 children were adopted, and in 32 of these cases premiums were received by the Department's agents and paid out at the rate of 15s. a week for each child concerned. Of the total number of children adopted, 73 were under the age of six months, 28 between the age of six and twelve months, and 158 between the age of one and six years.

CARE AND TRAINING OF AFFLICTED CHILDREN.

Deaf Children, Children with Defective Speech, and Mentally Backward Children.

The pupils under instruction at the school for the deaf, Sumner, during the year numbered 118, and of these 19 were day pupils and 99 boarders.

The special day classes in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin for partially deaf children and for children with speech defects were continued with highly successful results. About 119 children attended the classes last year. Provision has also been made in these centres and in Christchurch for night classes for the instruction of the adult deaf, 55 persons afflicted in this manner attending the classes in 1924.

Special Schools for the Feeble-minded.

There are two such special schools—one at Richmond (near Nelson) for girls, and one at Otekaike (near Oamaru) for boys. The number of girls in residence at Richmond at the end of the year was 76, and the number of boys at Otekaike 157. These institutions are for children who are educable to a certain degree, but not at the ordinary public school.