

friendly contact with the parents as well as the children is sufficient to bring about a readjustment of the home conditions or the correction of incipient anti-social traits in the children. In this important work the Department has had valuable assistance from certain of the private social service organizations, notably the Y.M.C.A. through its Big Brother movement commenced in Auckland a few years ago, and now extended to most of the centres of population throughout the Dominion.

The number of cases dealt with by the Courts last year was 1,316, and of these 323 were placed under supervision and dealt with as indicated in the foregoing paragraph.

The number actually admitted to institutions, such as receiving homes, special schools, training-farm, &c., was 423, but all these, with the exception of 85 who required long periods of training or were regarded as unfit for placing-out, were suitably provided for in the community before the close of the year. The remainder of the children were dealt with in a summary manner not calling for supervision by a Child Welfare Officer.

INFANT-LIFE PROTECTION AND ADOPTION OF CHILDREN (INFANTS ACT, 1908).

At the end of the year there were 771 children being maintained in 630 licensed foster-homes. Of these, 518 homes each had one child, 88 had two children each, 19 homes had three each, and 5 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 382 children were adopted, and in 38 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, 86 were under the age of six months, 41 between the age of six and twelve months, and 161 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 136 and of these 14 were day pupils and 122 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. Provision has also been made in these centres and in Christchurch for night classes for the instruction of the adult deaf.

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 196. These institutions are for children who are educable to a certain degree, but not at the ordinary public school.