

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

At the 31st March, 1927, there were 156 inmates at service receiving assistance (assisted service in most cases refers to apprenticeship). There were 45 children receiving higher education—30 secondary and 15 technical. In addition, there were 65 children over the age of fourteen years still attending the public schools and being maintained by the Department.

Nature of Employment at 31st March, 1927, of Boys having left School.

At the 31st March, 1927, there were 528 farm-workers—142 skilled in dairy and farm work, and 386 competent to carry out general farm-work. There were 68 boys apprenticed as follows: 10 cabinetmakers, 7 carpenters, 5 bootmakers, 5 motor mechanics, 4 electrical engineers, 4 bakers, 2 painters, 2 ironmoulders, 2 wire-workers, 2 motor engineers, 2 motor-car painters, 2 monumental masons, 2 coachbuilders, 2 engineers, 2 upholsterers, 2 plumbers, 3 plasterers, 1 french-polisher, 1 tinsmith, 1 glass-beveller, 1 jockey, 1 bricklayer, 1 sheet-metal worker, 1 cadet civil engineer, 1 probation teacher, 1 blacksmith, 1 bookbinder. Boys otherwise employed (not apprenticed) totalled 184, as follows: 62 labourers, 28 factory employees, 24 shop-assistants, 17 drivers, 10 clerks, 7 carpenters, 7 railway employees, 6 motor mechanics, 3 warehouse employees, 3 seamen, 3 postal employees, 2 bootmakers, 2 painters, 1 baker, 1 plumber, 1 tailor, 1 plasterer, 1 fisherman, 1 errand-boy.

Nature of Employment at 31st March, 1927, of Girls having left School.

There were 292 domestics, 38 factory employees, 3 clerks, 7 tailoresses, 3 upholsterers, 2 bookbinders, 4 laundry hands, 5 waitresses, 6 dressmakers, 6 shop-assistants, 2 nurses, and 1 teacher. This gives a total of 369 girls in employment.

PREVENTIVE WORK.

An important part of the work of Child Welfare Officers, District Agents, Boarding-out Officers, and Lady Managers of Receiving-homes is that of adjusting conditions in homes and in connection with families in order to prevent the committal of children to the care of the State. As time goes on our district offices are gradually assuming the role of child-welfare bureaux of information and adjustment. The police, school-teachers, and social organizations frequently refer to our officers for information and for assistance in the matter of adjusting undesirable or unfavourable conditions in homes where there are children, and in fact parents whose children are difficult to manage or are uncontrollable avail themselves of the services of our officers for the purpose of supervision and friendly guidance. A timely visit of a Welfare Officer frequently saves a child from further trouble. Very often it is found that the parents are at fault, and in these cases the officer's duty is to point out plainly and clearly the parental obligations and responsibilities. It is gratifying to find that these visits frequently have satisfactory results.

The following table shows the number of preventive cases notified by officers in the various districts during the year ended 31st March, 1927.

District.					Number of Families.	Number of Children.
North Auckland	..	..	..	..	17	54
Auckland	..	..	..	..	11	11
South Auckland	..	..	..	..	15	25
Wanganui	..	..	..	..	7	35
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	20	41
Palmerston North	..	..	..	..	9	9
Wellington	..	..	..	..	25	36
Nelson	..	..	..	..	24	31
West Coast	..	..	..	..	14	22
North Canterbury	..	..	..	..	23	49
South Canterbury	..	..	..	..	22	63
Otago	..	..	..	..	16	19
Southland	..	..	..	..	37	102
Totals	..	..	..	..	240	497

ADMISSIONS DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1927.

The following table shows the new admissions according to age:—

	Boys.	Girls.	Totals.
Under six months	26	26	52
Over six months and under one year	24	9	33
One year to five years	71	72	143
Five years to ten years	78	55	133
Ten years to fourteen years	94	50	144
Over fourteen years	63	35	98
Totals	356	247	603

Table 6 attached to this report shows the new admissions classified according to the causes of admission. Of the total number (603), 238 were destitute, 164 not under proper control, and 55 had been charged with punishable offences. Of the children admitted under these headings 298 were placed out in foster-homes before the 31st March.