

class in ordinary technical-school classes, groups of boys being drafted to manual-training classes and groups of girls to millinery and dressmaking. In addition, girls who are twelve years of age or over attend the manual-training centres for cookery, and the boys for woodwork. It is hoped by this means to ascertain the special aptitudes of the children, so that they may later on find a suitable niche in the industrial world.

Three teachers have returned from periods abroad, whither they had gone to acquire further training and to observe methods of work. One went to Canada and Great Britain, and two to Vinelands, New Jersey, which is regarded as the best training-school in the world for teachers of backward children. All three returned eager to put newly-acquired ideas into practice but convinced that our own classes are being conducted along right lines. Arrangements are under way for other special-class teachers to proceed abroad at an early date.

Two health camps for special-class children were held this year, one being in Wellington and one in Hawke's Bay. In both cases funds were raised locally and subsidized by the Department. The benefit to the children was most marked and well worth the labour involved.

No. 2.—STATEMENT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CHILD WELFARE BRANCH.

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1928.

As stated in the annual report of the Minister of Education, one of the most important functions of the Child Welfare Branch is to endeavour to check in the early stages the development of conditions in the social field that lead or are likely to lead to child wastage; and, where this is not possible, to provide social readjustment for the child or young person who by reason of his environment or physical or mental condition is handicapped in the race of life and likely to become a burden on the community. The Child Welfare Amendment Act of last year places a further responsibility on the Child Welfare Branch—viz., the inspection and registration of all orphanages and private institutions not used wholly for educational purposes where children are maintained apart from their parents or guardians, whether for payment or not. The scope of the principal Act (Child Welfare Act, 1925) has also been considerably widened by the raising of the age of a "child" from sixteen to seventeen years.

WORK IN SOCIAL FIELD.

Preventive Work.

One of the most important duties of the field staff is that of adjusting conditions in homes and in connection with families, in order to prevent developments that, unchecked, lead to vice, delinquency, and juvenile crime, and to anti-social conduct generally. Work of this kind is of incalculable value to the community and of considerable interest to the taxpayer. In the majority of cases timely intervention by an experienced officer obviates the need for the committal of children to the care of the State and the breaking-up of homes.

As the work of the Child Welfare Branch becomes better known, more use is made of this service by the police, school-teachers, private social workers, and in fact by a great many of the parents themselves who are experiencing difficulty in controlling their children.

The following table shows the number of preventive cases notified by officers in the various districts during the year ended 31st March, 1928. This does not of course represent the total of the work done, as there are a large number of cases of minor inquiries which are not reported to the Department.

District.						Number of Families.	Number of Children.
North Auckland ..	..	..	..	..	..	12	26
Auckland ..	..	..	..	..	..	13	13
South Auckland ..	..	..	..	..	..	31	72
Wanganui ..	..	..	..	..	..	11	32
Hawke's Bay ..	..	..	..	..	..	9	22
Palmerston North	..	..	..	..	..	6	6
Wellington ..	..	..	..	..	..	61	94
Nelson ..	..	..	..	..	..	32	39
West Coast ..	..	..	..	..	..	4	27
North Canterbury	..	..	..	..	..	19	60
South Canterbury	..	..	..	..	..	4	8
Otago ..	..	..	..	..	..	40	73
Southland ..	..	..	..	..	..	2	9
Totals ..	..	..	..	..	..	244	481