

offence, 77 ; and, in addition, 6 were admitted by private arrangement (5 under section 12, Child Welfare Act, and 1 under section 46, Infants Act), 43 were temporarily admitted, while 4 placed under supervision were ordered to be detained in residence for a period, making the total number of admissions for the year 485. Of the children committed, 75 had been dealt with previously by the Courts for other offences, for which they had received terms of supervision.

Classified according to the age at the time of admission, the numbers, including temporary admissions and those admitted under section 12, Child Welfare Act and section 46, Infants Act, and those ordered supervision with residence, are as follows : Under six months, 58 ; over six months and under one year, 17 ; from one to five years, 66 ; from five to ten years, 91 ; from ten to fourteen years, 109 ; over fourteen years, 144. The length of period of residence for the children temporarily admitted was from one day to seven weeks.

Of the children in foster-homes at the 31st March, 1937, 133 over the age of fourteen years were receiving further education, 67 at primary schools, and 66 at secondary or technical schools. Furthermore, 32 children under the age of fourteen years were receiving higher education. In addition, there were 15 residing in hostels receiving secondary education, and 11 children were boarding in colleges.

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1937.

FUNCTIONS OF THE CHILD WELFARE BRANCH.

Those interested in the early history of the Branch are referred to the article published in " Fifty Years of National Education in New Zealand " (Whitcombe and Tombs, Ltd.). This article sketches the growth of the work from the earliest recorded times up to the passing of the Child Welfare Amendment Act, 1927.

The main functions of the Branch may be briefly stated as follows :—

- (1) Supervision and general placement and care of all children committed to the care of the Department through the Children's Courts :
- (2) Visiting and oversight of all children placed by the Courts under the legal supervision of Child Welfare Officers :
- (3) Inquiry and investigation of all cases coming before Children's Courts :
- (4) Inquiry into cases of illegitimate births, to ensure that proper provision is being made for each child, and the mother where she is a young single woman :
- (5) Licensing of foster-homes under the Infants Act, and supervision of children placed therein :
- (6) Administration of State institutions for children and young people who cannot be placed in the community, including institutions for afflicted children :
- (7) Preventive work—that is, the inquiry in the early stages into cases of difficulty with children or bad adjustment in the home :
- (8) Inquiry into all applications for adoption of children :
- (9) Inspection and registration of private institutions and orphanages.

Before giving details of the year's work, the following is a brief statement of the Department's organizations outside the Head Office.

CHILD WELFARE OFFICERS.

There are at present 48 Child Welfare Officers, male and female, stationed in all the main centres in New Zealand according to the needs of each district. For instance, Auckland has 9 officers, while places like Hawera and Invercargill have 2 each. Upon these officers devolves all the preventive, inquiry, placement, supervisory, and other work involved in the functions of the Branch set out above. These officers report direct to the Children's Courts, and are given a wide discretion by the Department in dealing with all matters in their districts. Certain activities or proposals must, of course, have the approval of the Minister in Charge, in terms of the Act, but generally speaking the Department's policy is to decentralize the work so far as may be possible. The officers are selected according to their ability to deal with children and social problems, and to co-operate effectively with officials, and with parents and the public generally. With women, nursing and teaching experience, and with men, teaching or prior social service work, are regarded as essential qualifications. The need for trained workers is recognized, and it is hoped that arrangements may be made for our officers to obtain a diploma in this respect, with provision for continued lectures and study concerning the essential phases of child-welfare work in its broadest aspects. New appointees are trained in their more special duties by attaching them in the first instance to one or other of the larger centres under an experienced officer.