

Regarding admissions it may be stated that the usual practice is for a girl to be thoroughly tried out in a private foster-home or in a receiving-home before being admitted to Burwood, but at times with older girls it is necessary to send them direct from the Courts to Burwood. Of the 29 girls admitted last year 15 had to be admitted within a day or two of their appearance at Court. For the previous year ended 31st March, 1938, there were 38 new admissions, while 45 left the institution. A description of the activities of this institution is given in the Principal's report, which appears below.

The average period of residence of the girls taken over a number of years is approximately one year eight months. It is the practice to try girls out at day service first before giving them the opportunity of taking a position in a private home in the ordinary way. This system has proved very satisfactory. The girls during this period of day service return to the institution each night, and the officers, by friendly guidance and assistance, prepare the way for a girl to assume full responsibility when she is given the opportunity of taking a situation in the same way as other girls.

At the Boys' Training Farm at Weraroa day service for the boys would hardly be practicable, but there has been instituted a division in which a boy, whose conduct has improved sufficiently, is placed for a short period. He is paid a small weekly sum for his services and given much the same liberty as a boy would have in any well-ordered home. If he proves trustworthy his stay there is short, and he is then placed out in the community in the ordinary way.

At holiday time a number of boys are allowed to visit their homes, unless the home conditions are regarded as so unsatisfactory that it would not be in the boy's interest to give him the privilege. It has been found that the granting of this leave has been appreciated by the boys, and, with one or two exceptions, the privilege has not been abused.

At Weraroa every boy is medically examined by a local doctor as soon as he is admitted.

Regarding dietary at the institutions, I may say that officers of the Health Department have commented favourably on the menus provided, and have made suggestions for improvement, which the Department has gladly followed.

Backward children who cannot be educated at the special classes in the public schools are admitted to either of two residential institutions provided for the purpose. One of these, at Richmond near Nelson, is for girls, and one, at Otekaieke, near Oamaru, for boys. At both these institutions there is a highly qualified staff of teachers. Some of the children qualify after a period of training to return home and are admitted to a public school, and some are returned to foster-homes and again placed in the community. Others complete their school period at the institution and are then taken into the house or industrial section for further training before being placed in a situation. The children, when placed out, are supervised by the Child Welfare Officers of the district in which they may reside. Particulars and workings of these institutions for the year appear further on in the report.

In connection with its problem cases, including those in institutions, the Department again desires to record its appreciation of the services rendered by Dr. J. Russell, the Deputy Director-General of Mental Hospitals, an experienced psychiatrist, who has examined and reported upon a large number of children referred to him by the Branch, and who has kept in close contact with the Department's residential institutions. In the preventive field also his work is invaluable; parents with problem children call upon him or are referred to him for advice, the outcome of which is that frequently satisfactory adjustments in family and community relationships are made. His services have also been utilized to a large extent in connection with special investigations for the information of Children's Courts and with examination of cases where any instability or mental retardation in the child is considered to be a vital factor.

GIRLS' HOME, BURWOOD: REPORT OF PRINCIPAL.

I have to report a further record of good health during the past year in this institution, which has been safeguarded by a liberal and varied diet, plenty of out-door exercise, and the provision of expert medical and dental care when necessary.

About six hours each day are given to a careful training in all types of household work, dressmaking and sewing, and gardening and poultry-keeping, and every girl also attends daily classes where she is kept abreast of current events, encouraged in general reading and the intelligent use of newspapers, and taught singing and many types of handicraft and fine needlework. In connection with these classes mention may be made of the advantage taken of the broadcasts to schools, the special educational facilities and lectures at the Canterbury Museum, and the Country Library Service to which we are linked.

The girls attend their own local churches, and, in most instances, the Bible classes connected with them. They also attend the socials, picnics, &c., organized in connection with them, and those who form the choir of the Burwood Anglican Church take part in the choral festival at the Cathedral annually. During 1938 three girls were baptised and thirteen were confirmed.

With our girls, who are mostly of a pleasure-loving type, we consider it essential to provide ample facilities to foster the broader and more balanced use of leisure. We are fortunate in having a good swimming-bath and opportunities for outdoor sports, as well as indoor games and dancing daily. We have a branch of the Junior Red Cross, drama and bridge clubs, and great interest is shown in classes in first aid and home nursing, for which we are indebted to officers of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. During the winter short courses on mothercraft were also taken by a Plunket Nurse. The girls have also attended any outstanding films which have come to Christchurch, and small parties go regularly for tramps or to the beach during the hottest months. The outstanding events of the past year have been, in addition to our annual fete, a dance last winter to which we invited the members of Toe H and the local Bible classes, a visit as guests of the Christchurch Repertory Society to "Pride and Prejudice," and a Christmas Eve party given by one house for the rest of the girls and staff, which, after dancing, one-act plays, and supper, concluded with Nativity Shadow Tableaux accompanied by carol-singing.