

TABLE 13.—INSTITUTIONS FOR BACKWARD CHILDREN: NUMBERS AT 31ST MARCH, 1939.
(*Special School for Boys, Otekaike, and Special School for Girls, Richmond.*)

	Richmond (Girls).	Otekaike (Boys).	Total.
In residence	72	191	263
On vacation	..	1	1
Day pupils	2	..	2
At day service	4	..	4
In hospitals, &c.	4	23	27
Totals	82	215	297

These two institutions, which are also gazetted as institutions under the Child Welfare Act, 1925, provide for children who, being mentally retarded, cannot, for one reason or another, be taught efficiently at the ordinary school or provided for at a special class. The school curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of the pupils and is administered by specially-trained teachers of long experience in this particular work. Handwork, of course, occupies a prominent place. The health of the children at both institutions during the year was very good. A competent nurse is attached to the staff of each institution. The annual reports of the officers in charge of the institutions is attached.

SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS, OTEKAIKE: REPORT OF MANAGER.

I beg to submit herewith my report for the year ended 31st March, 1939:—

At the 31st March, 1939, the number of boys in residence was 191; of these, 139 were in the day-school section and 52 in the industrial department. Sixty-two pupils were admitted during the year and 71 left the institution. Of those who left, 64 returned to ordinary life in the community, 7 were found to be unsuitable for training in the institution (of these 4 were transferred to custodial homes), and 3 to the Boys' Training Farm, Weraoa).

In the industrial department the boys received training in farm, garden, and orchard work, bootmaking and repairing, coir-mat making, carpentry, and general domestic work (laundry, kitchen, &c.).

The farm supplied the requirements of the institution for fresh milk, meat, and potatoes. The garden produced an abundant supply of fresh vegetables, and, in addition, all the fruit required for jam-making, &c. In the bootshop the boots required by the inmates during the year were made, and all the repairs necessary to boots, harness, &c., were carried out. Coir-mats, seagrass-furniture, and basketware were made in the basket-shop. The average chronological age of the 139 boys in the day school was twelve years two months, and the average I.Q. (Terman) 70.

Throughout the year the usual recreational activities were carried on, and we are indebted to several visitors for providing entertainment for the children. Early in the year the Kurow Branch of the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union gave a concert at the school. Later Mr. Brailsford, W.E.A. lecturer, gave a lantern lecture on "Japan." Mr. J. Rutherford, ex Director of Education, Samoa, also gave an address on Samoa, illustrated by the film, "Moana of the South Seas." In December the Oamaru T.M. members provided a Christmas treat in the form of a picnic. All these entertainments were much enjoyed by the boys and staff, who appreciate the interest of these visitors. The children also enjoyed several picnics, provided by the institution. Last year we were pleased to accept the invitation of the committee of the Oamaru Musical Festival to participate in their annual function, a group of twenty boys contributing two items. The Otago Inspectors, the Physical Instructor, and the Supervisor of Manual Training have paid their usual visits. Mr. Green, Supervisor of Manual Training, has arranged for the weekly visit of the Woodwork Instructor for North Otago centres.

The health of the inmates of the institution during the year was good.

W. MEIKLEHAM, Manager.

SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, RICHMOND: REPORT OF PRINCIPAL.

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year ended 31st March, 1939:—

On the 1st April, 1938, there were 82 girls on the register. Of these, 2 were day pupils, 4 at day service, 4 in custodial institutions, and 72 resident boarders. During the year 34 girls were admitted, the youngest under seven years of age, and 26 were discharged. Of these, 8 were then on holiday or between positions, 1 day pupil finished her schooling, 8 went to friends for service, 1 were placed in position, 2 were transferred to Mount Magdala, and 3 to receiving-homes to be placed at work.

Eighteen girls spent Christmas holidays with parents or foster-parents. The remainder of the girls spent seventeen days in camp at Tahuna Beach during that time.

The girls have continued playing basket-ball, tennis, and clock golf, and had several basket-ball matches with other schools.

The school gained prizes at the Nelson and Richmond Shows for handwork.

On two occasions a number of the girls went to swimming sports and had some success. This was gratifying, as the girls have very little opportunity for swimming.

The school girls and some house girls went to the combined school sports at Richmond and met with success in several of the events. This is the first year they have been invited to join in with other schools, and we have appreciated it very much.

In November members of the Nelson Women's Club took all the girls to Wai-iti Domain for a picnic. They all went to Tahuna Beach for a picnic in December and a railway picnic to Wai-iti Domain in February. All the girls went to the first demonstration for Physical Fitness Week.

None of the girls attended pictures from July to December on account of measles. We had no cases of measles among the girls. This I attribute to the fact that during the epidemic they were not allowed to go anywhere where numbers of people congregated and they were kept in the sunshine as much as possible.

All the girls went twice to picture matinees in Richmond during January and to "Snow White" in Nelson in February.

We held a garden party in November, and displays of drill and folk-dancing were given by the girls and a sale of their handwork brought £17 for the Recreation Fund.

The health of the girls has been excellent; we have had no serious sickness at all.

The staff have all worked well and loyally, especially the school teachers, who have given much of their spare time for sports and picnics.

G. G. MEDDINS, Principal.