

Classified according to age at the time of admission the numbers are as follows: Under six months, 57; over six months and under one year, 23; from one to five years, 108; from five to ten years, 155; from ten to fourteen years, 135; and over fourteen years, 57.

During the year receiving-homes for the temporary care of such children were established at Napier, Hamilton, and Wanganui, and lady officers who are all qualified nurses were appointed to Palmerston North, Greymouth, and Invercargill for the purpose of investigating all cases reported as coming within the terms of section 17 of the Industrial Schools Act and for placing out either with relatives or friends or in foster-homes any children dealt with by the Courts in these districts, and for the purpose of supervising infants maintained apart from their parents or adopted with premium.

Numbers under Control.

At the end of the year there were 3,839 children under control (excluding those mentioned under separate headings below), and of these 151 were in residence at Government receiving-homes, probation homes, training-farms, and training institutions, and 207 in private industrial schools; 1,886 children were boarded out in foster-homes, 788 were in situations, and 520 residing under license with relatives and friends. Of the boarded-out children a number are over the age of fourteen years and are still attending primary schools, 27 are receiving higher education—(17 technical and 10 secondary), and 28 are apprentices partly maintained by the State.

The children over school age in employment number 683 males and 338 females (included in the total of 3,839). Of the males, 494 are farm workers (11 skilled in dairy-work and cheesemaking and 483 competent to milk and carry out general farm-work), 41 are apprentices, and 148 others are employed in various trades. Of the girls there are 292 domestic workers, 16 apprentices, 13 factory employees, and 17 engaged in various employments such as shop-assistants, nurses, dress-makers, typists, kindergarten trainees, &c.

Juvenile Probation System.

Male Juvenile Probation Officers have now been appointed to Napier, Palmerston North, Greymouth, and Invercargill. The functions of Juvenile Probation Officers are to assist the Courts in ascertaining the full facts regarding parents, conditions of homes and environment of all children brought under the notice of the police, to supervise and befriend any juveniles placed on probation by the various Magistrates, and to undertake, on the application of the parents, the supervision of any children who are inclined to become uncontrollable. In addition, all male inmates of industrial schools or training-farms placed in situations, or with relatives or friends, are supervised by the Juvenile Probation Officers. There were 947 cases dealt with by the Courts in the principal centres of population throughout the year, and of these only 224 were actually admitted to receiving-homes or training institutions, 277 were placed on probation and supervised in their own homes, and the remainder were dealt with generally in a summary manner not calling for supervision by Probation Officers.

Infant-life Protection and Adoption of Children.

At the end of the year there were 797 children under the age of six years maintained in 621 foster-homes. Of these 498 homes each had one child, 85 had two children each, and 29 homes had three each. The payments for the maintenance of each child ranged from 7s. 6d. to £2 2s. a week, but the average rate of payment was approximately 14s. a week.

Adoptions.

During the year 417 children were adopted, and in 41 of these cases premiums were received by the Department's agents and paid out at the rate of 15s. a week for each child concerned. Of the total number of children adopted, 113 were under the age of six months, 43 under twelve months, and 180 under the age of six years.