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The Functions of an Institution:
The Otekaieke Special School for Boys 1908 - 1950

S. Bardsley

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in History at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

1991
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Introduction:

Otekaieke and the Development of Special Education in New Zealand

Otekaieke Special School for Boys functioned at three distinct levels in the period 1908 to 1950. As an institution for dealing with children seen as problematic it functioned on a wide social level. As a backstop to the classroom it functioned as a significant part of the education system. And as the home of a large number of boys it functioned on an individual level as the setting for their experiences. At each of these levels the school fulfilled different needs and served a wide variety of interests. In the three chapters of this long essay I am going to examine each level in turn, and the interests served and needs fulfilled, or left unfulfilled, at each.

Social history claims to take the perspective of "history from the bottom up", that is, history from the perspective of the 'ordinary' person as opposed to the traditional concentration on the powerful. It also claims to reject the Whiggish concept that the past necessarily 'progresses', becoming always more and more enlightened. Social history claims to welcome the contributions which can be made to historical knowledge by other disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and geography. Yet the history of 'mental retardation' has

1 Alternatively spelt 'Otekaike' or 'Otekaieke'.
5 For the purposes of clarity I use the contemporary terms for individuals labelled as mentally retarded to indicate the group which society identified in such a way. The terms used, such as 'mentally retarded', 'feebleminded' or 'mentally defective' are put in inverted commas to show that I am describing individuals as perceived and labelled, not necessarily the characteristics of the individuals themselves. The
been slow to benefit from the new perspectives offered by social history. As a result, much of the history that has been written has taken the traditional 'progressive' approach, assuming that society's treatment of the 'retarded' becomes increasingly humanitarian and understanding as time goes on. Conventional history of 'mental retardation', it has been claimed, takes the approach of an "unfinished morality play" which serves to inspire its readers in the workings of democracy. In New Zealand the study of special education and separate provision for the 'mentally retarded' has been scanty. Vincent describes it as being characterised by its "brief and superficial nature".

The history of mental retardation' does not deserve to be treated in such a way. It is important for two reasons. First, it is necessary for special education and the concept of mental retardation to have a 'past' so that we are able to better assess its present state and its future. In order for modern decision-makers to claim the right to deal with individuals by separating them from society, they owe it to these individuals to understand the consequences of a decision to separate them. It is only by knowing the effects of their decisions that they best earn the right to make them.

Second, the study of past treatment of, and provision for, the 'mentally retarded' is significant for what it tells about society as a whole in any given period. 'Mental retardation' is a social construct, that is to say that it is not something that exists on its own. Nor is normality. They are both creations of society. Society decides and monitors what is and is not normal in the area of intellect as well as in all other aspects of existence. For most of history there has been no

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6 M. Lazerson, 'Educational Institutions and Mental Subnormality: notes on writing a history', M.J. Begab & S.A. Richardson (eds), The Mentally Retarded and Society: A social science perspective, pp. 33-35.
7 Ibid, pp. 34-35.
8 C. Vincent, Special Education as Social Control: The historical development of industrial schools and special classes, MA thesis in education, Massey University, 1985, p. 4. Vincent reviews the historiography of special education in New Zealand on pp. 1-14.
9 Ibid, pp. 4-5.
way to quantify intelligence, and many will argue that it still cannot be, and will
never be able to be, accurately measured. Nonetheless societies have ideas about
what is and is not normal and these can vary significantly according to time and
place. Primrose, with reference to the mentally ill, wrote that they "form but a
small part of the total New Zealand population. Yet they reflect that society, for
they are its failures, and in some ways an indictment upon it." Sociologists
have recently 'discovered' special education as a product of society and lamented
its previous neglect. Sarason and Doris express the importance for
sociologists of the history of 'mental retardation' when they write:

...in pursuing the social context in which mental retardation becomes defined and
managed, we are provided with a perspective from which to look at the nature of
our society. When we study mental retardation we are studying our society, and
the failure to understand that goes a long way to explaining the seamy history of
mental retardation in our society.

Treatment of 'mental retardation' is thus a useful tool through which to
monitor social attitudes in any given time.

Because I have chosen to order my long essay in a thematic, instead of a
chronological way, it is necessary at the outset to provide a brief sketch of the
overall development of the institution. It is against this backdrop that the
school's functions in terms of society, the education system, and the individual
boys can be assessed.

The Special School for Boys at Otekaieke was established in 1908 after a
considerable degree of public pressure. It was finally founded when the
Government handed over the homestead and 342 acres of land from what was

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10 M.S. Primrose, Society and the Insane: a study of mental illness in New Zealand 1867-
1926 with special reference to Auckland Mental Hospital, MA thesis in history,
University of Auckland, 1968, p. iii.
11 eg. S. Tomlinson, A Sociology of Special Education, passim; J.G. Carrier, 'Sociology
J.G. Carrier, 'Sociological Perspectives on Special Education', New Education, v. 11,
n. 1, 1989, p. 21; S.B. Sarason and J. Doris, Educational Handicap, Public Policy and
Social History, passim.
12 Sarason & Doris, p. 418.
13 Known as Campbell Park School since 1964.
left of the estate of Robert Campbell to the Education Department. The Government had bought the 29,925 acres of the Campbell estate and divided it into 60 allotments, which were ballotted out between 996 applicants.

George Benstead, the first principal, was selected in London by the High Commissioner for New Zealand, the Inspector-General of New Zealand Schools, and Dr Shuttleworth, a leading English specialist in the field of 'feeblemindedness'. He took up residence at the school in April 1908 and had admitted the school's first four pupils by the end of that year. Benstead was described as having had "long and varied experience in the intricate work" of educating such a "class" of children. Before leaving for New Zealand he had visited many of the "most advanced" institutions for the 'feebleminded' in England. Prior to his appointment Benstead had been the Superintendent of Chorlton and Manchester Joint Asylum, near Blackburn. The influence of overseas models, particularly British models, was to be important for Benstead in developing his ideas about how Otekaieke should be run. In his nine years as Principal of Otekaieke Benstead alienated many of the staff members at Otekaieke and several of the Government officials connected with the place. Complaints about the management of the school appeared as early as 1910, but the nature of the complaints is unknown. They may have had something to do with a disagreement between Benstead and a member of staff with regard to whether or not alcohol was allowed to be consumed on the property. Benstead's downfall, it seems, was largely due to the fact that he allowed the school to become filled up with "low grade custodial cases" and thus had problems getting results in terms of the 'training' of the boys. He was forced

16 AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 3.
17 AJHR, 1909 E-1, p. 23.
18 AJHR, 1908, E-1, p. xxxvii.
19 Prospectus for Otekaike 1909, CW 40/5.
20 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (hereafter NZPD), 31 August 1910, v. 151, p. 151 (Mr Clark).
to resign in 1917 and went on to found his own private school for 'feebleminded' boys in Timaru.23

After Benstead's resignation the school was divided into two sections with boys below fourteen years of age accommodated at a separate institution in Nelson, leaving Otekaieke for older boys being trained in vocational work.24 The experiment did not work out and the younger boys returned in November 1921.25 The Institution continued to be divided into two parts - the school and the industrial divisions - until 1951.26 Of the management of Mr T. Archey, Manager between 1918 and 1920, almost nothing is known.

The figure to dominate Otekaieke for the next thirty years was William Meikleham, who was Manager of the school from 1920 to 1951, receiving the award of Master of the British Empire in 1947 for his services.27 Two other important figures were Clare Wylie, Head Teacher from 1921-48,28 and Dorothy Steel, First Assistant teacher from 1930 to 1948 and Head Teacher from 1948 to 1951.29

Figure One shows that the total number of boys at Otekaieke varied considerably between the time of its establishment and the middle of the century, falling into three main stages.30

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23 G. Benstead's private school for the feebleminded, Timaru 1917-39, CW 40/6/50.
24 AJHR, 1919, E-1, p. 55; AJHR, 1920, E-1, p. 47.
28 'Clare Wylie Head Teacher 1921-48', p. 28.
29 'Dorothy Steel Head Teacher 1948-51', Aspden (ed), p. 29.
30 The four girls who were on the school roll between 1912 and 1915 are not included in the figures for the graph.
Figure One - Boys at Otekaieke 1909-1950

Number of Boys at Otekaieke Special School, 1909-1950

The number of boys rose steeply from nine in 1909 to over 200 in about 1926, as the school and its perceived role expanded. A. R. Avann pointed out in 1927 that the growth in numbers at the school was more than that which could be accounted for simply by the growth in population in New Zealand overall in this period. The government was taking responsibility for a larger proportion of the 'feebleminded' population than previously. The school roll became relatively constant between 1926 and 1940, staying between 183 and 219 boys. Then, after 1940, the roll dropped considerably, evening out between 1945 and 1950 at about 115 boys. The reason for the drop in numbers after 1940 was the fact that World War Two had led to severe labour shortages and the school was unable to get enough teachers and cottage staff to accommodate all the potential pupils. The average length of stay of a sample of 464 pupils was four years.

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and two months. Less than one sixth of boys stayed less than a year, whereas one quarter of them remained at the school for more than six years.33

Otekaieke was the first measure taken by the New Zealand Government to provide special education for 'feebleminded' children. More were to follow. The first half of the twentieth century saw a great expansion in facilities for both 'backward' and 'defective' children and these affected the role of Otekaieke. The Special School for Girls at Richmond was set up in 1916 after considerable pressure from women's organisations and Members of Parliament who saw it as a solution to the perceived threat of the breeding of 'feebleminded' girls.34

The first special class for 'backward' children was opened at Auckland Normal School in 1917 after similar pressure from the New Zealand Educational Institute and School Medical Officers.35 After a slow beginning the number of special classes increased to 29 by 1930, 43 by 1940 and 53 by 1953.36

In 1922 the Government began to move children still in mental hospitals into a home in Nelson.37 By 1943 the Nelson Home accommodated 180 children with levels of intelligence regarded as lower than those of children admitted to Richmond or Otekaieke.38 Templeton Farm School was established under the jurisdiction of the Mental Hospitals Department in 1929 to provide for children

32 AJHR, 1942, E-4, p. 2; AJHR, 1945, E-4, p. 5; Letter, Meikleham to Earle L. Davidson, 6 August 1947, CH 139 - Day School General 1931-50.
33 For notes on statistical method see Appendix A.
34 eg. letters dated 1913 from Women's Christian Temperance Union branches and Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union in Departmental file, CW40/5; Questions in the House from Mr Craigie, August 13 1913, NZPD, v. 163, p. 629, Mr Myers, August 27 1913, NZPD, v. 164, p. 124, Mr Witty, September 17 1914, NZPD, v. 170, p. 44.
36 Ibid.
38 J.M.E. Jones, A Study on the Problem of Mental Deficiency and Backwardness in New Zealand Children and the Measures Adopted to Deal with It, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1943, pp. 55-6.
thought to be of low intelligence,\textsuperscript{39} and enabled Otekaieke to transfer some of its "lower grades".\textsuperscript{40}

A government report (the Atmore Report) in 1930 recommended the establishment of 'Occupational Centres' for special class children who had left school but were unable to compete for ordinary jobs.\textsuperscript{41} Four centres were established - one in each of the main centres - but they came to be used more for children whose IQs were regarded as too low for them to be admitted to special classes or schools.\textsuperscript{42} In 1943 Occupation Centres catered for about 120 children.\textsuperscript{43}

The 'Boys Training Centre' in Levin, on the site of what had been Weraroa Training Farm for delinquent boys, was established in 1945 and by 1949 had 305 inmates.\textsuperscript{44} Its inmates were said to have had a "higher mentality" than those at Otekaieke, but more "anti-social habits".\textsuperscript{45}

As well as direct separate provision for 'defective' children, diagnostic and psychological services were also developed.\textsuperscript{46} A Psychological clinic was set up at Victoria University College in 1926,\textsuperscript{47} and others followed in Christchurch, Auckland and Dunedin.\textsuperscript{48} Two psychological clinics were established by the

\textsuperscript{40} D. Steel, 'Teaching in the Twenties', Aspden (ed), p. 27.
\textsuperscript{41} Mitchell & Mitchell, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{42} Memo, Russell to Gunn, 21 December 1938, H-MHD 4/6; Jones, pp. 33-4.
\textsuperscript{43} Jones, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{44} G.A. West and L.J. Walker, The Levin Farm, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1950, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{45} N. Roydhouse, Otekaieke Special School, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1949, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{47} Mitchell & Mitchell, p. 24.
Mental Hospitals Department in the 1930s as assessment centres for "mentally subnormal" and "disturbed" children.49

Otekaieke must be seen in the framework of special education development as the first provision in what was to become a complex structure. To some extent the motives for establishing and maintaining Otekaieke thus reflect the reasons for the development of special education as a whole. Otekaieke is a particularly useful case study of the reasons for special provision because of the fact that the field, in 1908, had not yet become as compartmentalised and specific as it did in later years.

49 Ibid.
Chapter One:
The Social Function of Otekaieke

Long term developments in New Zealand society meant that by the turn of the century it was considered necessary to establish separate provision for 'mentally retarded' boys. In this chapter I aim to examine the function that the Special School for Boys at Otekaieke was thought to fulfil in the context of New Zealand society as a whole.

Justifications for establishing and maintaining Otekaieke were voiced in a variety of forms. Members of the public, for example, wrote letters to the Education Department and presented petitions in the hope of getting something done. Teachers voiced their complaints to administrators and organisations such as the New Zealand Educational Institute. Government officials sent memorandums and letters urging action. Debates and questions relating to a school for 'feebleminded' children took place in parliament at regular intervals.¹ Justification for establishing and maintaining Otekaieke can be found particularly in the annual reports of the school's principal or manager,² in reports of visiting inspectors found in departmental files, in departmental memos and letters, and in stories of newspaper reporters. The evidence of these sources, along with that of overseas examples, will be used in this chapter to demonstrate the complexity of motivations behind the development of separate provisions for the 'mentally retarded' in New Zealand.

The vast changes affecting New Zealand society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries influenced attitudes towards 'mental defectives' in two main ways. First, they led to a reconceptualisation of 'mental defect' and an

¹ For example, the question of when a school was to be established was raised in Parliament at least seven times between 1900 and 1905, and questions about establishing similar schools in other areas were raised frequently thereafter.

² Excerpts from the annual reports are usually included in the Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives under the section E-4, the report of the Superintendent of the Child Welfare Branch.
easier identification of those in society who were different in some way. Second, social changes affected beliefs about the way in which 'mental defectives' should be treated. These beliefs were inextricably linked with changing attitudes regarding the role and responsibilities of the State, the concern for social order and protection, the emphasis on financial efficiency, concern for 'normal' children in schools, and the growth of bureaucracies and professions.

Over the period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries 'mental defect' came to be seen less as a private problem within the family and more as a public responsibility, to be dealt with by the government. Robertson has stated that the process of re-conceptualisation of 'mental defect' took place in New Zealand between 1900 and 1939. I would argue that it was a more gradual process with its origins firmly in the nineteenth century, and that there is evidence that attitudes had largely changed by the early 1900s. Robertson attributes the re-conceptualisation to four factors: the emergence of the 'mentally defective' as part of a problematic group in the education system; progress in the classification and definition of this group; the threat posed by 'feebleminded' women; and the hereditary nature of 'mental defect' which made it a concern of the eugenics movement. I would argue that, at least as far as children were concerned, there were other, less obvious, factors which were at least as important. The major social changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries underlie many of these factors.

In terms of demography urbanisation was the most striking change in New Zealand society between 1870 and 1920. Less than 30% of the European population lived in towns of more than 8000 people in 1896, compared to just under one half of the European population in 1936. Just as the rural ethos of

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4 S. Robertson, Production not Reproduction: The problem of mental defect in New Zealand, 1900 - 1939, BA (Hons) long essay in history, University of Otago, 1989, p. 4.
5 Ibid, p. 10.
7 Ibid, p. 254.
mid nineteenth century New Zealand society laid stress on individualism, hard work, and personal effort, the fact that so many people lived in such close daily contact must have led to more rigid expectations of cooperation and conventional behaviour. Certainly urbanisation helped to foster a "new spirit of organization" in all spheres of New Zealand life. Those who were unable to contribute equally to the increasingly structured social life of the towns, or who did not meet up to the intellectual expectations of their neighbours, were bound to stand out. Urbanisation led to a greater awareness of individual differences, and replaced the more socially flexible rural community with weightier social demands.

Industrialisation had a similar effect to urbanisation, in that it helped to identify those who were less able to keep up with their workmates. Industrialisation also led to increasing demands being placed on the education system to produce workers for a more skilled and socialised workplace. Added emphasis was therefore placed on school performance, and children who fell behind became more noticeable.

As Robertson points out the education system was indeed an important factor in the reconceptualisation of 'mental defect' as a public, rather than a private, problem. Children who were unable to progress through school at the same rate as others were easier to identify. 'Feebleminded' children came to be seen as a problem for teachers in many places around the turn of the century. Much of the reason for this was the passage of compulsory education laws. A Philadelphia administrator in 1909 commented that before the passage of compulsory education laws a pupil who failed to keep up tended either to drop out or to be forced out of school. A study of stages in the development of

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9 Olssen, p. 257.
11 Robertson, pp. 13-18.
special education in 119 countries found a strong correlation between the institution of compulsory education and special provision for the 'mentally retarded'. The passage of compulsory attendance laws immediately preceded the development of separate provision in many countries.

From 1877 New Zealand children had to attend school between the ages of seven and thirteen years. In 1901 compulsory attendance was increased until children were aged fourteen. The fact that each child was measured against his or her peers made it easy to see which children had more difficulties with learning, and 'backward' children were easily identified. Children with sensory deprivations, who were most easily recognisable, were the first to receive special provision in most countries, and New Zealand fitted into this pattern. Special education for deaf and dumb children was provided with the establishment of the Sumner School in 1880, and the blind were catered for when the Jubilee Institute for the Blind in Auckland was established in 1891. It was over forty years between the passing of compulsory attendance laws in New Zealand and the first state-established provision for the 'feebleminded' - Otekaieke Special School for Boys.

13 R. Werner Putnam, 'Special Education - Some Cross-National Comparisons', Comparative Education, v. 15, n. 1, 1979, p. 90. Figures from 1979 show that 91% of countries with compulsory education made special provision for the 'mentally retarded', compared with only 57% of countries without compulsory attendance laws.

14 Joseph Tropea has noted how special classes appeared immediately after the compulsory attendance laws were passed in many states in America. In Pennsylvania, for example, laws were passed in 1897 and special schools established in 1898. In Maryland compulsory attendance legislation went through in 1902 and the first "ungraded classes" appeared in Baltimore in the following year (Tropea p. 31). Problems were soon evident in England after the 1870 Education Act, but without overseas models it took longer before special measures were developed. In 1885 the Government set up a Royal Commission on 'Blind, Deaf and Dumb and Afflicted Classes' of children (Simmons p. 388).

15 D. McKenzie, 'Reluctantly to School', Education and Social Structure: Essays in the history of New Zealand education, p. 44.

16 Robertson, p. 15.

17 Werner Putnam, p. 84.

18 D. Ross, 'Special Education: Retrospect and prospect', S.J. Havill and D.R. Mitchell (eds), Issues in New Zealand Special Education, p. 19.
The situation for the 'mentally retarded' was exacerbated in New Zealand up to 1900 by the Standard Pass system, by which inspectors examined and passed a whole class en bloc each year without regard to individual performance. The New Zealand Educational Institute was well aware of the problem and had been pushing for its resolution for some years. After 1900 examination of all classes except Standard Six was done by the Head Teacher, who could retain individual pupils, enabling greater flexibility.19

Responsibility of schools for the 'mentally retarded' was related to other ideas about the nature and function of schools generally. Carol Vincent argues that compulsory education in New Zealand was not something that was demanded by the people, rather it was something that the State undertook to provide. Vincent uses this to argue that compulsory education should therefore be viewed as an explicit attempt to provide a means of social control.20 Marvin Lazerson, writing with particular reference to the United States, takes an opposite point-of-view. The school, he argues, came to be seen as the major public institution for the young and was increasingly called on to fulfill social, economic and political roles. Messages regarding mental and moral health were increasingly disseminated by the schools and, by the 1920s, it was assumed that any problem could be effectively treated by making it an educational problem. 21 These arguments are not mutually exclusive - compulsory education may indeed have been the creation of the State, but the role that the created schools came to play was not lessened by this fact. When individuals were concerned about the lack of provision for the 'feebleminded' or about the perceived danger to the purity of the race they contacted the Department of Education. Olssen argues that the first half of the twentieth century saw the transformation of the prescribed function of schools from being community institutions to teach self-government and civilised values to an expectation that they should create a stable and integrated community, training children with skills wanted by the

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19 R. Winterbourn, Educating Backward Children in New Zealand, p. 23.
20 C. Vincent, Special Education as Social Control: The historical development of industrial schools and special classes, MA thesis in education, Massey University, 1985, p. 82.
wider society and economy.22

The first years of the twentieth century saw concern about 'imbecile' children in all aspects of education, which shows the extent to which the education system had identified such children in the schools and accepted them as a public problem. The Education Department in 1901 was already regretting the delay in making arrangements for the care of such 'defective' and 'imbecile' children.23 The frequency with which the question of provision for 'feebleminded' children was raised in Parliament, and promises made on the subject, shows that the government had accepted the task of making separate provision. In 1903 the Prime Minister, Richard Seddon, acknowledged the public responsibility for such children, pointing out that establishing a separate institution meant very heavy expenditure on only a few children, yet he considered that this was a duty which the country had to perform.24 In the same year the Education Department sent out a circular to the industrial schools asking for a list of their 'defective', 'idiot' and 'imbecile' inmates and their respective ages, and found a total of 51 children.25 The fact that the government was acknowledging responsibility for 'mentally retarded' children in the early years of the twentieth century indicates that a change must already have taken place in the public perception of 'mental retardation'. The government was not stepping in unsolicited. Considerable pressure had been placed on it by members of the public such as Jessie McKenzie, who presented petitions to parliament urging separate provision annually between 1900 and 1903.26 Letters to Members of Parliament in Departmental files also show that the government was expected

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22 Olssen, p. 270. A similar comment is made by Barry Franklin with regard to special classes in Atlanta, Georgia when he claims that the ultimate purpose of special classes seems to have been to keep low-achieving children in schools long enough to propel them into unskilled or semi-skilled sectors of the city's industrial workforce ('Progressivism and Curriculum Differentiation: special classes in the Atlanta public schools, 1898-1923', History of Education Quarterly, v. 29, n. 4, Winter 1989, p. 586).


by the public to make separate provision from an early date.27

A related factor which led to the changing perspective on 'mental retardation' from a private to a public problem was the increasing involvement of the State in all areas of private life around the turn of the century. The State began to assume responsibilities, such as health care and child welfare, which had traditionally been thought the duty of the family.28 An example of the extended role of the State can be seen in the number of measures aimed at children's welfare around the turn of the century. The Department of Public Health was established in 1900 and took on the responsibility of vaccination of children against certain diseases. The Juvenile Offenders Act was passed in 1906, and Truby King established the Plunket Society in the following year. The School Medical Service was established in 1912 and began medical inspections of school children.29 Whether this increasing intervention marked the beginnings of the 'welfare state' or an increased paternalism concerned with social control and efficiency,30 the reconceptualisation of 'mental retardation' must be seen as part of a movement to extend the power of the State in all family life.

As far as 'mentally defective' children were concerned, therefore, the process of reconceptualisation was largely complete by the 1900s, and was influenced most by the effects of underlying changes in society, particularly urbanisation and industrialisation, by the identification of 'feebleminded' children in schools, and by the increasing role of the State in all aspects of family life. State responsibility for 'mentally retarded' children was regarded both by the Government and by the public as long overdue, the Government having 'dragged its feet' in providing it, despite promising to do so as early as 1900.31 Factors such as the

28 Olssen, pp. 260-262.
29 Mitchell, p. 31.
31 NZPD, v. 123, p. 541, 17 July, 1903 (Mr Ell).
threat of 'mental defectives' to the purity of the race, as perceived by eugenicists, and the professionalisation of medicine were important in maintaining the belief that 'mental defectives' were a public problem and were also important in justifying separate provision, assumed to be the natural form of state responsibility. They were not, however, as important in the initial reconception of 'mental defect' with regard to 'retarded' children.

As well as prompting the reconceptualisation of 'mental retardation', underlying social changes also gave rise to a number of other factors which were to influence beliefs about the way in which this reconceptualised group should be treated. No evidence can be found of suggestions for special provision for 'mentally retarded' children other than separating them from other children by means of special classes or schools. Why did society choose to separate these children? Five main reasons are suggested here. First, the possibility that separate provision was established because of genuine 'humanitarian' motives must be investigated. Second, the concern for protecting society as a motivation for banishing children from society's midst will be examined. Third, separate provision was justified by its claims to social efficiency. Fourth, there was a concern that 'mentally defective' children were slowing the progress of 'normal' children in schools and causing excessive strain on the teacher. Finally, the influence of professional motives was a significant factor in the establishment of separate provision.

Establishment of special education has traditionally been ascribed to the work of humane, philanthropic individuals who felt pity for the less fortunate. More recent inquiries have stressed the need to look beyond the face value at deeper motives with regard to provision for the 'mentally retarded'.\textsuperscript{32} Doubt has also been cast on the traditional assumption that the Liberal Government in New Zealand between 1891 and 1911 was as much compassionate and humanistic as it was disciplinary and paternalist.\textsuperscript{33} Although many of the apparently humane motives for establishing special education measures in New Zealand had less philanthropic purposes behind them, they cannot be totally discounted, and


\textsuperscript{33} Oliver, 'Social Welfare: Social justice or social efficiency?', p. 29.
have been accorded some value, even if minimal, in the development of special education in Scotland,\textsuperscript{34} England,\textsuperscript{35} and Australia.\textsuperscript{36}

That humanitarian motives were, to some degree, responsible for the founding and maintenance of Otekaieke is best illustrated by the comments of Members of Parliament in the House. MPs frequently referred to the tragedy of young children being in asylums because there was nowhere else to put them. Seddon's response to the situation in 1903 is one example:

To see the children in the asylums was heartbreaking. Children of tender years were to be found with the adults, and, in some cases sitting on the floor. In any of the asylums they would find little boys and girls hopelessly and helplessly insane, and to keep them there with such surroundings as they had was not, to his mind, the right thing to do.\textsuperscript{37}

The Member for Christchurch City, Mr Ell, had been astonished to find children as young as ten years in the airing-yard with violent patients when he visited Sunnyside Asylum.\textsuperscript{38}

Before Otekaieke and Richmond were established asylums were the only form of public residential provision for children labelled 'mentally defective'. Between 1900 and 1910 there was an average of 72 inmates below the age of 21 in asylums at any one time.\textsuperscript{39} In Auckland Mental Hospital this meant that persons aged less than 21 were 6.5% of the inmate population.\textsuperscript{40} The Medical Superintendents of Asylums had been complaining for some years about the nuisance that children in asylums caused, and thought that they would be better, safer and more suitably cared for in other homes. Not only was this thought to

\textsuperscript{34} Thomson, pp. 233-4.
\textsuperscript{35} Simmons, pp. 387-403.
\textsuperscript{36} G.F. Rogers, 'A Question of Policy: Is provision for special schools to be undertaken by this department ?', \textit{Journal of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society}, v. 9, n. 2, 1980, pp. 42-54.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{NZPD}, July 17 1903, v. 123, p. 541.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{NZPD}, July 11 1902, v. 120, p. 267.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{AJHR}, 1901-1911, H-7.
\textsuperscript{40} M.S. Primrose, Society and the Insane: a study of mental illness in New Zealand 1867-1926 with special reference to Auckland Mental Hospital, MA thesis in history, University of Auckland, 1968, p. 248.
be the most humane policy for the children, but also for the other patients, to whom they were a constant source of "irritation, discomfort and annoyance".41 The Superintendent of Wellington Asylum in 1902, Dr W. Baxter Gow, considered it a pity that "idiot children" were put in the asylum and thought that it would be a "great boon" to them if a separate home could be erected.42

As well as concern for 'mentally defective' children themselves, contemporaries also displayed humanitarian attitudes towards the families of the children. In particular, people were concerned for the "overworked mother" of the child.43 Children should have special training, Benstead argued in 1910, for the sake of their parents and friends "because of the constant worry and anxiety inseparable from the care of a feebleminded child under the ordinary conditions of home life, and the difficulty, under such conditions, of keeping the child from harm".44 He was also concerned about the possible effect on 'normal' brothers and sisters of keeping such children at home.45 The effect on the parents, in turn, could have repercussions on the child. Benstead claimed that there were cases on record of children who had been tied up in a room or locked indoors or turned outside all day while their parents went out to work.46

Genuine concern about the contemporary treatment of 'mentally deficient' children was, therefore, one of the reasons for people pressuring the Government to make provision for special education. Philanthropic motives were certainly not the only, nor the most important, motives for the support of such a measure, but they should not be discounted.

While some wanted to protect 'mentally defective' children, others were more concerned to protect society from the perceived danger that these children presented. They were thought to undermine the community, both in the short

41 *AJHR*, 1900, H-7, p. 6.
42 *AJHR*, 1902, H-7, p. 10.
43 eg. Memo, Benstead to Secretary for Education, October 22 1909, E 6/12/1; Letter, Mrs Onie MacKenzie to Minister for Education, 16 June 1904, E 40/5/1.
44 *AJHR*, 1910, E-4, p. 12.
45 Ibid; Memo, Benstead to Secretary for Education, October 22 1909, E 6/12/1.
46 *AJHR*, 1910, E-4, p. 12.
term by threatening social control, and in the long term by their defective genes.

A letter to the Minister of Education in 1904 encouraged the establishment of special schools on the grounds that 'feebleminded' boys grew up to become "criminals and a menace to the country". In 1922 a School Medical Officer urged that more special schools be established as 'mentally defective' children not at the schools were "inexorably doomed to become petty criminals and unemployable social refuse propagating their unhappy kind and involving the State in enormous and ever-increasing expense for their maintenance and police supervision".

Decision-makers were influenced particularly by the long-term fear of the perceived threat of 'mental defectives' to the purity of the race. The eugenics movement was at its height in New Zealand between 1900 and 1930. Concern to preserve the British Empire, at a time when it was beginning to lose its position as the world's most powerful entity, led to a heightened emphasis on racial fitness and purity. In New Zealand such concerns were reflected in the inauguration of the school cadets, the formation of the Society for Promoting the Health of Women and Children (Plunket Society) in 1907, and alarm over the falling birth rates and over the large numbers of army recruits deemed unfit. In 1903 a New Zealander, W.A. Chapple, published *The Fertility of the Unfit*, regarded as orthodoxy by eugenicists, which argued that all 'mental and moral defectives' unable to support themselves should be sterilised. One of the main concerns of eugenicists was that the 'unfit' were breeding at a faster rate than others and would soon seriously damage the purity of the British race. George Benstead reported in 1910 that the average number of births to a marriage in England was 4.63 children, whereas the average number in

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48 Extract from Dr A. Clark's Report for February 1922, CW 40/19/25.
50 Ibid, p. 77.
"degenerate families" was 7.3 children.\(^{52}\) Benstead, who was Otekaieke's first principal, was on the inaugural council of the Eugenics Education Society of New Zealand,\(^{53}\) and both Frank Hay, Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals, and George Hogben, Inspector-General of Schools, were on the Committee of the Society's Wellington branch.\(^{54}\)

H. Ilalio has argued that "Otekaieke was first of a number of special schools and classes for retarded children built during the 'Eugenics Scare'."\(^{55}\) Eugenicist arguments were regularly used by Benstead to justify the school's existence and to try and extend its control. He was particularly keen on the idea of expanding the school to provide for girls as well as boys, envisaging one large institution with two branches. 'Feebleminded' girls, Benstead argued, were continuing to increase the burden on society by producing "degenerate and deficient offspring" and suitable provision for them was even more important than provision for boys.\(^{56}\) He claimed that 'feebleminded' girls and women formed a "large proportion" of unmarried mothers who came to the lying-in wards of workhouses in England, about 600 each year.\(^{57}\) Benstead's plans were never fulfilled: Otekaieke did have four girls on its roll between 1912 and 1917 but two of these were boarded out and the other two were transferred to Richmond in February 1917.\(^{58}\)

Benstead also tried to extend the school by providing "after-care" for children who had been through the educational programme and outgrown it.\(^{59}\) 'Mental Defectives', he explained, had to be prevented from giving birth to children who would only grow up to be a further burden on the community. A family tree of

\(^{52}\) AJHR, 1910, E-4, p. 12.

\(^{53}\) Fleming, p. 76.

\(^{54}\) Ibid, p. 18.


\(^{56}\) AJHR, 1910, E-4, p. 11; Memo, Benstead to Inspector-General of Schools, 7 October 1912, CW 4/3.

\(^{57}\) AJHR, 1910, E-4, p. 11.

\(^{58}\) Nominal Roll for Otekaieke, Series 18, Item 8, Child Welfare Department Files, Wellington.

\(^{59}\) Memo, Benstead to Secretary for Education, October 22 1909, E 6/12/1.
four generations in England showed one 'mentally defective' woman who had given birth to one alleged prostitute, two females thought to be 'mentally defective' and one normal son. Cases like this, Benstead felt, necessitated an extension of control over 'mentally defective' children. Tracing the family trees of 'mental defectives' was a common way of arguing the case for segregation, especially after the publication of one famous case study in 1875. R.C. Dugdale presented the Juke family, 709 descendents of one 'degenerate' who were said to include 76 convicted criminals, 128 prostitutes, 18 brothel keepers and more than 200 paupers. H.H. Goddard's equally famous study of 480 members of the Kallikak family was published in 1912. John Beck attempted similar case studies, although on a much smaller scale, and argued in 1920 that four particular New Zealand families had between them cost the State a total of £40,836.

The Committee of Inquiry into Mental Defectives and Sexual Offenders was in many ways the peak of eugenicist concern in New Zealand. It visited Otekaieke on its travels around the country collecting evidence in 1924. As with other institutions, the Manager of Otekaieke had been given clear instructions from John Beck with regard to the sort of evidence that he should produce. William Meikleham, the Manager of Otekaieke from 1920 to 1951, accordingly prepared case histories of a selection of boys which pointed towards heredity as the most important factor in causing their 'feeblemindedness'.

Otekaieke thus played an important function in both calming and fuelling the eugenicist concerns of the early twentieth century. Segregating the 'feebleminded' from society, as Otekaieke did, was seen as one solution to the perceived threat to racial purity. Yet Otekaieke also served to provide case examples for such arguments. As far as the eugenics movement was concerned, the school had a significant social function.

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60 Fleming, p. 4.
61 AJHR, 1920, E-4, p. 17.
62 Letter, Beck to Meikleham, 17 June 1924, Commission of Inquiry - Mental defectives and sex offenders. 1924-25, CH-139.
63 Commission of Inquiry - Mental defectives and sex offenders. 1924-5, CH-139.
Many of the expressly stated reasons for establishing and maintaining Otekaieke were related directly to financial considerations. This was not rare for such an institution - employability had long been a feature of special education elsewhere.\textsuperscript{64} The New Zealand Government in the Liberal period were particularly concerned with social efficiency,\textsuperscript{65} and Otekaieke should be seen in this setting.

Economic justification for Otekaieke took two forms. First, the manual and farm work that the children did was thought to contribute to the cost of their food and board. Under favourable conditions, the Government explained, children could be taught to maintain themselves and not be a lifelong burden.\textsuperscript{66} Instead of academic subjects an emphasis was put upon training the pupils to achieve partial or total economic self sufficiency, either in a sheltered or an independent situation. The school was obviously aware of its financial obligations to the state - Benstead's comment is representative of this viewpoint:

It goes without saying that the State requires a practical return for the money spent in all its undertakings, and there are probably many who wish to know what the country gains by spending money on the education of afflicted children. The more one looks into the question of educating mentally deficient children, the more apparent it becomes that the State is doing the right thing in providing for the compulsory education of all these children who are educable - i.e. those who, in the hands of an expert, can be taught, by arousing their dormant capabilities, to contribute somewhat towards the cost of their own maintenance, or who can be made sufficiently useful to become self-supporting under kindly guidance in a custodial institution.

To those of us who are carefully watching the development of the dormant

\textsuperscript{64} In 1889 in Britain the Egerton Commission reported that it was "better for the state to expand its funds on the elementary technical education of the blind, than to have to support them through life in idleness" (S. Tomlinson, \textit{A Sociology of Special Education}, p. 13). When the Massachusetts School for the Feebleminded was forced to become more economically efficient in the 1880s, staff developed a policy of self-sufficiency through utilisation of inmate labour. The aim of the Massachusetts institution changed from simply one of 'improvement' of the 'feebleminded' to trying to make them as economically useful as possible (J.S. Zainaldin and P.L. Tyor, 'Asylum and Society: An approach to Institutional Change', \textit{Journal of Social History}, v. 13, n. 1, 1979, p. 36).

\textsuperscript{65} Oliver, 'Social Welfare: Social justice or social efficiency?', pp. 25-6.

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{AJHR}, 1907, E-1, p. 30.
faculties of the children at Otekaieke, it is patent that the State will be amply repaid for the money which is being spent here, inasmuch as we are continually developing useful members of our own community who would otherwise remain absolutely useless units, with physical and mental deterioration slowly but surely awaiting them; and because too, we are lessening the misery of the world and preventing the increase of the helpless and hopeless section of the Empire.\textsuperscript{67}

Meikleham also stressed the importance of the perceived financial savings from the school. In 1927 he was able to record proudly that the farm had provided all the needs of the institution in fresh milk, butter, meat and potatoes; that the garden had produced an abundant supply of fresh vegetables and a sufficient quantity of fruit for jam; that the bootshop had made all the boots required by the inmates during the year and the horse and cow covers required on the farm; that the basketshop had produced £323 worth of basketware, seagrass furniture and coir mats; and that the sawmill had provided building timber for various works about the institution as well as fruitcase timber for disposal locally. A full-time manual class had been established with the specific aim of training boys to be self-reliant and generally useful so that they could later "take their place in the world". They were taught gardening, raffia, tray and leather work, basic carpentry skills, and domestic work. Milking lessons were also given after school hours in the industrial division to boys who were soon leaving to become farm workers.\textsuperscript{68}

The second financial justification for Otekaieke was that the 'training' that the boys received was thought to prevent them from being a burden on the State or their parents throughout their lives by teaching them useful skills and keeping them out of trouble. Miss Muir, one of the teachers, claimed that untrained "feeble-minded" boys constituted a large proportion of those in prisons, reformatories, Borstals and homes for inebriates. She felt that the situation could be prevented by correct training from an early age, and that the Special Schools at Richmond and Otekaieke fully warranted the additional expenditure that they entailed.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{AJHR}, 1910, E-4, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{68} \textit{AJHR}, 1927, E-4, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{69} Newspaper cutting from Ashburton Guardian 28 March 1928, CW 4/3.
Such views were shared by the education administrators based in Wellington. The Minister of Education explained that, with institutions such as Otekaieke, experience showed that it was best to teach the "inmates" such occupations as would make the institution self-supporting, rather than attempting "to any considerable extent" to teach a variety of occupations or to manufacture goods for sale.\textsuperscript{70} The views of John Beck, Officer in charge of Special Schools, encompassed both economic and social protective justifications for the control of 'mental defectives':

> The modern scientific study of the dependent and delinquent classes as a whole has demonstrated that a large proportion of our criminals, inebriates and prostitutes are really congenital defectives who have been allowed to grow up without any attempt being made to improve or discipline them. Society suffers the penalty of this neglect in an increase in pauperism and vice and finally at great increased cost is compelled to take charge of adult idiots in mental hospitals, and of mental defective criminals in prisons generally, off and on during the remainder of their lives. As a matter of mere economy it is better and cheaper for the community to assume the permanent custody of such persons before they have carried out a long career of expensive crime.\textsuperscript{71}

A newspaper reporter visiting in 1924 defended Otekaieke from claims that it was a very expensive school for the country to "keep up". The reporter cited the high standard of 'training' given and the fact that the State was less likely to have to later maintain the children in "less desirable institutions".\textsuperscript{72}

By 1938 the school still set out its primary objectives in terms of economic justification:

> The aim of the school is to re-place in the public schools retarded boys as soon as they give promise of making satisfactory social adjustment, and to train the subnormal boys, so that on leaving the school they may be replaced in the community and ultimately become self-supporting.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{70} Letter, J.A. Hanan to Hon. the Acting Prime Minister, 11 December 1916, H-MHD 4/6.
\textsuperscript{71} Memo, John Beck to Director of Education, 22 June 1920, CW 40/5.
\textsuperscript{72} Otago Witness, 22 July 1924, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{73} AJHR, 1938, E-4, p. 13.
The need for accountability to the taxpayer was always present in the reports of Otekaieke's managers and the Child Welfare personnel. The fact that Otekaieke could claim to represent a long-term saving was a considerable asset in the establishment and management of the school.

Concern for 'normal' pupils in ordinary classrooms was another reason for urging separate provision for the 'mentally retarded'. The increasing attention being paid to the situation of school children was related to ideas about the increasing importance of the individual child and beliefs about social efficiency. The first years of the twentieth century were thought to show an "upsurge of concern" for the nation's children, as evidenced by the Child Welfare provisions and legislation.74 The reasons for such an interest are necessarily complicated but can be attributed partly to a decline in family size, which increased the relative value of each individual child and encouraged "investment" in New Zealand's future.75

At the level of the classroom teachers claimed that 'mentally retarded' children were impeding the progress of the rest of the class. In 1893 the president of the New Zealand Educational Institute, Clement Watson, wrote that the successful teacher gave "far the greatest part of his time to driving on the dunces".76 The Superintendent of the Baltimore Public Schools in 1908 summed up a lot of the arguments put forward by New Zealand teachers for excluding 'feebleminded' children when he stated:

If it were no: for the fact that the presence of mentally deficient children in a school room interfered with the proper training of the capable children, their education would appeal less powerfully to the boards of education and the fee-paying public...the presence in a class of one or two mentally or morally defective children so absorbs the energies of the teacher and makes so imperative a claim upon her attention that she cannot under these circumstances properly instruct the number commonly enrolled in a class...the rights of normal children cannot be safeguarded when 50% of the energy of the teacher is expended on 5% of the pupils in the class.77

74 Mitchell, p. 30.
76 Winterbourn, p. 23.
77 James Van Sickle, 'Provision for Exceptional Children in the Public Schools', The
In New Zealand, as in America, members of the public seemed to be aware of the problems of the teachers. Indeed, the clearest statement of why it was felt that 'mentally deficient' children should be excluded from schools came from the report of the Committee of Inquiry into Mental Defectives and Sexual Offenders in 1924. They argued that children should be excluded for three reasons: because they had a detrimental effect on other groups in the education system - the 'normal' and the 'merely backward' - and dragged the progress of other pupils; because they had a detrimental effect on teachers, distracting them and increasing the range of abilities for which they were forced to cater; and because the situation in the classroom was detrimental to the children themselves, with them learning little and developing inferiority complexes and anti-social behaviour. Safe-guarding the interests of 'normal' children and of teachers was therefore another vital justification for removing 'mentally retarded' children from ordinary classrooms and making separate provision for them elsewhere.

The establishment and development of special education services has also been viewed in terms of a model of the development of professions. Tomlinson, looking at the similar English situation, considers that "the development of special education during the twentieth century can be viewed in terms of the vested interests of the professional groups, medical, psychological, educational and administrative, each anxious that their perspectives and influence should predominate". The two main groups in New Zealand in the early twentieth century who stood to increase professional status from the development of special education were the medical and educational professions.

The medical profession was perhaps the occupational group with the most to gain from the development of separate provisions for 'mental defectives'. They

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78 Robertson, pp. 66-7.
80 Tomlinson, p. 12.
were regarded as the 'experts' and entrusted with powers of diagnosis yet did not have the ultimate responsibilities. Doctors were largely responsible for 'directing the traffic' between normal schools, special schools, special classes and asylums, while less senior staff of the Mental Hospitals and Education Departments actually looked after the children. Vincent considers that "one of the most striking features in the history of special education internationally is the early and generally persistent domination of the medical profession in the care and treatment of handicapped persons".81 By viewing 'mental retardation' as an illness and having the power to apply such a label, the medical profession created what was seen as a legitimate claim on the control of the 'feebleminded'.82 The State collaborated in the development of this control, both in New Zealand and overseas. Having doctors in charge of the system was administratively and ethically efficient, as well as answering what was portrayed as a social need.83

The State's reliance on the medical profession in New Zealand with regard to 'mental defectives' can be seen as early as 1902. When a question was raised in parliament about when a home for "imbecile children" was to be established, the answer was that "medical men" had not yet found what they considered to be a suitable place for it.84 In 1912 the School Medical Service was established and soon began to comment on what Medical Officers thought to be the high number of 'backward' and 'mentally defective' children in the schools.85 The Australasian Medical Conference in February 1914 reported the recommendations of a special committee which had been appointed to examine the subject of the 'feebleminded' child. More day and residential schools for children and residential colonies for adults were recommended.86 Doctors had no hesitation in considering themselves the correct people to be judging the situation. The degree to which doctors had power over educationalists with

81 Vincent, p. 32.
82 Ibid, p. 41.
84 NZPD, 11 July 1902, v. 120, p. 267 (Mr Mills).
regard to diagnosis is evident in the fact that doctors' certificates were needed before the Manager of Otekaieke could have children admitted to mental hospitals. Records of examinations that survive show that the doctor had a brief interview with the boy concerned, testing his knowledge of things such as time, value of money and counting ability, which seems minor in comparison with the depth of knowledge of a child's abilities built up by a teacher.\footnote{Examples in file 3/3/2 Field Worker. Admissions to Mental Hospitals. 1947-1959, CH-139.}

In 1916 Benstead wrote a letter to the Minister of Education to protest against the power of doctors to diagnose and advise parents about 'feebleminded' children. He cited a case in which he felt that a doctor had misdiagnosed a boy and he told the Minister that he thought it necessary to be cautious, in cases of 'feeblemindedness', about the opinion of the medical profession.\footnote{Memo, Benstead to Minister of Education, September 20 1909, CW 40/5.} An opposite situation occurred in 1936 when Meikleham was accused of misdiagnosing a boy as suitable for admission to a mental hospital. A complainant to the Director of the Division of School Hygiene claimed that "Opinions as to educability should be accepted only from those who have made an adequate study of the subject, and who are qualified by training to interpret symptoms".\footnote{Memo, Deputy Inspector-General to Director, Division of School Hygiene, 27 April 1936, H-MHD 4/6.} Members of both the medical and educational professions were therefore keen to protect and extend their control over special education.

Impetus from within the education system for establishing special provision for the 'mentally retarded' did not just come because of the nuisance that children caused in classes, or from the results of public contact. Barry Franklin claims that the emphasis in educational history on connecting the development of public schooling with events in the wider community has resulted in historians losing sight of the role that educationalists have played in instituting change. Like other groups in society, educationalists were keen to enhance their own professional status and political agendas through increased responsibilities.\footnote{Franklin, p. 580.} One of the best examples of an educationalist keen to increase his professional
power in the New Zealand special education setting is George Benstead, Otekaieke's first principal.

From the time of his arrival Benstead was keen to expand the scope and functions of Otekaieke. In particular he wanted to develop provision for girls and extend the ages for which Otekaieke could cater. He also insisted that it was "practically an impossibility" to prepare guidelines that would enable others to diagnose suitable cases for admission to Otekaieke. It was extremely difficult for anyone "outside the work" to differentiate between the 'backward' and the 'defective' child, in his opinion. After a brief discussion of some of the manifestations of 'feeblemindedness' he stated:

Knowing as I do the extreme difficulty in diagnosing the cases on the lines I have indicated above even when one has had a good deal of experience, I am fully convinced that any such set of directions, given out to those who have not had experience in these matters, would not be worth the paper it is written on and would not be of any material assistance to the people concerned.91

Benstead's scorn for the abilities of doctors to diagnose 'mental defectives' was shown not only by his letter to the Minister of Education but also by his recounting of an incident which apparently took place at Ellis Island in 1912. Officials from the New Jersey Training School at Vineland visited Ellis Island, the landing place for American immigrants. As 1260 potential immigrants filed past them the group of Vineland officials and the group of immigration doctors each selected those who appeared to be 'mentally defective'. The Vineland officials selected 83 people and the immigration doctors only 18, thus apparently missing a large proportion. Benstead wrote:

I mention this to show that experts on feeblemindedness - those who are working and dealing with them - should be able to recognise quite easily those unfortunate people who through no fault of their own are allowed to come in unnoticed and so swell the numbers of our defective population.92

Benstead's concern to extend the school to cater for all degrees of 'feeblemindedness' might partly have led to his downfall. According to John

91 Memo, Benstead to Secretary for Education, September 18 1909, CW 40/5.
92 AJHR, 1913, E-4, p. 19.
Beck he filled the school up with "low-grade custodial cases" and thus had problems getting results in terms of the 'training' of the children.93

At a different level from the 'hands-on' approach of doctors and educationalists, Government officials in the Education and Mental Hospitals Departments were also trying to increase their own power, and relieve themselves of less pleasant responsibilities, by furthering the cause of special education. The tension between the two departments in the 1920s and 1930s has been considered by Vincent and by Robertson.94

Otekaieke Special School was the first government provision for separate education for 'mentally defective' children. Underlying social changes which involved changing standards of social behaviour, the development of the education system and the increasing role of government led to a reconceptualisation of 'mental retardation' from a private to a public problem and necessitated special provision. A number of factors, also influenced by underlying social change, combined to ensure that this provision was separate, taking children away from the normal classroom and effectively out of sight of the community. Humanitarian concerns for the welfare of the children must be accorded a minor role. More important was the way that Otekaieke fitted in to the eugenicist movement of the first decades of the twentieth century, the Liberal campaign for social efficiency, the increasing attention paid to 'normal' children, and the enhancement of the medical and education professions. Otekaieke Special School thus played an important function in New Zealand society in the first half of the twentieth century.

94 Vincent, pp. 96-7; Robertson, pp. 18-24.
Chapter Two:
Otekaieke in the Education System

My aim in this chapter is to address the question: what role did Otekaieke Special School play in the New Zealand education system between 1908 and 1950? Otekaieke and Richmond, Otekaieke's female counterpart founded in 1916, were the only 'Special Schools' established in New Zealand and as such served a unique function. They were controlled directly by the Education Department until the establishment of the Child Welfare Division in 1925 after which time they were under its jurisdiction. The New Zealand Government had delegated to the education system the responsibility of making provision for 'mentally retarded' children through legislation.

The 1877 Education Act made education compulsory and free for all children aged between seven and thirteen. From 1908 acts made specific reference to 'mentally defective' children and increased the period of their education. The Education Act of 1908 made it compulsory for all deaf, blind, feeble-minded and epileptic children between the ages of 7 and 16 years to be under "efficient and suitable instruction". The Education Amendment Act of 1910 extended the provisions to young persons aged between 6 and 21 years of age, unless before that age the Education Department could be satisfied that the child's educational attainment or proficiency in some art, handicraft or other calling would enable them to provide for future needs. If education was not provided by a near relative, a child could be sent to a Special School and the cost of his or her maintenance charged to the parents, at a rate agreed upon by the parents and the Minister of Education. Provision was also made in the Act for control to be extended for periods of up to four years (which could be renewed) if it was

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1 D. McKenzie, 'Reluctantly to School', Education and Social Structure: Essays in the history of New Zealand education, p. 44. Compulsory attendance was extended to fourteen year olds in 1901.
considered that a feeble-minded person was still not fit to guide his or her own life, or if it was in the public interest that he or she be under institutional oversight. Application for extending the period of control was to be made to a Magistrate. This increased measure of control was one which George Benstead had been advocating.\footnote{A/HR, 1909, E-4, p. 13; Memo, Benstead to Secretary for Education, October 22 1909, E 6/12/1.} The Mental Defectives Act of 1911 arranged for "educable mental defectives" to be transferred from the Mental Hospitals Department to the Education Department.\footnote{N. Roydhouse, Otekaieke Special School, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1949, p. 34.} In 1914 a further Education Act extended the former Acts by making provision for a Magistrate to be able to send a child to an institution if a parent would not provide suitable education for that child.\footnote{Ibid.}

In the first few decades of the twentieth century, therefore, the notion that the education department was to provide for 'mentally defective' children was thoroughly entrenched in legislation. For reasons described in Chapter One, however, it was accepted that provision for such children would mean separate provision. It should be emphasised that the characteristic which was thought to warrant exclusion from the normal classroom was low intelligence.

Throughout the period 1908 to 1950 referral of children to Otekaieke was generally initiated by the classroom teacher or school principal. No formalised procedures for admission were laid down until the late 1920s, admission before then depending largely on chance.\footnote{A.R. Avann, An Investigation of the Public Provision made for Feeble-Minded Children in the Dominion of New Zealand, MA thesis in education, Victoria University, 1927, p. 19.} A memo sent to School Medical Officers in 1922 pointed out, as a last resort against parents who would not let their children go to the Special Schools, that one means of compulsion was having the children excluded from an ordinary primary school. Under the 1910 Education Amendment Act parents were obliged to provide education until the children were 21 years old, and would therefore be forced to send them to a Special School.\footnote{Ibid.} Presumably there was reluctance from parents to send their
children to Otekaieke, and pressure from teachers to exclude the children from the ordinary classroom.

By 1938 a system existed whereby all primary school Head Teachers notified the Education Department of all children attending state schools who were three or more years behind their age group. The children were then examined by School Medical Officers. The Deputy Director-General of Education commented that notification of children under this system depended a great deal on individual Head Teachers, some of whom never notified cases "for reasons best known only to themselves".  

The system as described in 1943 again emphasised the position of the Head Teacher, who was reported to interview children referred by class teachers, administer written and oral intelligence tests, then record the children's names on a special form issued annually by the Education Board for further testing and possible admission.  

Ralph Winterbourn's report in the following year emphasised that the initial step in the admission process could be taken by anyone - social workers, police, General Practitioners, parents, or Head Teachers - but it seems that the majority of cases were referred for further testing through the schools.

A large proportion of children at Otekaieke were State Wards, removed from their homes and sent to Child Welfare institutions (also under the control of the Education Department). The precise number of State Wards at the school is not known for the whole period, but was 87% in 1931, and "a large number" in 1936, and in 1939. Jones suggests that many of these children had been

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8 Memo, Director, Division of School Hygiene to All School Medical Officers, Circular no. 137, September 4, 1922, CW 40/5.
10 J.M.E. Jones, A Study on the Problem of Mental Deficiency and Backwardness in New Zealand Children and the Measures Adopted to Deal with It, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1943, pp. 42-3.
12 Reports on a Visit to Otekaike School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Training College - Administration - R. Winterbourn. CW 40/4/29.
subject to ill treatment by their parents, and that their situation had been brought to the notice of the Child Welfare Department by school teachers. 'Mentally defective' children could not be "suitably managed" in foster homes or other Child Welfare Institutions like other State Wards, she claimed, so they were sent to the Special Schools. Teachers were therefore indirectly responsible for the referral of many State Wards also.

Children referred to the Special Schools, a process in which teachers played a major part, were supposedly children who were a problem in normal classrooms because of their lack of intelligence. It is possible to test the importance of the intelligence factor in comparison with other factors by examining some of the perceived characteristics of boys admitted to the school between 1908 and 1950.

Intelligence tests were not in widespread use at the time when the school was founded, but other systems existed to define and isolate children thought to be low in intelligence. Several different labels could be applied to the child whose intelligence appeared to be less than 'normal'. The labels most commonly used to refer to different grades of mental defect were 'idiot', 'imbecile' and feeble-minded'. These terms, as well as the often-used label 'moral imbecile', were defined in 1908 by the report of the English Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded:

"Idiots" ie. persons so deeply defective in mind from birth or from an early age that they are unable to guard themselves from common physical dangers, such as in the case of young children would prevent their parents from leaving them alone.

"Imbeciles" ie. persons who are capable of guarding themselves against common physical dangers, but who are incapable of earning their own living by reason of mental defect existing from birth or from an early age.

"Feeble-minded" ie. persons who may be capable of earning a living under favourable circumstances, but are incapable from mental defect existing from birth or from an early age (a) of competing on equal terms with their normal

13 A.M. Stanton, Backward Children. What is being done for them in New Zealand, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1936, p. 24.
14 Memo, Director of Division of School Hygiene, Department of Health to Dr C.E. Beeby for Director of Education, 1 February, 1939, CW 4/3.
15 Jones, pp. 42-3.
fellows or (b) managing themselves and their affairs with ordinary prudence.

"Moral imbeciles" ie. persons who from an early age display some moral defect, coupled with strong vicious or criminal propensities, on which punishment has little or no deterrent effect.16

Otekaieke was expected to cater for school-age boys labelled as 'feeble-minded' but to exclude 'idiots' and 'imbeciles' as they were thought to be beyond help. As well as these definitions, children were often divided into two groups of those considered 'educable' and those considered 'ineducable'.17 Distinctions were drawn between the 'feeble-minded' and children who were 'merely backward' as a result of poor education, while not actually below average in intelligence.18 Otekaieke's mandate was to cater for the 'feeble-minded', 'educable' children rather than wasting resources on children for whom it was thought that nothing could be done. After the 'crisis' between the principal, George Benstead and the Superintendent of Special Schools, John Beck, which led to Benstead's resignation in 1917, the school was forced to develop a more conscious policy of admission with regard to ranges of intelligence.19

When intelligence tests became more widespread in New Zealand in the 1920s it was possible to further develop the label 'feeble-minded' by defining limits for it in terms of intelligence quotients.20 In the first half of the twentieth century Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests were being used increasingly to classify children thought to be mentally defective.

Intelligence Quotients were two or three digit numbers, expressed either as a decimal or as a whole number. They were calculated by finding the mental age of a child and dividing it by the child's chronological age. For example, if a child

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16 AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 15.
17 eg. Letter, Hanan to Hon. the Acting Prime Minister of New Zealand, 11 December 1916, H-MHD 4/6; Memo, Caughley to Minister of Education, 16 January 1918, CW 40/5.
20 Terman considered that all with IQ test results below 70 should be considered feeble-minded (L.M. Terman, The Measurement of Intelligence, p. 81).
was aged ten years but was judged to have a mental age of seven years, then the IQ could be found by dividing seven by ten, the result being .70, which might also be expressed as 70. If the same child was thought to have a mental age of thirteen then the IQ would be thirteen divided by ten, 1.30 or 130. A child with a mental and a chronological age that were thought to be the same was said to have an IQ of 1.00, or 100. The system was thus based on the idea that average is 'normal'. Children who were notably above this average were thought to be intelligent, those below it were considered unintelligent.

From the 1920s onwards, the education system was increasingly divided into parts, each catering for a range of IQ levels. Such classification in the 1920s could be seen in all areas of mental illness and mental deficiency. Otekaieke played a vital role in this classification, and was assigned slightly different IQ ranges at different times. By 1925 the perceived potential of IQ tests was being considered enthusiastically by the Education Department:

There is no doubt that great benefit would result if it were possible to provide suitable means of testing the mental capacity of children by competent persons, particularly at an early stage in the child's career, and also at any stage when there appears some unusual difficulty. Consideration is being given to the means that should be adopted to secure this end.

The rapidity of the Education Department's adoption of IQ testing, however, should not be exaggerated.

There were many different tests for calculating mental ages. In New Zealand from the 1920s the test used for children who appeared to be retarded was generally the Binet-Simon Test as had been revised by L.M. Terman at Stanford University in 1919. Other tests, which were supposed to measure attributes such as personality and ingenuity, were also used. A 1927 Education thesis lists three tests used at the time to test children thought to be mentally defective: the

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21 S. Robertson, Production not Reproduction: The Problem of Mental Defect in New Zealand, 1900-1939, BA (Hons) long essay in history, University of Otago, 1989, pp. 40-41.
Terman Revision of the Binet-Simon test; the Pintner Patterson Performance Tests; and the Porteous Maze Test.\textsuperscript{25} The reports of School Medical Officers on children examined for possible admission to Otekaieke in the 1930s also included the Manikin Test and the Ship Test.\textsuperscript{26} The sort of questions that children were asked included general knowledge and basic scholastic ability. Questions in the reports on children tested for admission included basic addition, spelling, change up to £1, giving the name of the current King, the capital of France and the names of cities in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{27} A Departmental file covering the late 1910s and early 1920s included the list of criteria from the Binet-Simon test (not the Terman Stanford Revision) for determining mental ages between four and twelve years.\textsuperscript{28} Four or five criteria were listed in each category. A four year old was expected, amongst other things, to be able to give the sex of him or herself and name familiar objects (such as a key, knife and penny). A six year old was required to choose the prettier of two heads, one pretty and the other very ugly. An eight year old had to be able to count backwards from 20 to 1 in twenty seconds, and a 'normal' twelve year old was thought to be capable of defining charity, justice and goodness! The criteria for determining mental age were therefore very subjective and did not necessarily rely so much on intelligence as on social adaptation. One might also wonder at the ability of a twelve year old, or even of most adults, to clearly define such abstract concepts as charity, justice or goodness.

The first indication of the IQ ranges assigned to Otekaieke can be found in the 1922 report of a School Medical Officer.\textsuperscript{29} His opinion, and he considered that teachers concurred, was that no child with an IQ below 0.50 (50) should be admitted to Otekaieke. He also thought that children with IQs between 0.70 and 0.90 (70 and 90) should be admitted to special classes which were to be established

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Avann, p. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{26} H-MHD 6/15 Backward Children - Otekaieke vol I. National Archives, Wellington.
Various reports of School Medical Officers, Deputy Director-General of Mental Hospitals Department, Medical Superintendents etc.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Binet-Simon Tests for Mental Age, CW 40/5. Identified in Terman, \textit{The Measurement of Intelligence}.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Extract from Dr A. Clark's Report for February 1922, CW 40/19/25.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
In 1928 John Beck, Superintendent of the Child Welfare Branch, saw the IQ range 50 to 75 as the general criteria for admission to Otekaieke. He was careful to point out, however, that a child who had an IQ below 50, but responded well to a mechanical or performance test, might also benefit from the training given. Similarly, he explained that children with an IQ in the range of 75 to 80, but with "anti-social tendencies" or "temperamental instability" which made them unfit for a normal school, required training in a special class or school. Beck considered that the standard of admitting only children with IQs between 50 and 75 could not be an arbitrary one, but he pointed out that children with IQs of 45 or lower were "not, as a rule, suitable".  

During his overseas visit of 1935, Mr N.T. Lambourne, the Director of Education, took the time to visit several schools for the feeble-minded and commented on their means of selection of pupils. The school he visited in Sydney accepted no boy with an IQ below 60 and no girl with an IQ below 55, whereas the school in Edinburgh catered for pupils with IQs ranging from 50 to 72. The IQ divisions chosen by the New Zealand Department of Education in this period were thus roughly in line with those chosen in other parts of the Commonwealth.

J.M.E. Jones, in 1943, recorded that the range of IQs accepted at Otekaieke varied between 0.55 (55) and 0.75 (75), although she pointed out that these were not arbitrary. On rare occasions, she recorded, children with IQs below 55 were accepted if they had a fair social sense. More frequently, children who had IQs much above 75 but had little manual ability or social sense were accepted into the school.

In 1944 Winterbourn found that 19.4% of children at the Special Schools had IQs over 80, compared with only 12% of children in special classes. In 1949 a medical student visiting Otekaieke was told that the school normally accepted

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30 AJHR, 1928, E-4, pp. 15-16.
32 Jones, p. 49.
33 Winterbourn, p. 266.
children with IQs between 55 and 75. The range of IQs of boys at the school in 1949, however, was 52 to 94, with an average IQ of 71.

The school itself also used IQ tests extensively. By comparing the prescribed with the actual IQs at Otekaieke we can see the extent to which they were an important factor in admitting children to the school (see Figure Two).

*Figure Two - Intelligence Quotients for Day School as listed in Annual Reports*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average chronological age</th>
<th>Average mental age</th>
<th>Average IQ (Terman)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>12y 4m</td>
<td>8y 8m</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>12y 2m</td>
<td>8y 5m</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>12y 10m</td>
<td>9y 1m</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>13 y 0m</td>
<td>9y 1m</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>12y 11m</td>
<td>8y 9m</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure Two* demonstrates that the average IQ for the boys in the day school (this does not include the boys in the industrial division) from the late 1930s stays around 70.

The actual IQs at Otekaieke can also be examined by looking at the results of tests given at the time of admission and recorded on a sample of 334 admissions cards (see Figure Three). Only four of these were for students from the early period, 1908 to 1919, when the tests were not in common use.

Figure Three shows that the general rule of admitting primarily those children with IQs between 50 and 75 was not always followed. IQs tended to be on the higher side of this range, and many reached up into the 80s. Throughout the period 1908-1949 eleven children in the sample had IQs of 45 or below, and 87 children, or 26% of those for whom IQs could be found, had IQs of over 75. Two thirds of the children's IQs, or one standard deviation each side of the average, were between 55 and 81.

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34 Roydhouse, p. 23.
36 *AJHR*, 1927, E-4, p. 11; *AJHR*, 1938, E-4, p. 5; *AJHR*, 1939, E-4, p. 16; *AJHR*, 1946, E-4, p. 5; *AJHR*, 1947, E-4, p. 4; *AJHR*, 1950, E-4, p. 4.
37 For notes on statistical method see Appendix A.
Although the official policy was that the school existed for children with IQs between about 50 and 75, more than a quarter had IQs above this range, and the average IQ was consistently in the high 60s and low 70s. Intelligence, as measured by intelligence quotients, was obviously not the only reason, or was not even the most important reason, that children were being sent to Otekaieke in this period. What, then, were the reasons for sending children to the school?

Age of admission may offer insights into the purpose of the school. In the prospectus for Otekaieke which Benstead prepared in 1909 he urged parents to send their children to Otekaieke as early as possible, suggesting an age of 4 to 6 years. He claimed that special training was most effective in children of a young age, "before the formation of bad habits is acquired". The actual ages at which children were admitted, however, were much later than either those suggested by Benstead or the legally required ages for 'defective' children to be educated. As with the levels of intelligence, there is a discrepancy between the official function of the school and the actuality (see Figure Four).

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38 Prospectus for Otekaieke, 1909, CW 40/5.
Ages of admission were available for 524 records in the sample. The average age of admission for these children was twelve years and three months. Admission ages ranged from one child admitted at five years and ten months to one inmate admitted at the age of twenty two years and ten months. The overall standard deviation amongst the admission ages was 2.662 years, indicating that about two thirds of the children were admitted between the ages of nine years, seven months and fourteen years, eleven months. American studies show a similarly late age of admission albeit from an earlier period.39 Clearly more factors were at play than the simple provision of special education.

Why, throughout the period, were children being admitted to the school around about the time of their twelfth birthday? From 1901 the leaving age for New Zealand schools was 14 years, so children would not, on average, have had particularly long to wait before being able to leave a normal school anyway. Winterbourn, in 1944, commented on the late entry to Special Schools when comparing the ages of admission to those of children in special classes.40 He also observed that there was a slight tendency, in the admission details of pupils at Richmond and Otekaieke that year, for pupils that were admitted to Special Schools to have previously advanced to a higher class in an ordinary school than pupils admitted to a special class.


40 Winterbourn, p. 267.
If the aims of the institution were educational, why were children not admitted at a much younger age? Three reasons are possible: their 'defects' were less recognisable when they were younger, the gap between them and their classmates became greater as time progressed and twelve was a particularly problematic age. The learning of reading and writing in the first years at school, particularly in classes of up to forty others would have obscured the fact that some children were less academically capable than others. After most children had conquered the rudiments of literacy the difference between their academic level and that of children who were less able would have appeared more marked. Teachers might also have realised at this stage that a boy was unlikely to be able to support himself once he had left school. The age of about twelve years was the time in which children were beginning to undergo adolescence. Social concern about individuals who would soon become sexually mature but were 'feeble-minded', fuelled by alarmist eugenicism, could have influenced the decision to send a child away.

An understanding of the children's backgrounds may allow insights into the purposes of the school which underlay the apparent educational mandate. Certainly contemporaries held that the environment had a marked effect on intelligence. It is very difficult to prove anything substantive about the previous environments of the children although attempts were made by contemporaries, from the time of the school's establishment, to associate its pupils with a lower socio-economic background and immoral parents. This was part of a larger movement to blame the perceived problem of mental defect on immorality, and argue for eugenicist measures such as segregation or sterilisation of the mentally defective.41

In a paper presented to the 1922 annual conference of the British Medical Association (New Zealand branch), Dr A. Clark, School Medical Officer, directly related mental defect and environment.42 Clark had graded the homes of children that he inspected in the Auckland and Hawkes Bay districts, guided by the "principles" of cleanliness, ventilation and general suitability. In any given

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41 Robertson, pp. 29-30.
42 Newspaper cutting (paper and date unknown), CW 40/5.
community in the Auckland and Hawkes Bay districts, he claimed, 23% of the homes would be graded 'excellent', 59% would be graded 'moderate' and 8% graded 'bad'. Of the mentally defective children he had observed, however, he reported that only 12.5% came from 'excellent' homes, 29.16% from 'moderate' homes while 58.33% were from 'bad' homes. 'Bad' homes, Clark argued, caused a vicious circle of more mental defect and more 'bad' homes. He also claimed that seventy to eighty percent of persons convicted of crimes were mentally defective.

Teachers shared this perspective on the backgrounds of pupils. One recalled:

The school as we knew it then was "The Otekaike Special School" for boys, who were unable to fit in to Society generally, often from unstable homes, and many were deserted by delinquent irresponsible parents. The depression of the 1930s caused much hardship among the poor, and the School during those years was overcrowded. 43

Information in respect to the home circumstances of 103 boys in 1944 suggested that about two thirds of them came from unsatisfactory homes and one third from "more or less satisfactory" homes. 44 Roydhouse in 1949 recorded that "a large proportion" of the boys had a "poor home environment with a lack of parental control". 45 By contrast to Otekaieke Elmsdale, the private special school for boys established by George Benstead after resigning from Otekaieke in 1917, catered for the "sons of well-to-do people". 46

Evidence of the socio-economic background of all of the pupils at Otekaieke in this period might tell something of the level of tolerance of 'feeble-minded' children of different social classes. 47 Italio claims that in 1912 50% of pupils who were not State Wards were children of manual workers, although it has not

43 Lucie Brooker, Notes on the Campbell Park School, North Otago, 1929-50, Hocken Library, Misc MS 523.
44 Winterbourn, p.268.
46 Memo, Alfred Cowles to the Director of Education, 10 August, 1928, CW 40/6/50.
been possible to find her source for this statement.\textsuperscript{48} The fact that so many of the children, 87\% in 1931,\textsuperscript{49} were wards of the state might also reflect on their backgrounds, but it was not possible to find the numbers who were in this category throughout the period. Of forty children for whom parents' occupations were able to be found thirty-one were the sons of labourers or of tradespeople, but no conclusions can be based on this small sample.

The recorded 'character or state' of the parents of children admitted is also inconclusive, as parents were assessed by Child Welfare Department staff. The only objective category in the 'character or state' classification is that of parents who were dead at the time that the card was filled out. The possible categories are shown on the Child Welfare admissions card in Appendix B. The results that were calculated are as listed below, but it must be remembered when looking at them that they relate only to the perceptions of the people who filled out the admissions cards.

\textit{Figure Five - 'Character or State' of Parents}

\begin{tabular}{lcccccccc}
 & Dead & Good & Questionable & Bad & Mentally Unfit & Other & Total \\
\hline
Mother & 42 & 12.4 & 148 & 43.8 & 69 & 20.4 & 21 & 6.2 & 31 & 9.2 & 27 & 8.0 & 338 \\
Father & 32 & 9.5 & 128 & 38.0 & 56 & 16.6 & 38 & 11.3 & 11 & 3.3 & 72 & 21.4 & 337 \\
\end{tabular}

The mother of one child in every eight had died prior to the time that the child was admitted, which suggests that children were sometimes admitted after their fathers had trouble coping with them.

\textsuperscript{48} H. Ilalio, \textit{From Levin Mental Deficiency Colony to Levin Hospital and Training School 1945-65}, MA thesis in education, p. 25. Perhaps the source was Winterbourn, who recorded that, at the time of his visit in 1944, something under half of the pupils who were not State Wards came from homes where the main wage-earner was an unskilled manual worker (p. 268).

\textsuperscript{49} Reports on a Visit to Otekaikae School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Training College - Administration - R. Winterbourn. CW 40/4/29.
Winterbourn provides another hint about the backgrounds of the children. He calculated that more than twice as many Special School pupils as special class pupils had attended more than four schools, while only half as many had been to only one or two schools. He also noted that almost one quarter of Special School children had averaged ninety half-days of absence per year prior to their admission to Otekaieke or Richmond, a much greater proportion than children in the special classes. "These facts", Winterbourn commented, "are probably symptomatic of the behaviour difficulties and frequently unsatisfactory home conditions of many of the special-school pupils". 50

The reasons for admission given on the Child Welfare admission cards are also revealing in looking at the backgrounds and characteristics of children admitted to Otekaieke. It must be pointed out, however, that the reasons marked might not have been the reason for entering Otekaieke: a large number of the children had been in other Child Welfare institutions before being referred to Otekaieke and the reasons given are for the first admission.

Figure Six - Reasons for Admission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Admission</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigent</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detrimental Environment</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglected</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not under proper control</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charged with an offence</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint by police or C.W.O.*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destitute</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Arrangement</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Child Welfare Officer

The most common reason for admission to a Child Welfare home amongst this

50 Winterbourn, p. 268.
group of children was being charged with an offence. A comment from Roydhouse in 1949 corroborates the significance of this factor. He felt that "the possession of anti-social habits, such as stealing, vandalism, lying, specific offences against the Law, and an unusual interest in young girls" was a main factor in bringing children to Otekaieke.51 Winterbourn also noted that about one seventh of Special School pupils were alleged to be thieves, compared with very few of the special class pupils.52 "Sex troubles", truancy and instability were also recorded much more frequently on the records of the pupils of Otekaieke and Richmond. Winterbourn included a long list of "unfavourable character traits" which, he claimed, appeared particularly in the pupils sent to the Special Schools. He also calculated that about 95% of Special School pupils were recorded as showing aggressive reactions (assumedly to authority) compared with less than a quarter of special class children.53

The description "not under proper control" was another significant reason for initially admitting Otekaieke pupils to a Child Welfare home. When this figure is combined with the categories "neglected" and "detrimental environment", nearly 39% of children are admitted for reasons which imply fault on the part of the parents.

Over 22% of children were admitted to Child Welfare homes because they were indigent or destitute, which reflects on the economic background of some of the parents. In the sample there were only nine children admitted to Child Welfare homes because of private arrangements.

Information on legitimacy was found for 335 children, 246 of whom were legitimate and 87 illegitimate. The illegitimacy rate thus works out at 26%, or over one in four. Compared to the rest of the population in New Zealand in the first half of the twentieth century, which had an illegitimacy rate of 4.5%, it can

51 Roydhouse, p. 10.
52 Winterbourn, p. 269.
53 It should be noted that Winterbourn's statistics for Special School pupils seem to have been based on the children who were at Otekaieke and Richmond at the time he visited. The figures he gave for IQ and age of admission appear to have been taken from the records of only 127 children, so presumably these figures are from the same sample.
be seen that children at Otekaieke were nearly six times more likely to be illegitimate.\textsuperscript{54} Working from the assumption that a child was no more likely to be mentally retarded if born out of wedlock, this figure might suggest that the child of an unmarried mother would be more likely to be sent to a Child Welfare institution than a child born to married parents.

A correlation between mental and physical defect in the children at Otekaieke was noted by visitors. Visiting the school as part of a team from Christchurch Teachers College in 1931 Winterbourn commented that, if one guessed at the children's ages without knowing them, one would think that they were aged between about five and twelve years, whereas in fact the age range was between 7.5 and 16.9 years.\textsuperscript{55} Other students also noticed the physical immaturity of the pupils:

One of the outstanding features was the close relation of physical to mental development. Although in PI the average age was 9yrs 10 mths not one of the children was further developed physically than a normal child of five or six years. One boy had the appearance of a baby of about four, and responded only to such treatment as one would give a child of that age. The same mental and physical relationship was noticeable in every other class.\textsuperscript{56}

At the time of his visit thirteen years later Winterbourn commented on the higher proportion of "abnormal physical conditions" at the Special Schools in comparison with the special classes. In particular he noted that 23\% of children at the Special Schools were "undersized", 18\% were "very thin", 7\% had "poor muscular control" and 6\% were "delicate". Surprisingly, children at the Special Schools suffered less from "defective speech": only 2\% had stammers and 21\% had other speech defects or indistinct speech, compared with 4\% of special class pupils with stammers and 33\% with other defects.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{54} Averaged from figures calculated from \textit{Statistics of New Zealand} and \textit{Report on the Vital Statistics of New Zealand, 1905-1955}:

\begin{tabular}{lcccc}
1905: 4.5\% & 1910: 4.5\% & 1915: 4.1\% & 1920: 4.8\% & 1925: 4.8\% \\
1930: 5.2\% & 1935: 4.4\% & 1940: 4.0\% & 1945: 5.0\% & 1950: 4.0\%.
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Reports on a Visit to Otekaieke School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Training College - Administration} - R. Winterbourn. CW 40/4/29.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Reports on a Visit to Otekaieke School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Training College - Academic and Aesthetic Features} - Irene E. Greenfield and Sadie E. Pickett. CW 40/4/29.
At the time of Winterbourn's investigation of the special schools in 1944 just under 80% of the children at the Special Schools came from large towns and cities, with the remainder being from smaller towns and rural areas. Without his criteria for defining a "large" or a "small" town, it is difficult to know just how significant this assessment was. He does, however, calculate that just under 60% of children came from the North Island. The North Island population at the time was about twice that of the South Island, which, Winterbourn claimed, indicated a degree of geographical selectivity.

The Child Welfare cards did not have a category which gave any indication of the racial background of the boys, although Roydhouse found five Maori boys at the school in 1949, so it is not certain if there was any correlation between race and admission to Otekaieke.

The children's backgrounds suggest that the majority of children admitted to the school were seen as social problems in one way or another. Many were children with whom their parents could not cope, who had been in trouble with the police, or who were the products of a union of which society disapproved. A large proportion of the children were therefore from socially unacceptable backgrounds. Over a quarter of the children admitted had been charged with an offence at some stage and another quarter had been thought not to have been under 'proper control'.

The function that Otekaieke fulfilled in the education system between 1908 and 1950 was not simply one of catering for children with low intelligence, as the school claimed. During most of this period intelligence was thought to be able to be measured by IQ tests. Test results show that the average IQ of children at Otekaieke was well above the prescribed range for the school. Low IQs could be a contributory factor for sending children to Otekaieke, as in the case of 'retarded'

57 Winterbourn, p. 269.
58 Ibid, p. 271.
60 Roydhouse, p. 8.
State Wards who were not able to be boarded out as easily as other State Wards, but by no means were all New Zealand boys with IQs in the prescribed range sent to the school, and nor was the school filled with boys with IQs within that range.

The most important criteria for admission to Otekaieke was inappropriate social and classroom behaviour. Winterbourn's opinion was that Otekaieke and Richmond were largely filled up with younger delinquent children and children with unstable temperaments (even some with normal intelligence) simply because there was nowhere else to send them. He was of the opinion that under one third of the pupils at Otekaieke in 1944 were there solely because they were 'feebleminded' or 'borderline intelligence' cases. The remaining two thirds had a history of behaviour and personality maladjustments, the severity of which varied between individuals.

Children were removed from classes when they were pre-pubescent and began to pose more of a threat to the authority of the teacher and school. These children were obviously seen as social problems, who parents, teachers, School Medical Officers, Child Welfare Officers, and the police were unwilling or unable to deal with in the community in the short term. The impact of eugenicist thought may have influenced the decision-makers when considering the longer-term future of the children since feebleminded children were regarded as a potential threat to the racial purity of New Zealand. Many also stood apart from their peers because of physical 'defects' or slow development. Children were thus removed from society for a variety of reasons, not necessarily connected with intelligence. Their removal tells us that the education system could not cope with, and felt a need to banish, children who looked and acted in a different way from the 'normal', children whose behaviour was seen as inappropriate, children who made classroom management more difficult, and children who were thought to be 'feebleminded' at an age when they were about to develop into sexual maturity.

Tomlinson considers that the origins of state special education in Britain can "certainly be traced to the desire of educators in normal schools to separate out

61 Winterbourn, p. 265.
the defective and the troublesome". Special education, she claims, can be considered as a "safety-valve, allowing the smoother development of the normal education system". Otekaieke functioned as such a safety-valve in the New Zealand education system.

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Chapter Three: 
The Experiences of the Boys

In this final chapter I aim to show how Otekaieke functioned from the perspective of those who were most affected by it - the children at the school. Social history aims to revive the 'unheard' voices in the past, those of groups who were often ignored, such as women, racial minorities and poorer socio-economic groups. Individuals at Otekaieke fit into two such 'inaudible' categories - they were inmates of an institution and they were children - so that their experiences were not regarded as worthy of much interest to contemporaries. There is a danger with institutional history that we, like the decision-makers of the past, can sometimes regard the inmates only as one corporate body. We forget that it is made up of many individuals, each with feelings and emotions, and each with reactions to the situation in which he or she is placed. The "phenomenological approach" to studying mental retardation and institutions sees the concept of mental retardation as a social phenomenon and tries to understand its effects on those labelled and how they experience life, rather than just noting the main 'facts' about their existence. It is increasingly being employed by social scientists, although historians have been more cautious about such an approach.

By looking at the experiences of the children we can see the real effects of decisions of policy makers, discussed in the previous two chapters. These decisions, ostensibly in the best interests of educating the child, actually paid little heed to how the boys experienced their isolation and subjection to strict

1 J.A. Henretta, 'Social History as Lived and Written, American Historical Review, v. 84, n. 5, December 1979, pp. 1294-5.
routines. The function of the school at an educational and at a wider social level subverted its initial aims, and affected the function of the school on an individual level.

As with many 'inaudible' groups there is a problem with studying the experience of the individual at Otekaieke in that there are very few records to show how the children felt about the institution and its routines. Because the information to which I had access was mostly confidential, I was unable to make contact with any of the ex-pupils to ask how they regarded the institution. Some comments are available in absconders' reports of the late 1930s and early 1940s, in which boys who ran away were required to write down their reasons for doing so, and an account of their adventures. The jubilee magazine produced by the school in 1983 contains an article written by an ex-pupil, but the article is more concerned with recalling the main events in the school's history, rather than with his experiences of the school.

The direct material for studying the experiences of the boys is very sparse, but much can be gained from looking at other material. The physical surroundings of the school and the routine of the day, for example, tell us about how and where the day was experienced. They do not tell us how each individual boy felt about the school and its routines but they enable us, at least, to picture the context from which they might partially form such a reaction. This is not to

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4 Moreover, I was not certain that oral histories would have been particularly reliable. I would have been asking people to remember back at least forty years, and the fact that attending Otekaieke had a particular stigma about it might have affected the way in which it was remembered. I felt that ex-pupils, now fathers and grandfathers, would have been unlikely to have responded to newspaper advertisements for interviews and that those who did respond were unlikely to be a representative sample. They might have particular motives in remembering the school in one way or another, affected by their experiences since leaving the school. Oral history has been used to record the stories of people labelled as "mentally retarded" (eg. R. Bogdan and S.J. Taylor, *Inside Out: The social meaning of mental retardation*; L. Heshusius, *Meaning in Life as Experienced by Persons Labelled Retarded Living in a Group Home: A participant observation study*) but in this case I did not think that the method would be appropriate.

suggest that individuals' reactions to situations are formed solely by their immediate contexts. Some boys, for example, might have found conditions at the school vastly superior to those in their homes and thus reacted in a different way than others from more fortunate backgrounds. But absconding records suggest that a large number found the institution sufficiently oppressive to decide to run away.

Much revealing material about Otekaieke is in fact written by the 'adults' with particular aims in mind. The principal/manager wanted to make the school look economically efficient and socially successful; physical instruction inspectors were keen to emphasise the importance of physical instruction in educating the 'feeble-minded'; government officials tried to stress what they saw as New Zealand's great acts of humanitarianism and progressiveness in comparison with other countries. Newspaper reporters were sent with the specific task of enlightening the public about the latter achievements and school medical officers 'pushed the barrow' of the importance of sanitation, fresh air and diet. The most objective comments came from students studying Otekaieke as part of their courses in education or preventive medicine. Yet the material produced by all of the above is revealing if we 'read between the lines' and are aware of the biases in it.

Experiences are here divided into five main areas: physical environment; use of time (at school, in industrial training, in physical training, and in recreation); the staff and their relationships with pupils; boys' general health; and their attitude towards the school.

What would a boy have thought when arriving at Otekaieke for the first time? He would probably have travelled to the Otekaieke Railway Siding by train, up the Waitaki river. He would have been picked up and transported the two miles to the school by buggy, spring cart, or car, depending on the decade in which he was admitted to the school. Otekaieke Special School for Boys was located in the Otekaieke valley, up a tributary of the Waitaki river. It is 30 miles from the sea and about 800 feet above sea level. The climate was cold. No record

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appears to have been made of the temperatures at Otekaieke in this period, but figures for Kurow (about 15 miles away) in the 1980s should give at least some indication of the climate. The average daily minimum temperature for June and July, in the period 1980 to 1984, was below one degree celsius and the average daily maximum temperature was below 11 degrees. On average snow fell on 4.4 days of the year, yet the rainfall in the winter was generally below 30 millimetres per month.⁸ The climate of the school was seen as essential to its function. Benstead, in his first annual report, stated:

Here with the invigorating air of the North Otago uplands, ample sunshine and good dry soil, the mentally feeble children of New Zealand with scrofulous or rickety tendencies should thrive; here the build-up of their health by judicious feeding and the placing of them under the best hygienic conditions possible should tone up their bodies to satisfactorily perform their functions.⁹

That the climate was thought to play a role in the 'treatment' of the children can be seen from the comment of a School Medical Officer in 1922. In true Truby King style he checked that there was adequate ventilation of the dormitories at night and commented that he was pleased to see "that, although it was a very cold night, all windows were open and the rooms were very fresh and airy." The next morning he toured the schoolrooms and again remarked on the good ventilation, adding "Evidently there was no fear of fresh air, and although there was a sharp frost the boys did not seem to be in any way incommoded by the cold".¹⁰ An ex-teacher's recollections are somewhat less romantic:

It was a spartan life with no electricity in the early days and a harsh winter. I believe some minister of the Education department came to pay a visit during a vigorous winter, and nearly froze to death in the bleak stone building! And then things improved for Boys and Staff.¹¹

Electric light was introduced to the school in 1916, running on generators. It was

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⁷ N. Roydhouse, Otekaieke Special School, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1949, p. 4; AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 10.
⁸ Figures supplied by the New Zealand Meteorological Service in personal correspondence.
⁹ AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 10.
¹⁰ Supplement to the Monthly Report to June - Visit to the Special School at Otekaie from P.B. Philips, School Medical Officer, 28/6/1922. CW 40/19/25.
Figure Seven: The 'Main Building' and part of the grounds, 1909
(Source: AJHR, 1909, E-4, facing p. 12)

Figure Eight: The 'Main Building' and the classrooms from a hill on the right, 1949 (Source: Roydhouse, between pages 32 & 33)
not until 1928 that the Waitaki Electric Power Board brought power up from Oamaru.¹²

The physical environment of Otekaieke also served to isolate the school from much of society. The nearest town of any size was Kurow, fifteen miles (24 kilometres) away, which in 1921 had a population of 419. Oamaru was about 35 miles (56 kilometres) away, and Dunedin was over 100 miles (160 kilometres) away, a full day's journey by car during much this period. The immediate environment of the school was somewhat rugged. Several of the school buildings were set into the side of a hill to the west. South of the school was a range of hills, which separated the Waitaki Valley from the Maniototo Plains, visible in the background of figure seven. Three miles to the north of the school was the Waitaki river, beyond which were The Hunters Hills, and to the school's east was the Otekaieke river and valley, with the Kakanui Mountains to the South-East, as seen in figure eight.¹³

342 acres of mixed farming land, part flat and part hilly, were purchased along with the school, although other portions were subsequently bought and sold.¹⁴

The remoteness and the climate of Otekaieke were regarded as advantages by the Department of Education when the school was established. But John Beck later criticised the choice of location for these same reasons and claimed that the isolation and bitterly cold winters had not been taken sufficiently into account in choosing the site.¹⁵

Otekaieke used the 'cottage' system of housing its pupils out of school hours. The cottage system, as opposed to having one huge building with long dormitories, was first used at the New Jersey Home for the Education and Care of Feebleminded Children, established in 1888 by S. Olin Garrison. The idea of the new system was that it was better able to foster a home-like atmosphere and

¹² Chant, p. 20.
¹³ Roydhouse, p. 6.
Figure Nine: Cottage C, no date
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 19)

Figure Ten: The inside of a dormitory, no date
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 19)
reduce the monotony and sterility of an institution. It also made classification of children for different methods of care much easier. Although this system has become the norm for large institutions now it was still seen as unusual at the time when Otekaieke was established and Benstead felt that he had to defend the model, relating it to the "consensus of opinion both in America and the Continent". The large size of Otekaieke's 'cottages' makes one wonder if a home-like atmosphere was possible, but Benstead explained that the number to each cottage was as low as it could be made "having due regard to initial expenditure and administrative charges".

Five cottages were in existence at Otekaieke at various times, although their precise functions varied throughout the period. The children who attended the school, as opposed to the industrial section, were generally housed in the identical Cottages B, C, and D (see figure nine). Each of these held about 40 children, a matron, a 'general help' and a 'house boy' from the industrial division who helped the matron with some of the more menial functions of the cottage. One end of Cottage B served as the dining room for all of the boys. Three dormitories for the boys were located at the north end of the cottages, the largest one housing twenty boys, and the other two each housing twelve to fifteen boys (see figure ten). The smaller dormitories could be viewed through windows between them and a staff bedroom. They were not heated. The kitchen and larder were appropriately housed at the opposite end of the building, with staff bedrooms and facilities in between! A bathroom containing baths, basins, showers and footbaths was located inside the cottages, with six toilets and washbasins being located in a separate shed at the back of the cottage.

17 AJHR, 1914, E-4, p. 15.
19 Roydhouse, p. 21.
20 Ibid, p. 5.
21 AJHR, 1910, E-4, facing p. 11.
Roydhouse explained that the dormitories were kept very clean and tidy: "Everything that can be is polished and the cottages have a distinct appearance of cleanliness".23 A reporter from the *Otago Witness* in 1924 found the dormitories "pleasing" and the rows of beds with spotless coverlets "very attractive".24 Two teachers, recalling their first impressions of the school, noted that they were struck by its cleanliness and highly polished appearance.25

There does not appear to have been any provision for an individual desk or private area for each child, although they probably each had a chest of drawers in which to keep their clothes and private property. From *figure ten* it appears that the dormitories were cramped. Despite their bareness, and possibly their sterility, the cottages were in fact the homes of the children at Otekaieke for at least nine months of the year and, along with the schoolrooms, were the place in which the children spent almost all of their time.

Otekaieke employed the cottages for different classification purposes at different times. Benstead was particularly concerned to classify and separate children who were "addicted to pernicious habits, and given to self-abuse". These children, he felt, were "a continual source of danger to all the other children in the institution".26 From the time of the school's establishment, children were divided into groups according to their intellectual classification, behavioural tendencies, and age. The prospectus for the school that Benstead prepared in 1909 claimed that children were placed in a probationary ward on admission so that they could be carefully observed until their characteristics were known, when they could "take their place in the general classification".27 In the Annual report for 1910, Benstead recorded that he hoped to get more separate villas so that he could further the classification system, putting the six to ten year

22 Roydhouse, p. 6.
23 Ibid, p. 21.
27 Propectus for Otekaie Special School, 1909, CW 40/5.
Figure Eleven: The main school building and the playground, 1949
(Source: Roydhouse, between pages 5 & 6)

Figure Twelve: Boys in the playground in front of the school, no date
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 27)
olds in a villa of their own. In 1927 one cottage was used primarily as the sleeping quarters for boys in the industrial division.\(^{28}\) Another was set aside in 1929 for lower-grade younger boys.\(^{29}\) By 1949 Cottage B was being used mainly to house the elder and more difficult boys, and Cottage C for the elder 'house boys' who behaved well and the younger children.\(^{30}\) Particular concern was taken to separate the younger boys from the older and more long-term residents. A School Medical Officer's report in 1922 explained the necessity for separating the school-children from the adults whose "morals are too degenerate and peculiar even for the approval of the least prudish of critics".\(^{31}\)

The schoolrooms were located halfway between the cottages and the main buildings, and shared the cottages' government architectural style (see figure eleven). In 1916 there were eight separate small classrooms,\(^{32}\) though by 1927 these had been reduced to four classrooms, a storeroom and an office, two of the classrooms being separated by a folding door which could be pulled back to make one large room if necessary.\(^{33}\) A 'shop', which was administered by the boys, and a library were also attached to the school.\(^{34}\) By 1949 an extra two rooms were added, separate from the main building of the school. Roydhouse considered that the school must have been a very modern building when built but that it still measured up to present day standards in 1949. It had large windows which were constantly open, open air verandahs, good lighting and heating by hot water radiators. The two separate schoolrooms were similarly well-heated and ventilated with windows on both sides.\(^{35}\) Outside was a large playground (as seen in figures eleven and twelve) with recreational equipment.

\(^{28}\) Avann, p. 36.
\(^{29}\) AJHR, 1929, E-4, p. 11.
\(^{30}\) Roydhouse, p. 21.
\(^{31}\) Extract from Dr A. Clark's report for February 1922, CW 40/19/25.
\(^{33}\) Avann, p. 36.
\(^{34}\) Reports on a Visit to Otekaike School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Teachers College, 'Academic and Aesthetic Features' - Irene E. Greenfield and Sadie E. Pickett, CW 40/4/29.
\(^{35}\) Roydhouse, p. 5.
Figure Thirteen: The 'Main Building', 1909
(Source: AJHR, 1909, E-4, facing p. 12)

Figure Fourteen: Boys transporting stones for rockeries, no date
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 19)
such as parallel bars and ladders.\textsuperscript{36}

Certain parts of the school were 'out of bounds' to the children. The 'main building' at Otekaieke, the old stone building which had been the homestead of the Campbell estate (see \textit{figure thirteen}) was one of these - by 1949 boys were not allowed to approach within 100 yards of it under normal circumstances.\textsuperscript{37} In the earlier days, however, it had served as a dormitory for some of the children and had even contained a recreation room for the boys of the industrial division.\textsuperscript{38} According to an ex-teacher the building had been improved greatly over the years from the "bleak austere place it was in the 1930s".\textsuperscript{39} By the end of the period it served as a main office for the school, a hospital, and provided living quarters for the nurse, seamstress, laundress, assistant laundress and visiting officers. The 'hospital' consisted of a room set aside as a surgery and an office, and another room with six beds serving as a ward for any boys who were confined to bed.\textsuperscript{40} The central kitchen was attached to the main building and included dining rooms for the staff and storerooms.\textsuperscript{41}

A significant aspect of the physical environment for the boys was the gardens. The boys maintained the flower gardens throughout the school grounds and broke in new areas of garden. In particular they were responsible for creating the large rockery which ran along the bank in front of the cottages (see \textit{figures nine} and \textit{fourteen}). This work was undertaken at the instigation of Miss Wylie, the long-serving Head Teacher of the school, who had found a bare bank of clay on the site when she arrived in 1921. Under her guidance the boys converted this area into a rockery over the next nine years, constructing the double sets of steps leading up to the main building at the same time (see \textit{figures one} and \textit{fifteen}). Stones for these two enterprises were carried by the boys on their backs, although some had been fetched most of the distance from the Otekaieke River by a truck.\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{flushright} \textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p. 6. \\
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, p. 26. \\
\textsuperscript{38} Avann, p. 36. \\
\textsuperscript{39} Brooker, p. 4. \\
\textsuperscript{40} Roydhouse, p. 26. \\
\textsuperscript{41} Avann, p. 36. \\
\end{flushright}
Figure Fifteen: Boys seated up steps, no date
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 27)
The boys were responsible for the maintenance of the rockery and other gardens during the time set aside for gardening in the school timetable. They also kept the paths around the institution, which were made of river gravel, weeded and tidy. Boys had patches of garden of their own, located around the school in the playground above, in which they were able to grow any vegetables or flowers which they chose. A large commercial vegetable garden was also cultivated by the boys.43

The physical environment was a vital part of the experiences of the boys at the school. It is essential for us to understand it, not only as a backdrop for what took place, but also because of the way in which it affected their everyday life - the remoteness, the cold, the sterility, the attractive gardens. Jeanine Graham has emphasised the role of the environment in the upbringing of colonial New Zealand children, but it seems no less significant in the experiences of these boys.44

Otekaieke ran according to a strict timetable during the term. During school holidays boys were sent home, boarded out with members of the community, or sent to the school's holiday camp. Two complete timetables of the boys' day during school terms survive from the period up to 1950. One of these is from the prospectus for the institution, written by Benstead in 1909, and the other is from Roydhouse's thesis, written forty years later:

School Timetable as set out in Prospectus, 1909

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 am</td>
<td>Rise, Dress etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.45 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 am-12 noon</td>
<td>School, physical exercise and walks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.15 pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pm-2 pm</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pm-4 pm</td>
<td>School, physical exercises and walks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 pm - 5.30 pm</td>
<td>Play, in summer out of doors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30 pm</td>
<td>Tea, in summer out of doors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 pm-7 pm</td>
<td>Recreation, in summer out of doors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42 Roydhouse, pp. 5-6.
43 Ibid.
44 Jeanine Graham, 'My Brother and I', Hocken Lecture, 1 August 1991.
7 pm
Commence to get ready for bed

Saturday afternoons
Organised game and walks

Sundays
Religious service and walks

An entertainment or dance is given weekly

It is not entirely certain, from Benstead's prospectus, whether the timetable he presented was the one he envisaged for the institution or one already in use at the time. It is not particularly detailed, leaving, for example, an hour and three quarters for pupils to "Rise, Dress etc". Presumably the boys were also doing chores at this hour, which Benstead was not keen to spell out in detail to prospective parents.

By contrast, the timetable recorded by Roydhouse (overleaf) shows much more detail. Nearly every minute of the day can be seen to be under some sort of prescribed routine. In the mornings each boy carried out a task that had been allocated specifically to him. Floors of the cottages and schoolrooms were polished, windows were cleaned, paintwork was wiped over, and all woodwork, such as forms, toilet seats and benches were scrubbed. This emphasis on cleanliness, which might seem excessive, may have been due partly to the fact that a large proportion of the children (43% in 1950) suffered from diurnal or nocturnal enuresis.

Several hours of the day were devoted to academic work, although it was always acknowledged that this was not the most important aspect of the school curriculum. Benstead's 1909 prospectus claimed:

It is the aim in the school to teach only so much of the 3R's - reading, writing and Arithmetic - as can be taken in without too great a mental stress, and in place of this teaching to spend as much time as possible in kindergarten and manual occupations which will enable the children as they grow older to work at useful tasks and in a manner to contribute something to their cost of maintenance.

45 Prospectus for Otekaie, 1909, CW 40/5.
46 Roydhouse, p. 32.
47 J.F. Aitken, Enuresis in the Subnormal Child, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1950, p. 8.
48 Prospectus for Otekaie, 1909, CW 40/5.
Figure Sixteen: Open-air lesson in mat-making, 1910
(Source: AJHR, 1910, E-4, facing p. 4)

Figure Seventeen: Open-air lesson on number, the pupils using plasticine, 1910 (Source: AJHR, 1910, E-4, facing p. 4)
School Timetable in 1949

6.30 am  boys woken and get up
        clean dormitories
7.20 am  clean their boots
7.55 am  breakfast
8.30 am  toothbrush drill
8.45 am  inspection of clothes and physical training
9.45 am  a cup of milk
10.00 am English and attendance at the surgery
10.50 am Playtime
11.00 am Reading
11.30 am Numbers
12.20 pm Dinner
12.50 pm Rest time. Usually lie in the sun.
1.30 pm  Walks or Games
2.00 pm  Gardening
3.00 pm  Handwork
4.00 pm  Singing or handwork. The afternoon's timetable is very elastic and
        weather permitting the whole of it may be spent outside.
5.10 pm  Tea followed by toothbrush drill
5.45 pm  Recreation. Woodwork, advanced physical activities, scouts, cubs,
        games, walks, stories and other activities, including general knowledge
        talks.
7.00 pm  Junior boys to bed
7.30 pm  Senior boys to bed

Friday
10.00 am Recitation or gardening
12.50 pm Change of footwear and sports till 3.45 pm
4.00 pm  Free Occupation
7 till 8.00 pm Library Night

The influence of overseas institutions such as the Vineland Home is evident. The curriculum of the Vineland institution in the 1900s relied largely on kindergarten games to teach prompt obedience and observance of the rights of others. Nature study, physical training and manual training were thought to stimulate the mind and body, teach discipline and lay the foundations for the

49 Roydhouse, p. 21.
Figure Eighteen: Boys working in the bootshop, 1920s
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 24)

Figure Nineteen: Boys working at handcrafts, 1920s
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 27)
teaching of the '3Rs'. The emphasis away from academic subjects continued throughout the period - in 1949 Roydhouse listed the subjects in order of importance, scholastic work coming fourth after physical education, manual work and handwork, ahead only of music. The lack of emphasis on academic subjects concerned Winterbourn at the time of his visit in 1944, as he considered that there was not sufficient being done for the more intelligent pupils at the school. Academic and handcraft lessons were often taken outdoors in good weather (see figures sixteen and seventeen), particularly in the early years of Otekaieke's establishment when the ideas of 'open-air' lessons and 'open-air' classrooms were coming into vogue.

The relative lack of importance placed on academic subjects can be accounted for largely through attitudes towards the economic function of the school, both in the short term and in the long term. What, then, did the boys learn instead? Roydhouse's timetable shows that the afternoon in the school section were devoted to handwork, gardening, and other 'non-academic' activities. The boys in the industrial section, of course, were engaged in such activities for almost all of their time. Manual activities of the industrial section at various times included farm work, carpentry, basket-making, chair caning, mat making, boot making, knitting and sewing (see figure eighteen). For the children in the school section it included plasticine-modelling, drawing with chalk and crayons, bead-threading, block-building, paper and raffia weaving, sewing, canvas work, knitting, darning, painting and leather work (see figure nineteen). Boys became highly skilled in many areas of craft. During the Second World War, for example, they knitted a large number of jerseys and pairs of socks for the Navy League and the Patriotic Council. The annual Kurow Agricultural and Pastoral Show frequently saw knitted and crocheted articles made by Otekaieke boys winning first prizes, and visitors commented that it was common to see a boy who had finished his work for the moment sitting on a verandah knitting a sock or a jersey.

50 Doll, p. 5.  
51 Roydhouse, p. 19.  
52 R. Winterbourn, Educating Backward Children in New Zealand, p. 276.  
53 Prospectus for Otekaieke, 1909, CW 40/5.  
54 AJHR, 1927, E-4, p. 11.
Figure Twenty: Boys picking potatoes, 1910
(Source: AJHR, 1910, E-4, facing p. 4)

Figure Twenty-one: Boys performing drill outside the 'Main Building', 1909
(Source: AJHR, 1909, E-4, facing p. 13)
Gardening was a major part of the curriculum at all levels, with the boys maintaining all the rockeries and paths. They also looked after a vegetable garden from which they received the proceeds of vegetables sold to use in a recreation fund (see figure twenty). Gardening was obviously an activity which some boys enjoyed - or at least preferred to schoolwork - as Roydhouse reported that the boys were forever reporting that some particular job needed doing, in the hope that they would be allowed out of school to do it!

Physical instruction and drill were the school subjects considered most important in 1949, although they were stressed from the time of the school's formation. In 1909 physical instruction was noted as a "marked feature of the school curriculum", taking place daily and being most important for instilling a sense of discipline into the children and helping their general health and deportment (see figure twenty-one). Physical training was thought to increase the intelligence of children. Benstead quoted from Seguin who claimed that "the physiological education of the senses must precede the psychical education of the mind". This attitude was borne out in the reports of physical education instructors who visited Otekaieke, one commenting:

That physical training is a direct means of approach to the intelligence is well exemplified here. The very lowest in intelligence are being trained to lead useful lives.

A School Medical Officer visiting in 1922 noted that the teachers laid great stress on games for developing the children's minds and overcoming "that sullenness which their previous lives had engendered in them". As in their academic subjects, children were grouped into several classes for physical training, which had no correlation to their scholastic level. The youngest children did simple

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55 Roydhouse, p. 18.
56 Ibid., p. 6.
57 Ibid., p. 19.
58 Prospectus for Otekaieke, 1909, CW 40/5.
59 AJHR, 1909, E-4, p.11.
60 Report, H.E. Longworth to Director of Education, 5 December 1923, CW 40/19/45.
61 Supplement to monthly report for June, P.B. Philips, School Medical Officer, 28/6/1922, CW 40/19/25.
Figure Twenty-two: Before a football game in the season of 1938-9
(Source: Aspden (ed), facing p. 35)
exercises with the levels of difficulty progressing up to the Senior Squad, who were trained in Swedish Drill to the same grade as children in Standard VI of the public schools, step-dancing, and difficult rhythmic work. A wide variety of sports and games were played at Otekaieke, as well as the physical drill. The school played rugby, soccer and cricket against other local schools, and had internal sports tournaments in other sports (see figure twenty-two). From 1921 to 1947 daylight saving existed at Otekaieke for a longer period than that of the rest of the country. A concrete open air swimming pool was also built for the boys.

Recreation was usually in the form of organised games or activities, rather than free time, and usually had some educational basis. The Head Teacher in 1924 commented that staff had decided on games as a way of "quickening" the children and beating "the dragging inertia of the untrained defective, his lack of concentration, and his poor self-control". She believed that if children sat around idly then they would quarrel or get into mischief. Games were therefore used to try and change their mental attitude. Music and games, she believed, were the two single greatest assets in "the training of the defective".

In 1929 a scout troop was founded (Oamaru Troop no. 4) with the object of giving boys an opportunity of mixing with others of their own age. The troop took part in scout activities in the district. In 1938 a cub pack was founded.

One of the most popular recreational activities was watching the weekly films. The school owned both a 16mm and a 35 mm motion picture machine. Films were sent from the National Film Library and from the motion picture

62 AJHR, 1927, E-4, p. 11.
63 Chant, p. 22; Reports on a Visit to Otekaieke School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Teachers College, 'Occupational Features', Margaret G. Dennison and Bertha M. Anderson, CW 40/4/29.
64 Roydhouse, p. 7.
65 Newspaper cutting from Otago Daily Times in Departmental File, 'Educational Institute', 6 June 1924, CW 40/5.
66 AJHR, 1929, E-4, p. 12.
companies, providing a mixture of educational and recreational viewing. Boys thus saw films once a week and a student in 1949 commented that it was "just like going to the pictures in Dunedin on a Saturday afternoon for all the noise that there is". The radio, installed in 1930, also provided enjoyment and contact with the outside world. A gramophone and a magic lantern show were also owned by the school.

Other recreational activities included long walks around the surrounding countryside. A "stroll" of ten miles over the hills, with the boys racing the last mile home, was a "regular occurrence" on Saturday afternoons.

The Manager's report in 1938 shows that the range of activities available in the previous year was large: the scouts had been to a scout party in Oamaru, and had entertained Scouting officials at the school; the school's mouth-organ band had been to the Kurow Anglican church to provide music for the service; the Salvation Army band from Oamaru had visited on Labour Day; the boys had been given a concert by the Oamaru Toc H in the winter months, and a picnic in December; and the football team had played several matches against surrounding public schools.

Whatever the activity in which the boys were involved - academic, manual or physical - the most important element in the eyes of the school was that they were always busy. "One of the chief points in the treatment is to keep each boy constantly occupied", declared the Calvinist Benstead. "Suitable recreation is essential but care is taken that relaxation does not degenerate into mere loafing." It appears that there was very little free time given to the children at any stage in this period. Inactivity was regarded as a crime, with the result that

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68 Letter, Meikleham to Earle L. Davidson, 6 August 1947, Day School General 1931-50, CH-139.
69 Roydhouse, p. 32.
70 AJHR, 1938, E-4, p. 14; Chant, p. 20.
71 Chant, p. 23.
72 Roydhouse, p. 19.
74 AJHR, 1910, E-4, p. 9.
75 Prospectus for Otekaikie, 1909, CW 40/5.
boys seldom got time in which to determine their own occupation. Being at Otekaieke must have been a bit like being in the army, with a constant sense of duties to perform and a constant sense of being watched. A boy who, with his companions, repeatedly ran away from the school in the early 1940s explained that they did so "just because we wanted to be free".76

The staff members were a significant aspect of the boys' experience at Otekaieke as they were the only adults and role models with whom they were in regular, frequent contact. In considering the staff members, I intend to concentrate mainly on their relationships with the children, their attitudes towards them, and the 'values' that they tried to instil into them, rather than looking at life for the staff at Otekaieke, or their relationships with each other. As always, this subject is hampered by the fact that so many sources came from an 'adult' point of view. Besides the Manager, staff were divided into three main groups: the teaching staff; the cottage staff (who supervised the boys outside school hours); and the support staff of cooks, office staff, laundresses and general aides.

The first thing to note about the teaching staff in the school section at Otekaieke was that a large proportion of them were women. Although the Principals and Managers were always male, the school was very much dominated by female teachers in the period up to 1950. Men were sometimes employed by the school as instructors in industrial and manual activities, but most of the boys would have come into daily contact with women only while at the day school. Otekaieke was not unique in the fact that it employed mainly women - the Special School for Girls at Richmond was in the same position. In Queensland, Australia, only women were employed in special education for many years. The reason for this can be found in a crossed-out paragraph in minutes of a meeting of Directors of Education in Perth in 1924:

...past experience with children in special schools had clearly shown that the employment of men of outstanding teaching ability as teachers of mental defectives in schools could not be justified on educational grounds, as even the most favourable results of work with subnormal children have been small.

76 Absconders' Report of B.R.N., 13 February 1940, 3/11, CH-139 (initials of the boys have been scrambled so as to ensure anonymity).
Brilliant educational ability can be more profitably employed by the State in teaching normal or supernormal. Sympathetic motherly women with experience in Montessori methods were considered ideally suitable for work with mental defectives. Records of such an attitude existing in New Zealand cannot be found, although the underlying idea may have been present. The reason for the predominance of women in special education in New Zealand possibly had more to do with the problems which the Department had in finding any staff who were prepared to live in such a remote area and at a school with a reputation like that of Otekaieke. Primary school teaching was a vocation which was increasingly being taken up by women in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1930 the Director of Education wrote to the Teachers Colleges in Christchurch and Dunedin, explaining that the Department had "met with considerable difficulty inducing teachers to take up work at Otekaieke Special School" and suggesting that they arrange for groups of students to visit the school. Problems with finding staff did not diminish in the period - the situation was exacerbated by labour shortages in the Second World War and, when Winterbourn visited in 1944, one cottage was closed because of staff shortages. Because the setting was hardly appropriate for teachers' families, and there was little married accommodation, it tended to be unmarried women who taught there and earned extra money by supervising the boys outside of school hours. A past teacher recalled that "In those days there was no 40 hours a week, the staff worked long hours, 50 or more, including the Principal". The altruism of teachers was frequently a source of comment for visitors.

79 Letter, Meikleham to Earle L. Davidson, 6 August 1947, Day School General 1931-50, CH-139; Winterbourn, p. 261.
80 Gardner, p. 40.
82 Brooker, p. 2.
83 eg. Supplement to the Monthly Report for June - Visit to the Special School at Otekaieke. P.B. Philips, School Medical Officer, 28 June 1922, CW 40/19/25; Memo, H.E. Longworth to Director of Education, 5 December 1923, CW 40/19/45.
By 1944 there were as many as nine full-time teachers in the school section, although by 1949 the numbers had been reduced to six. The experience and qualifications of the teachers varied widely. By 1944 there was still no special training scheme in place for teachers at Otekaieke, although Winterbourn felt that it was urgently needed. Teachers often specialised in particular subjects. For example, one teacher took most music classes, while another specialised in swimming lessons in addition to taking her own particular class. Clare Wylie, who held the position of Head Teacher from 1921 to 1948, spent a great deal of her time in administrative and assessment work. As well as the testing that took place before admission to Otekaieke, children were also tested upon arrival - usually the second day after they actually arrived and almost always by the Head Teacher. Further IQ testing took place at periodic intervals, to check the child's progress. The boys appeared to quite enjoy the tests after they had become used to them. Dorothy Steel tells of her interest in mental testing and relates an anecdote about an occasion when she had been testing the children:

I was putting my things away when I noticed one of the boys was still there. So I told him I was finished with them and he could go back to the cottage. He became quite annoyed and said "Mad dopey ole Teel, I hope you die in the night and I won't go to your funeral.""}

Little is known about the instructors in the industrial section of the school. Benstead envisaged a staff consisting of farm and garden instructors, tradesman attendants and other industrial trainers, each qualified in his or her particular area. It is not known how many of these positions were filled, although several of them must have been in order for the industrial section to function at all.

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84 Winterbourn, p. 261.
85 Roydhouse, p. 16.
86 Winterbourn, p. 263.
87 AJHR , 1927, E-4 , p. 12; Memo, Meikleham to Director of Education, 16 February 1924, CW 40/19/25.
88 Steel, p. 27.
89 Prospectus for Otekaieke, 1909, CW 40/5.
Each cottage was under the charge of a matron and a housemaster or housemistress. Two general assistants also helped out, sometimes boys from the industrial section who were apparently unsuitable for going on service but had been retained as 'houseboys'. The cottage staff had control over the boys outside of school hours and in the weekends. They roused the boys in the morning, supervised the morning wash and the cleaning out of cottages, and helped in the serving and supervision of meals. In the weekends they organised sports, games, hikes and other outdoor activities.90

The way in which teachers spoke or wrote about the pupils reveals something of their attitudes towards them and the relationship which they might have had. In 1908 George Benstead wrote to the Secretary for Education, urging him to hurry with alterations to the school before the boys arrived. In particular he wanted a separate house of his own and he justified it on the grounds of protecting his daughter, "a child of between the tender ages of three and four" from the "feebleminded boys". He wrote:

Knowing the idiosyncrasies and vagarities of the feebleminded child, and knowing well the sensitive disposition and the exceptional powers of mimicry she possesses, I cannot allow her to be possibly mentally ruined for life through some rude shock or fright at the hands of one of the feebleminded boys.91

For an 'educator' to have such an attitude towards his pupils before they even arrived suggests that he was unlikely to be able to relate to them particularly well. Benstead's authoritarian mentality continued to show itself in his reports. In his first annual report he wrote that "Feebleminded children are very indolent, as a rule, and work must be made a habit before it comes agreeable in any way to them". Later in the same report he expressed the view that "Mentally Defective children are usually lacking in will-power, and are easily led, hence the necessity of a good moral training - a bad example is easily followed".92

Attitudes seemed to have mellowed only a little by 1924, when Clare Wylie

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90 Roydhouse, p. 16.
91 Memo, Benstead to Secretary for Education, 4 September 1908, CW 41/21/18.
92 AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 13.
spoke to a meeting of the New Zealand Educational Institute. She explained that she felt that scholastic training was a "sheer waste of time and money" for the "low grade mental defective". Although they might be able to memorise facts in a parrot-fashion, they were incapable of using these facts, Wylie claimed, because they were devoid of judgement and reason. She had found that the 'feebleminded' would work only under the closest supervision and that they had to be taught in the most direct way possible. The "why" and the "wherefore", she felt, conveyed nothing to the 'feebleminded' child.93

From these comments it appears that staff regarded their pupils as one group or category, rather than as a number of individuals, each with their own strengths and weaknesses and their own personal morality. The idea of the retarded as "moral imbeciles" was very pervasive,94 and staff, sharing the beliefs of the wider society, assumed that children were reluctant to learn as a consequence of laziness inherent in their 'feeblemindedness' rather than because of their experiences at home and at primary schools. The teachers often discussed boys amongst themselves which shows that they were sensitive to individual differences.95 Yet they worked in a society which had no qualms about labelling a child and treating him or her simply as a member of the group called 'the feebleminded'.96

Visitors to Otekaieke were frequently impressed by the discipline at the school, and the response of the boys to their teachers. In 1922 a School Medical Officer, after commenting with pleasure on the fresh air, noted:

The next thing that struck one was the smart [way] in which the boys responded to any orders from the teachers, and I was pleased to notice that the Navy rule of carrying out all orders at the double was in vogue.

He also noted that the teacher who took the drill had a "very good "word of

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93 Newspaper cutting from Otago Daily Times in Departmental File, 'Educational Institute', 6 June 1924, CW 40/5.
94 eg. AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 15.
95 Roydhouse, p. 22.
command".  

Another visitor commented that "The discipline of the boys was of a very high order: this was severely tested by means of formal exercises and games". Roydhouse also noted the "fairly strict discipline" and tight organisation of the school:

Everything is done without any fuss or bother and whilst I was there, there seemed to be no sign of any disorganisation.

When the Dean of the Medical School visited, Roydhouse reported, he was most impressed to see a squad of small boys all marching in step with their heads erect and their arms swinging.

That discipline was indeed strict we can be sure, but the measures taken to achieve such a standard of discipline are less certain. If the children were prepared by staff they might have made a special effort to behave in the prescribed way for a short period of time while an important visitor was present, but they surely could not have managed it for a sustained period, such as a week (the length of Roydhouse's visit) and with the number of frequent visitors which they had. Strict discipline and behavioural standards thus had to be the norm, not just paraded on exceptional occasions. Presumably the fact that a lot of repetition was involved in life at Otekaieke meant that boys were in no confusion as to their role. With regard to indoor drill to music, for example, an ex-teacher wrote that "Through repetition, tight control and the rhythm of the music the boys were able to march, skip, run and skip-hop around a marked rectangle, and change from one to the other without missing a beat".  

There are records of certain punishments, but there must have been many others of which there is no record. Students who visited the school in 1931 commented that a great deal of discretion with regard to discipline was exercised, and that more serious cases were sent to the Manager.

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97 Supplement to monthly report for June. P.B. Philips, School Medical Officer, 28/6/1922, CW 40/19/25.
98 Report, H.E. Longworth to Director of Education, 5 December 1923, CW 40/19/45.
99 Roydhouse, pp. 32-35.
100 Gardner, p. 40.
101 Reports on a Visit to Otekaieke School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Teachers College, 'Farm Notes' - J.P. Wilson and K.C.M. Cockerill.
According to Harris, who visited Otekaieke in 1957, discipline was based on a privilege system. A privilege was regarded as anything beyond the bare necessities - bed, meals and clothing. Discipline was therefore maintained by denying privileges according to the severity of the misdemeanour. Privileges included pocket money, going to see films, using the library, going on special outings and "social promotion". Although Harris visited the school seven years after my time period finishes - and in the time of a different principal - the concept of the privilege system seems to have existed earlier, even if not articulated. One of the most frequent means of punishment seems to have been banning offending children from going to the weekly films. As a general principle corporal punishment was not used in 1957, but it was retained for use in cases of direct insolence, and for swearing at or striking a staff member. In these cases staff felt that the problem had been reduced to a personal one between two individuals, which, they felt, justified the use of corporal punishment. It is not known whether corporal punishment was used earlier, or whether it was administered by both male and female staff.

Harris also noted that staff were helped considerably in maintaining discipline by the fact that there was a "complete lack of loyalty" between the boys. Boys seldom grouped themselves into gangs because, in Harris's opinion, of the lack of leadership amongst them. He was surprised to find that boys were more loyal towards staff members than to their fellow pupils, and that they hastened to report any irregularities amongst the other boys. Although this did not build character, Harris commented, it certainly helped the staff in maintaining discipline and knowing what all the boys were doing.

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CW 40/4/29.

102 G.J. Harris, Otekaieke Special School, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1957, p. 32.

103 Brooker, p. 3; Reports on a Visit to Otekaieke School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Teachers College, 'Farm Notes' - J.P. Wilson and K.C.M. Cockerill, 'Occupational Features' - Margaret G. Dennison and Bertha M. Anderson, CW 40/4/29.

104 Harris, p. 32.

105 Ibid, p. 33.
Discipline was probably maintained by a set of complex mechanisms. Although it is uncertain whether or not corporal punishment was used in the period, other punishments involving withdrawal of privileges were in operation. Staff disfavour must have been another element in the discipline structure. Whatever the punishments were, they were obviously adequate to enable staff to maintain a high degree of control, and to instill considerable fear into the children. A child who ran away in 1940 recorded that he did so because he was in trouble for trying to run away on a previous occasion. Another ran away because he had been forced to steal apples, presumably for another boy, and was afraid of getting into trouble.

As well as maintaining control, staff also used their positions to try and inculcate certain values into the children. In particular they emphasised responsibility, leadership and initiative. It was thought that children at Otekaieke were very dependent by nature, and would always lean on others unless encouraged to develop self-government. One method of developing these attributes, they felt, was to divide boys into teams or squads, with one boy at its head, responsible for the behaviour of the rest of the squad. One situation in which leaders were responsible for their squad was at mealtimes. The leader would organise the setting and clearing of the table and the serving of pudding. He had to be trustworthy and fair to all, else he would be disrated, which was "the very height of humiliation". Being a leader was considered an honour, by the teachers at least. The attitude of the boys is, as always, unknown.

The method of using groups was still in use in 1949 - wherever possible a boy was put in charge of a group which might range in size from as few as one or two boys to as many as thirty or forty boys. When boys had to "fall in" outside,
they paraded in groups of five, each with a senior boy as a group leader (see figure twenty-three). They were also each given some small job or chore to carry out on a regular basis, such as cutting and drying lavender, which was thought to increase responsibility. There was always a staff member "unobtrusively looking on", however, as most boys, Roydhouse records, could not bring themselves to do a job "either without stopping for a rest or a chat".\textsuperscript{111} Attempts by staff to improve boys' 'characters' took place in both an active and a passive way. The relationship was one geared specifically to 'improvement' of the boys, and it was on this basis that interaction took place.

The general health of the boys appears to have been very good, although it often took some time after they were admitted to build up their health. Some children in the early period were very frail indeed when they entered the school, as evidenced by the weights recorded by Benstead. One eight year old was recorded as weighing only 2 stone, seven and five-eighths pounds. One seven year old weighed two stone, eight pounds, while a fourteen year old was admitted to the school weighing just over four stone.\textsuperscript{112} These boys were obviously cases of serious illness or malnutrition, but the frequency of very low rates shows that several boys were in this condition on arrival in 1909 or 1910.

The Annual report for 1937-8 commented that the children's health was "very good" and that there was a "competent nurse" attached to both Otekaieke and Richmond.\textsuperscript{113} When Elizabeth Gunn visited the school later in 1938 and "medically inspected" 118 boys she found fourteen with subnormal nutrition, ten with fair, and the rest with good nutrition. In particular she noted the very good posture and drill at the school, and the fact that the boys were "clean and well-cared for". A few chilblains were found, but not nearly as many, or cases as severe, she noted, as she had found in some North Island private boarding schools.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{111} Roydhouse, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{AJHR}, 1910, E-4, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{113} \textit{AJHR}, 1938, E-4, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{114} Memo, Gunn to Director of Education, Wellington, 24 August 1938, CW 3/12/2.
Roydhouse was similarly impressed in 1949 by Otekaieke's "relatively clean health record", which he assumed was influenced by the beneficial effect of the healthy outdoor life and regular hours and meals on the general constitution. He noted that the school had always been relatively free from infectious diseases, although there had been two outbreaks of influenza in 1946 and one in 1947. Only one case of diphtheria had ever occurred at the school in the memory of the Head Teacher, this boy being infected by a recent arrival at the school. Diphtheria immunisation was given to all children, except those whose parents refused it.\footnote{Roydhouse, p. 27.}

The incidence of enuresis was 43% in 1950.\footnote{Aitken, p. 8.} The attitudes of the staff towards boys who suffered from this were decidedly negative, even towards the end of the period. The attitude shown by George Benstead in 1911, however, was particularly critical. Benstead sent a memo to the Secretary for Education giving advice on curing the "numerous cases of enuresis" at the Industrial School in Stoke. It is not known why he should have been the one to give advice, or whether or not the advice was solicited. Benstead listed two "probable causes" for the problems at Stoke - a lack of robust health and vitality, and self abuse. He recommended having all the children examined to see if they were suffering from enlarged tonsils or adenoids, or if they needed to be circumcised. It was also necessary, he advised, to ensure that the bedclothes were not heavier than was necessary for warmth. The Manager at Stoke should then take them boys "who still transgress in this direction" and deal with them firmly. He should, according to Benstead, extract a promise from the boy daily that he will not wet his bed again. Enstead advised:

\begin{quote}
The Manager should parade all wet-bedders in his office every morning \textit{before breakfast} (when a list of all delinquents must be in evidence) whether they have wetted the beds the previous night or not. Congratulate and encourage all who have not wet beds, then deal with the delinquents individually according to their varying dispositions. A look of horror and disgust is enough to make one boy decide to make fresh efforts whereas a very straight and sharp talk is necessary for another.\footnote{Memo, Benstead to Secretary for Education, 3 August 1911, CW 3/12/7.}
\end{quote}
Presumably this system was also used at Otekaieke and Benstead's advice was based on his own actions. A form which he had printed for reports of night attendants included a section for recording children who had wet their beds.\footnote{Form in departmental file CW 38/19/A.}

The children's dental health seemed to be very good. Dental students who visited the school in 1949 reported that the children who had been at the school for several years had a surprisingly low number of dental caries and contrasted decidedly with the more recent arrivals. The probable explanation for this, they felt, was the balanced diet, the children's general health, and the extreme hardness of the water.\footnote{Roydhouse, p. 25.} 'Toothbrush Drill' was carried out twice a day and was explained by a member of staff:

Have you ever seen 90 boys standing in a lines all doing toothbrush drill in time to numbers? Each boy equipped with a small aluminium mug filled with salt water, plus a toothbrush, awaiting the command "Dip!, Shake! (to get rid of the surplus water) One!" That was for the front teeth. "Dip! Shake! Two!" That was for the right side. And so on, up to about Eight and finishing with massaging the gums with a forefinger. This little nightmare of control took place after each mealtime. While not every teacher's idea of fun, the results of this, plus controlled diet and very few sweets, was extremely healthy teeth.\footnote{Gardner, p. 40.}

The food which the boys received was thought by visitors to be adequate. Elizabeth Gunn in 1938 reported that there was very little wrong with the diet that the boys were getting. She did suggest, however, that stew appeared too frequently on the menu, and that it did not look particularly appetising after being carried from the main kitchen to the boys' dining room and served onto cold plates. She showed the diet to a Professor Malcolm, who went through it and reported that he thought it rather short in animal fat. She thus advised a much more generous buttering of the bread. Gunn also advised that boys were given a "good spoonful" of jam on their plates and allowed to spread it themselves, rather than having the staff do it.\footnote{Memo, Gunn to Director of Education, Wellington, 24 August 1938, CW 3/12/2.}

A "typical day's diet" in 1949 consisted of porridge and milk, bread and butter for
breakfast, a midday dinner of potatoes, one other variety of vegetables, meat, semolina or steam pudding and milk, and a tea of scones or bread and butter or scrambled eggs, cheese, jam and cocoa. Boys were also given a cup of milk during the morning at school, an apple each day for most of the year, and occasionally some grapes or stone fruit that had been grown on the farm. Roydhouse thought that food was in abundance at Otekaieke, and that the diet was more than adequate nutritionally. There were always second helpings for those who wanted them, and he considered it an "eye-opener" to see the amount that some of the boys ate. Fresh vegetables were picked early each morning, and food was cooked in steam ovens, a method which was nutritionally superior to boiling vegetables and losing minerals and vitamins. Roydhouse's only concern was that much time was wasted in serving the food out - over half an hour between the food being taken out of the ovens and it being eaten. This would have resulted in the food losing its warmth and freshness and in the oxidation of vitamins.¹²²

Because the children at Otekaieke were on the whole healthy, health does not seem to have been a particular issue for them, and thus probably did not have a large effect on their experience of the school.

Visitors to Otekaieke frequently commented on the happiness of the boys whom they saw. Frequently they compared the happiness of the children with the emotional conditions which they assumed that the children would have experienced if left in their previous situations. They might have been correct: chapter two shows that a large proportion of children appear to have come from troubled backgrounds and unstable homes.

Dr A. Clark, a School Medical Officer visiting Otekaieke in 1922, claimed that their happiness was the first thing that struck him about the children.¹²³ Dr Clark's opinion was that this was due to the fact that children were "living amongst their intellectual equals, instead of being the butts of their normal school-fellows or the subject of their half-contemptuous tolerance". He

¹²² Roydhouse, p. 28.
¹²³ Extract from Dr A. Clark's report for February 1922, CW 40/19/25.
recognised several children whom he had sent to the school and was thus able to "compare their present happy, ordered, useful little lives with their wretched futility whilst they were attending a primary school".

Another School Medical Officer visiting Otekaieke later in the same year was similarly impressed by the children's state of mind. Like Clark, he attributed it to the theory that children were happier among others of the same level of intelligence, but he also saw it as being due to the fact that they were all able to be taught to do something useful. Consciousness of being some use in the world, he argued, was a source of happiness to 'defectives'.

A newspaper reporter in 1924, dispatched probably to try and dispel some myths about the school, was also very positive about the boys' experience of the place. The reporter considered that cheerfulness was the prevailing impression of a visitor to the school and noted that the children particularly enjoyed singing and games.

In 1931 a group of students from Christchurch Teachers College commented on the boys' demeanor and the "general tone of happiness". "Every inmate," they recorded, 'seems to be in the main contented and happy'. The children appeared so contented that the students were concerned about whether they would want to be sent out on service after living in such a friendly environment.

Elizabeth Gunn's visit to the school in August 1938 was similarly positive: "I found a happy lot of boys, each proud of his work, his school work and his home duties". Eleven years later Roydhouse was impressed by the tone of the

124 Supplement to the Monthly Report for June - Visit to the Special School at Otekaieke, P.B. Philips, School Medical Officer, 28 June 1922, CW 40/19/25.
125 Otago Witness, 22 July, 1924, p. 69.
126 Reports on a Visit to Otekaieke School for Mental Defectives by Students of Christchurch Teachers College, 'Administration' - R. Winterbourn, CW 40/4/29.
128 Memo, Gunn to Director of Education, 24 August 1938, CW 3/12/2.
school. Altogether, he wrote, the boys seemed to be happy and contented with their lot. They were provided with good food, clothing and entertainment and had time to do a lot of outside work, "which the average boy likes".\textsuperscript{129}

Throughout most of the period visitors commented on the happiness at the school. Only one comment can be found to suggest that visitors did not always see the best side of the school. The Chief Inspector, visiting in 1926, commented that the control seemed to him to be too rigid and that he too seldom saw a smile on the face of the boys. Even the humorous songs they sang did not make them smile. He advised:

\begin{quote}
I feel quite sure that indiscipline would not result in the establishment of a more kindly relationship between teachers and their pupils. Firmness should not be sacrificed but more of the atmosphere of the home would I feel sure assist the teachers in the difficult problems they often have to face.
\end{quote}

He also commented that "little or no" opportunity appeared to be given for boys to develop their creative capacity.\textsuperscript{130}

The report of the Chief Inspector, coming amongst a number of positive reports, is difficult to explain. Perhaps he happened to visit on a particularly bad day. Perhaps the children had been given strict instructions about behaviour for the occasion of his visit and the atmosphere was more tense. Or perhaps the Chief Inspector was particularly perceptive as a visitor and was able to sense things that others might not. The impressions of outside visitors to the school are not a particularly good source for trying to gauge an amorphous concept like the happiness of the boys, but they are one of the few sources which are available.

Children's attitudes towards the school must necessarily have been influenced by the way in which the school was seen in wider society. It appears that, particularly in the early years, the school's public image was not good. An instructor in physical education, who visited in 1923, was moved to write to John Beck at the Special Schools Branch about Otekaieke:

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{129} Roydhouse, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{130} Notes on Visits to Otekaieke and Richmond Special Schools. Otekaieke 11/6/26. CW 40/4/29.
\end{footnotes}
I had often heard of Otekaieke, and always as a semi-lunatic asylum. This was and is the common idea of the institution. I know of a case recently where a local H.M. advised a parent not to send a child there as it was practically an asylum, and the child would only get worse. When Miss Wylie and Miss Muir went from here to your branch, practically all the teachers here thought they were deserting the ranks of teachers and joining that of the warders. The instructor claimed that "A boy being sent to Otekaieke now is a slur on him for life" and suggested that the Department organise some positive publicity of the school through the Education Gazette and newspapers. Although Beck's reply was somewhat patronising and non-committal he did admit that the matter had been brought "rather pointedly" to the Department's notice by parents and others in the previous three months and that they were considering publicity, even though it was not Departmental policy to advertise their good works. The reporter who visited Otekaieke for the Otago Witness in July 1924 might have been one of those encouraged to do so by the Department, as the article, in its opening paragraph, states:

For those parents who fear that their backward child will receive harsh discipline, or be lonely amid sordid surroundings, a description of the work and entertainment at Otekaieke Special School in Otago may prove interesting.

In 1935 the Supervisor of Special Classes commented that many parents objected to Otekaieke on the grounds that it was a corrective institution, and that there was a need for an institution without such a stigma. Winterbourn, in 1944, claimed that many persons who would send a 'feebleminded' child to Otekaieke did not do so because they knew that many of the pupils had "undesirable characteristics of personality". This, he considered, was one reason why "merely feebleminded children" were in a minority and many of these children, whom he felt should otherwise be at Otekaieke and Richmond, stayed in ordinary schools.

Social stigma is a traditional problem for all special education measures. New

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131 Letter, A.P. Roydhouse to Beck, 7 March 1923, CW40/19/45.
132 Letter, Beck to Roydhouse, 13 March 1923, CW40/19/45.
133 Otago Witness, 22 July, 1924, p. 69.
134 Memo, W.A. Valentine to Director of Education, 4 June 1935, E40/5/1.
135 Winterbourn, p. 265.
Zealanders were reluctant to accept special classes when they were introduced, and the Government had to work hard to convince people that they were of some value. In 1926 in Queensland, Australia, the euphemism "opportunity classes" was used to replace the term "backward classes" on the grounds that teachers had previously referred openly to the special provision as "dunces' classes". Queensland schools also faced considerable problems in persuading parents to admit children to these classes.

The way in which Otekaieke was regarded by the general public must surely have affected the way in which the children thought about the school. One boy, who ran away from the school in August 1940, recorded that he did so "because I was afraid of staying here a long time".

Indeed, absconders' reports can be used as one indication of the general attitudes of the boys towards the school. From the reports that survive for the years 1937 to 1950 it appears that absconding was not uncommon. In 1937, for example, there are records of 35 abscondings, in 1940 24 abscondings, and in 1941 there were at least 32. Although some children absconded (and were thus counted) more than once, these figures mean that up to about 15% of children attempted to run away from the school in a year. Other years have much lower numbers, but the records may well be incomplete in some of these years. Most boys were missing only for a night or two, and 21 of the 195 absconders recorded in the file returned to the school of their own accord. Absconding from Child Welfare homes, according to the Superintendent of Special Schools, John Beck, could never be totally eliminated:

..like an epidemic it comes in waves, and is difficult to check. One unstable type can upset a whole institution, and often does. As often as not the absconder has no real reason for walking off.

Although Beck may have been right about absconding coming in waves, some of
the boys appeared to have definite ideas about why they ran away. The reasons were often associated with fear of other boys or with wanting more independence.

Several children wrote that they ran away between 1937 and 1950 because they had been bullied by older children. E.H., for example, said that he left because "D........ was going to give me a hiding".141 Two boys in August 1940 left because their food was being taken from their places on the table by other boys.142 In October of the same year two others ran away because older boys had threatened to "give us a hiding" if they did not steal some tobacco for them.143 A child in the following year recorded that "I run away be Cauces I had, mad me pierch appes for him".144 Presumably this was another case of a child being bullied into a crime, and being caught between fear of his teachers and fear of his fellow pupils. Peer pressure could be seen in other ways however - one boy claimed that he left because "N...... wanted me to go with him".145

Some other comments by boys in the absconders' reports show that they felt that the school offered limited opportunities for them, and that they felt restricted by its lack of freedom. The fourteen year old boy who recorded on separate occasions that he ran away because he wanted to be free and because he was afraid of staying at the school a long time is one example. S.A., aged 11, left because he wanted to get to Auckland.146 Another boy explained: "I took the bike because I wanted to go to a dance at Kurow". He later adds "I did not like Mr C........ because he is snappy".147

The prospect of getting a job and thus having some independence seemed to appeal to some boys. One recorded "I went away because I was upapy and I want to go on a farm".148 Another, when asked why he left, wrote "Why because I

142 Absconders' Reports of L.C and C.B., 29 August 1940, 3/11, CH-139.
143 Absconders' Reports of R.M. and C.R., 1 November 1940, 3/11, CH-139.
144 Absconders' Report of P.P., 12 March 1941, 3/11, CH-139.
145 Absconders' Report of J.B., 5 May 1941 3/11, CH-139.
148 Absconders' Report of R.S., 29 April 1940, 3/11, CH-139.
want to get a good job on cows". Two fourteen year old boys who ran away only a few days later had similar ideas. One explained: "We planned to run away and try to get a job somewhere". The other wrote "I ran away because I wanted to get a job". But, with his intended audience in mind, he added that he was now going to turn over a "knew leaf" and wait until he had a chance to go on service.

Experiences are multi-faceted. They cannot be summarised by a single argument or theme. The experiences of the boys with regard to one area cannot even be summarised, because of the wide variety of possible responses to any one situation. The function of Otekaieke in the lives of individuals in this period exists in over 2000 versions.

What can be summarised and expressed, however, is the way in which the school attempted to control the lives of its pupils. The sterile physical climate, strict timetabling and constant efforts of staff to 'train' and 'improve' their pupils demonstrate the school's attempts to dominate and control their pupils' experiences. The extent to which they were successful will never be known, but the high number of abscondings and the individuality of the boys as expressed in photographs (eg. figure twenty-four) suggests that attempts to enforce conformity met with considerable resistance from many of the boys. The "nightmare of control" could be experienced at Otekaieke in more ways than one, and not only by the teachers.

149 Absconders' Report of H.W., 12 March 1941, 3/11, CH-139.
151 Absconders' Report of E.S., 15 March 1941, 3/11, CH-139.
Conclusion:
The Functions of Otekaieke

Otekaieke Special School for Boys functioned at three distinct levels in the period 1908 to 1950, with varying degrees of success in each. Functions fulfilled at one level could affect the operation of the school at another level. This was particularly evident with regard to the experiences of the boys. For them, the school's emphasis on social control and provision of a safety-valve for the education system subverted the ostensible purpose of the institution and thus affected the way it ran on a day-to-day level.

The extent to which the school fulfilled its ostensible purpose can be gauged by comparing two statements of aim with data regarding the destination of the children after leaving school. In 1909 Benstead stated:

Its mission is to educate and train boys who, while unable, owing to mental feebleness, to derive due benefit from the ordinary school course, are yet capable of improvement by special education - sufficient in some cases to enable them to earn their living independently; in others, with assistance to maintain themselves by following some occupation in the outside world in circumstances where due allowance will be made for their infirmity, or at the school in work that will be reproductive enough to cover, or partly cover, the cost of their maintenance.1

Meikleham's statement nearly thirty years later is along similar lines:

The aim of the School is to re-place in public schools retarded boys as soon as they give promise of making satisfactory social adjustment, and to train sub-normal boys, so that on leaving the school they may be replaced in the community and ultimately become self-supporting.2

There is little available information about where boys did, in fact, go after leaving. An education student in 1931 criticised the lack of follow-up of ex-pupils.3 Figures which are available on the destinations of the boys show only

1 AJHR, 1909, E-4, p. 3.
2 AJHR, 1938, E-4, p. 13.
3 Reports on a Visit to Otekaieke School for Mental Defectives by students of Christchurch Teachers College, 1931, Administration - R. Winterbourn, CW 40/4/29.
their immediate destination on leaving - there is no record of how long they stayed in any one place or if they indeed succeeded in "ultimately becom[ing] self supporting". Even the Oamaru Rotary Club expressed concern about the lack of after-care for boys who had been at Otekaieke, and offered to help find them work.4

Boys were expected to be moved from the school section into the industrial section after they turned sixteen.5 After this time they were usually sent out on 'service', that is, work on a local farm which was intended to lead to permanent employment. Over one third of boys in a sample of 430 throughout the period went out on 'service'. 'Training' in the Industrial Section of the school, in the workshops and on the farm, was supposed to prepare them for farm work (see figures twenty-five and twenty-six) and their abilities with regard to gardening and milking skills were carefully noted.6 Boys on service were under the control of the local Child Welfare Officer, stationed in Timaru. That there were problems with such a system is evident from a letter to the Manager of Otekaieke from the Child Welfare Officer in 1941:

...over a period of 22 years in dealing with these boys, I cannot recall even one who has had more than an elementary knowledge of farm work before being placed out...[there] has been a tendency during recent months to place out boys who have proved troublesome in the institution.7

A considerable proportion of boys also went directly from Otekaieke to mental hospitals or to Templeton Farm School. Winterbourn's survey of 154 boys who left school between 1938 and 1940 recorded that 21% went to "institutions for the delinquent, unstable or low-grade defective".8 From my sample 13% went directly to mental hospitals, 7% to Templeton Farm School, and 10% to other boys' homes or industrial schools. A proportion of these children may have

5 Letter, Meikleham to Earle L. Davidson, 6 August 1947, Day School General 1931-50, CH-139.
6 eg, comments in letter, Meikleham to Cummings, no date, 3/2/8, CH-139.
7 Letter, Cummings to Meikleham, 7 August 1941, 3/2/8, CH-139.
8 R. Winterbourn, Educating Backward Children in New Zealand, p. 280.
been 'unsuitable' for Otekaieke in the first place, but the fact that 30% went straight into other institutions suggests that the school was certainly not succeeding in its aim of replacing all children in the community. A "small number" of boys also suffered "a relapse to their former habits" while on service, and were returned to the school or sent to other institutions.9

Most of the remainder of children were sent home or were boarded out with relatives or friends, where they may have returned to a public school, been sent out to work, or stayed at home. Both Winterbourn and Roydhouse recorded that 11% of children returned to schools, either in special classes or ordinary classes.10 Such boys were dispatched with detailed comments by Otekaieke teachers on their abilities and temperaments.11

Little attention was paid at Otekaieke in this period to the after-care of pupils and to rehabilitating them for life in the community. Part of the reason for this neglect may have been that staff were afraid of what they might discover - the fact that 30% of children went directly to other institutions suggests that the 'failure' rate for the school's 'training' may have been high. To a large extent, Otekaieke justified its existence by claiming that it prevented 'retarded' boys from becoming a future burden on the State. Evidence that it was not particularly successful might have meant that its existence would be reconsidered.

Otekaieke's operation, according to the figures above, was not entirely in accordance with its ostensible aims. If the school did not function to fulfil these aims, then how did it function? In the course of this long essay I have argued that it functioned on three main levels, serving a variety of needs.

9 N. Roydhouse, Otekaieke Special School, 5th year thesis in preventive medicine, Otago University, 1949, p. 22, p. 33.
10 Winterbourn, p. 280; Roydhouse, p. 24.
11 eg. Letter, Acting Manager of Otekaieke to Juvenile Probation Officer, Christchurch, 17 January 1924, 3/1, CH-139.
The level most significant in the establishment of the school was the wider social one, whereby social changes and pressure from groups within the community combined to justify a need for separate provision for those labelled as 'mentally retarded'. Once the school was established it functioned largely in the interests of the education system, providing a 'safety-valve' for children with inappropriate classroom behaviour. It also served to protect society from what it perceived as a threat from certain individual boys. Children were removed at an age which seemed particularly problematic and were maintained, out of sight of the public, until their behaviour was thought to be more contained.

By applying the label of 'mental retardation' and justifying the removal of 'retarded' boys, society ignored other problems, such as disruptive backgrounds, physical impairments and adolescence, which contributed to make the behaviour of certain children seem problematic. I was not able to find any sources which argued for increasing tolerance, acceptance, or understanding of 'difficult' children within the community. Instead, isolating the boys meant that the problems they created were similarly put out of sight.

Isolating these children, and liberally using the label 'mental retardate', also meant that the individuality of the boys was denied in this period. Their individual identities and personal characteristics were lost in their placement into the category of the 'feebleminded'. Yet a boy at Otekaieke experienced life just as acutely as any other individual in society. Because his experience was as valid as that of any other individual it is thus just as worthy of historical consideration.
Appendix A:
Statistical Methods Used

550 children were used in the mini-survey of Otekaieke pupils, the information on the admission cards being copied onto a computer and analysed with the help of the statistics programme, SPSS\textsuperscript{X}. The boys' admission cards make an revealing historical source, betraying many of the attitudes of the period simply in the layout of the form. A copy of the Child Welfare admission card form can be found in Appendix B. It can be seen that, amongst other things, staff thought it their business to know whether or not a child was legitimate, the reason for a child's admission, and the 'character or state' of a child's parents. Pre-selected categories were printed on the form, and the person who filled it out would check the category which he or she thought appropriate. Often certain categories were left out. It is not known who filled out the forms, although it is suspected that it might have been the School Medical Officer who recommended a child's admission or an employee of the Child Welfare Department. Because some of the information is based on value judgements with no objective criteria (such as the 'character or state' of the mother and of the father) it cannot all be used to give a picture of the backgrounds of the children. It does show, however, the way in which the person who filled out the card (and presumably most of the staff at Otekaieke) perceived the children's backgrounds.

One limitation of the computer findings is the method of selection. The first 550 cards of the 1603 in National Archives in Christchurch were used as the sample, the cards being in alphabetical order. In retrospect it might have been more statistically correct to have taken the cards at random or to have selected them at regular intervals throughout the whole group. This is because it is possible that some ethnic groups might be under-represented, as surnames starting with Mac or Mc or O' are not included. It is also possible that the Maori population is not represented in the correct proportions, however the cards do not give any indication of ethnicity and it is impossible to know how many Maori children were at the school. In such a small group there are unlikely to be any significant
deficits from the under-representation of those of Irish or Scottish descent. The last surnames included begin with "Gr". Admission cards do not survive for every child who attended the school in these years but a significant proportion clearly do. Most of these are for the middle and later years of the period: only 21 of the children in the sample were admitted between 1908 and 1919. Throughout the other decades they are spread relatively evenly.
Appendix B:
Child Welfare Card (C.W. 32.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD WELFARE.</th>
<th>INMATE:</th>
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<td>Parentage.</td>
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<td>(committal order)</td>
<td>Legitimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at:</td>
<td>(supervision) yrs</td>
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<td>(committal) yrs</td>
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<td>Religion:</td>
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Why committed or placed under supervision.

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Indigent</th>
<th>Delinquent</th>
<th>Detrimental Environment</th>
<th>Neglected</th>
<th>Not under Proper Control</th>
<th>Charged:</th>
<th>Temp.</th>
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Section of C.W. Act, or Amendment Act under which Child appears before Children's Court.

Act 1925 13.1 By warrant, 13.2 13.5 31 32 Amendment Act 13.3 13.4 25 26 30

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<td>25</td>
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<td>Arrangement</td>
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Character or State of Parents at Committal. (Add "D," drunkard.)

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<th>Physically</th>
<th>Mentally</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Questionable</th>
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<th>Deserter</th>
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3/11 Field Work Pertaining to State Wards. Absconders - General 1937-59
3/18/2 Field Work. Letters from Ex Inmates. 1938-1964
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Day school - General. 1932-50
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School diary. 1945-47
Admission Cards - c. 1923-49
Principal's Casebook
Unidentified Photos (Box 128)

(ii) National Archives, Wellington

**CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT FILES**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>3/2/12</td>
<td>Placing out of inmates from special school for boys, Otekaie</td>
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<td>3/12/7</td>
<td>Treatment of enuresis 1911-1963</td>
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<td>4/3</td>
<td>General - including admission to special schools 1927-58</td>
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<td>4/14</td>
<td>Psychiatric and psychological services part 1 - General 1948-70</td>
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<td>4/14/1</td>
<td>Clinics 1927-73</td>
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<td>4/14/2</td>
<td>Intelligence tests 1923-51</td>
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<td>6/70/3</td>
<td>Campbell Park School - Management and functions annual report 1909-62</td>
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<td>7/70/10</td>
<td>Campbell Park - recreational amenities part 1 1941-63</td>
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<td>7/70/12</td>
<td>Campbell Park - teaching aids and equipment 1938-63</td>
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<td>8/22</td>
<td>Memoirs and obituary of John Beck</td>
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38/19A  Forms 1913-1914
38/19B1  Special Industrial Schools forms 1914-15
38/19/7  Special Industrial Schools forms 1917-48
38/19/8  Child Welfare Act 1925, forms 1926-49
40/4/29  Inspection, Otekaike Special School 1912-44
40/5  Feeble-minded children - general 1909-25
40/5/5  Mental Defectives Act 1911 Amendment 1911-33
40/5/9  Care and control of feeble-minded children - replies to circular of 1 May 1924
40/6/50  G. Benstead’s private school for the feeble-minded, Timaru 1917-39
40/15/43  Transfer of boys from Weraroa to Otekaike 1932-36
40/19/25  Special School for boys, Otekaike - Instruction of inmates 1908-37
40/19/45  Otekaike - Physical instruction
41/6/3  Feebleminded - proposed institute in North Island - special schools
41/21/18  Otekaike - buildings 1908-11

Series 17
item 1  Otekaike Admissions Register

Series 18
item 8  Nominal roll for Otekaike 1909-17
item 9  Nominal roll for Otekaike 1918-20

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

40/5/1  Mentally Defective Young Persons - Establishment of Homes
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MENTAL HOSPITALS DEPARTMENT

4/6  Mentally Defective Children
6/1/3  Child Welfare Reports - backward children 1929-39
6/15  Backward Children - Otekaike vol 1 1930-37

Index - Children in Mental Hospitals in New Zealand 1929-39

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<th>Author(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Luckin, B.</td>
<td>Towards a Social History of Institutionalization</td>
<td>Social History, v. 8, n. 1, 1983, pp. 87-94.</td>
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<td>Milne, K.A.</td>
<td>Backward Children</td>
<td>Issues in New Zealand Special Education.</td>
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<td>Mitchell, D.R.</td>
<td>Special Education in New Zealand: An historical perspective</td>
<td>Exceptional Children in New Zealand.</td>
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Ross, D.H., 'Special Education: Retrospect and prospect' in S.J. Havill & D.R. Mitchell (eds), *Issues in New Zealand Special Education*.


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