

deprived of their natural aliment and warmth, perished in one year. The matter was reported to the Government, who directed that in future the infants were to be farmed-out. The average mortality of the infants so farmed-out is very high this year. The Commission to report upon this blot on our civilization.

6. To inquire into the dangerous position of a number of the younger children, who are sleeping three in a bed in an upper room, where they would all be inevitably roasted to death in the event of a fire. And whether space could not be found on the ground floor, from the ample accommodation at present occupied by the master and his family.

No. 4.

The Hon. T. FRASER, M.L.C., to the Hon. the MINISTER of JUSTICE.

SIR,—

Wellington, 6th July, 1880.

In my letter of yesterday's date it escaped me to mention that before leaving Dunedin I visited the Industrial School, when I informed the master that it was my intention, if possible, to have all the placed-out children put under the protection of the police. The master deprecated any such movement on my part.

Mr. Weldon, Chief of the Police, informed me that, without any extra cost to the colony, the police could periodically visit and report upon the condition of the children. On that occasion Mr. Weldon informed me that the police had interfered in one case of cruelty to placed-out children on the Wakatipu.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. W. Rolleston, Minister of Justice.

T. FRASER, M.L.C.

No. 5.

REPORT.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 23rd August, 1880.

In compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 13th July, asking us to hold an inquiry into the management of the Otago Industrial School at Caversham, and accompanying such request by a series of questions to be inquired into, numbered from one to six both inclusive, we have made the inquiry, and have now the honor to state our views upon the several matters which came under our notice and are touched upon in the questions. We have had before us all the persons who in our judgment we deemed could afford us information, and their evidence will accompany this report.

Matter No. 1.—With reference to this question, we requested the master to produce all warrants authorizing the licensing-out of the children named in the return alluded to. He was enabled to produce them all, with the exception of those for numbers 21, 26, 34, 40, 43, 52, 99, and 100, which, apparently, he says, had been mislaid, or had miscarried on their transit to or from Wellington. One of those warrants he recollects transmitting to Wellington; but he never received it back. The whole of the warrants produced to us were strictly in order, and signed either by His Excellency the Governor himself, or by some one holding his delegated powers.

Matter No. 2.—With reference to this question, we found that, although in the return of children alluded to the word "adopted" is used, that word is only meant to express that the child was licensed-out, the warrant in both cases being precisely the same. We took exception to the word "adopted" being used, inasmuch as it has no existence in the Act, and only tended to mislead. The master, seeing the force of our objection, promised in future the word should not be used. As regards the remark that some of the girls had been licensed to "single men, apparently," we found that in every instance the whole of the children had been licensed-out to married men, with one exception, that exception being in the case of Mary T—to the Rev. Father Crowley, a Roman Catholic priest at Lawrence. This girl was licensed-out two years ago, her age then being ten years.

Matter No. 3.—In connection with this question, we have taken particular pains to ascertain the correctness of this statement, and the only case that we discovered as giving any colour to it was the case of a family named J—, the circumstances of which were as follows: On 16th October, 1877, five children, one an infant twenty months old, were committed by the Resident Magistrate at Outram to the institution, the abandoned character of the mother, and the father's avocation taking him constantly from home, being the reasons. On 22nd October in same year the father applied to the master of the institution for the release of the children from the institution. The master declined to release them, saying he would write to the committing Magistrate; he accordingly did so, in terms of the copy of letter attached (marked A). On the 24th October, 1877, the Magistrate replied to the effect that he would not consent to release the four elder children, but he saw no objection to the infant being returned to its parents during the good behaviour of its mother. This letter is attached, and marked B. The master, consequent upon this communication, licensed the infant to the father. On the 4th of February, 1878, the Magistrate sent a telegram to the master withdrawing his consent to the infant being any longer intrusted to the mother's care, and on the 5th of the same month the master, in a letter to the Magistrate, asked him to instruct the police to return the child to the institution. This was not done, and consequently the child remained with its parents. A copy of the Magistrate's telegram and the master's, marked respectively C and D, are attached. With reference to the other children, we find that in July, 1878, the master received a letter from the wife of the Magistrate, in her husband's absence in the North Island, requesting him, in consequence of the mother being at the point of death, to allow the four children in his custody to visit their mother. This letter has been mislaid, but it will be found alluded to in a letter by the master to the Magistrate, dated 15th July, 1878, a copy of which is attached. In view of the circumstances of the case, the master allowed the four children to go and see their mother, as desired. The mother died, and the father then requested that the children might be licensed to him. The master, in consequence, wrote to the Magistrate on 15th July, 1878, a copy of which letter is attached (marked E), asking if he had