

SCHEDULE NO. 2.—*Kit for a Boarded-out Child.*

BOYS :—				GIRLS :—			
Articles.		Quantity.		Articles.		Quantity.	
Boots (pair)	...	1		Boots (pair)	...	1	
Caps or hats	...	2		Hats	...	2	
Jackets	...	2		Jackets	...	2	
Socks (pairs)	...	3		Dresses	...	2	
Vests	...	2		Chemises	...	2	
Trousers (pairs)	...	2		Stockings or socks (pairs)	...	3	
Shirts	...	2		Drawers (girls over eight years)	...	2	
Belt	...	1		Petticoats	...	2	
Flannels*	...	2		Pinafores or aprons	...	2	
Handkerchiefs	...	2		Flannels*	...	2	
				Handkerchiefs	...	2	
				Collars, Linen (girls over twelve)	...	2	
				Nightgowns	...	2	

* For those children only who wear them by doctor's instructions.

3.—EXTRACT from REPORT of INSPECTOR of INDUSTRIAL and REFORMATORY SCHOOLS, Victoria, for 1879.

THE number of children boarded out during the year was 460, and there are now 230 applications for 380 children in my office. The total number out on 31st December was 1,458.

I did not anticipate finding it necessary to invoke again public sympathy with, and approval of, the work which the ladies in all parts of the colony are doing for the State. But the manner in which that work has been spoken of has been felt to be unjust, and makes it a duty for me to endeavour to make clear the extent to which the ladies' committees are really serving the country. There are 477 ladies engaged in the work in the 77 boarding-out districts. They have 1,458 children under their supervision (in addition to those at service). They visit and report upon the homes and the appearance and treatment of the children once in every six weeks; they inquire into complaints, smooth difficulties, see to the attendance of the children at school, obtain reports from the teachers and medical officers, seek situations for the children when they are of an age to go to service, and in many ways look after their welfare with untiring energy and patience. Each committee has a lady correspondent, and these ladies do an amount of necessary clerical work in connection with the disposal and care of the children, and payment of the foster-parents, that but few voluntary workers would undertake. And the work of the ladies is on the whole admirably done. The fact that cases arise now and again in which the unsuitability of foster-parents is made apparent does not of necessity impugn the vigilance of the ladies. Such things would occur under any system of supervision, and when the number of children who are boarded out is taken into account, the rarity of such cases is a testimony to the care the ladies exercise. It is certain that no staff of travelling agents would discharge the duties in a manner so satisfactory to the community as the ladies have done, while if the system were in the hands of men alone it would be a failure. It is, therefore, a matter for thankfulness that the threatened retirement of some of the ladies on account of suggested interference has been averted.

There is one feature in connection with the boarding-out which is, I think, deserving of passing notice, viz., the decided improvement in the appearance of many of the homes, due largely, no doubt, to the visits and suggestions of the ladies. I have noticed this improvement in the course of my periodical inspection of the homes, and in conversation with several of the ladies find they have observed it likewise.

It will be observed from the special reports attached hereto that several ladies are still of opinion that the rate of pay should be increased. The views of the ladies on this matter are undoubtedly entitled to respectful consideration, and if they were at all unanimous in believing an increase to be necessary to the well-being of the children, I should feel compelled to advise that an increase be made. But, failing that, I do not feel justified in recommending an increase in view of the fact that there are still so many more persons willing to take children under nine years of age than can be supplied. Some of the best foster-parents have candidly admitted to the ladies that they can make it pay with three children. The decision to allow the committees to grant permission to foster-parents to send children above twelve years of age only half a day to school instead of full time will no doubt assist in creating a larger demand for the elder children.

The vote for boarding out, £19,000, has proved inadequate to the requirements by about £1,500, partly owing to the large number who have been sent out during the year and partly to the requirement that children shall not leave school till they are fifteen years of age, or till they are certificated, which increases the number on pay. It is desirable I should add that, although there are still so many applicants waiting for children, they all require young children, and there are at the date of this report only 71 children under ten years of age in the State Industrial Schools, inclusive of new admissions, the sick, &c.

4.—EXTRACT from REPORT of CHAIRMAN of DESTITUTE POOR DEPARTMENT, Adelaide, 19th Aug, 1880.

The boarding-out system still assures us most convincingly of the wisdom of thus dealing with the children of the State, and it is the Board's aim so fully to push this branch of its operations as to lessen considerably the number of children at Magill, and make that establishment more of a receiving home, from which to draft off the children as speedily as may be to the more desirable private homes throughout the colony.

It is certainly a matter for great satisfaction that, out of more than 500 visits made to the homes of the children, only twenty-four reports are adverse.

It is in no stereotyped form that I desire again in the warmest terms to express the Board's appreciation of the valued services of the Boarding-out Committee. The ladies and their friends throughout the colony do the work of kindly visitation far better than it could be done by any amount of perfunctory officialism. This aid, in addition to the official visits made from the department, secures to the utmost the beneficent results of the scheme; and it is no small gratification to find that the arrangements initiated and matured some years back under the late Chairman (Mr. T. S. Reed) are stimulating the authorities in the neighbouring colonies to plans of like beneficence.