

SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

REPORT OF THE VICTORIAN SECRETARY AND INSPECTOR OF NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS, AS PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ACT.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

REPORT.

The SECRETARY and INSPECTOR, Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools, to the Hon. the
CHIEF SECRETARY.

Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools,
Melbourne, 30th June, 1897.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit for your consideration the annual reports of this department, together with the usual returns, statement of accounts, &c., for the year ended 31st December, 1896 in accordance with the requirements of the Acts Nos. 1121 and 1079.

The transactions of the year are shown on the following table, which has been recast with a view to greater simplicity, and to enable the somewhat complicated admission and discharge schedule of former years to be dispensed with:—

STATEMENT of ADMISSIONS and DISCHARGES, &c., for the Year 1896.

| | Neglected Children. | Reformatory Children. | Total. |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| <i>Admissions, &c.</i> | | | |
| Number under supervision on 1st January, 1896 | 3,487 | 442 | 3,929 |
| New committals | 551 | 80 | 631 |
| Transfers from gaol | ... | 8 | 8 |
| " " Neglected Children's Department | ... | 76 | 76 |
| " " reformatories | 1 | ... | 1 |
| | 4,039 | 606 | 4,645 |
| <i>Discharges, &c.</i> | | | |
| From institutions, foster homes, service, &c., as follows :— | | | |
| By order of the Governor in Council | 91 | 10 | 101 |
| Effluxion of time | 278 | 111 | 389 |
| Death | 47 | 3 | 50 |
| Transfers to asylums | 8 | ... | 8 |
| " reformatories | 76 | ... | 76 |
| " Neglected Children's Department | ... | 1 | 1 |
| Absconders during 1896 not returned | 38 | 33 | 71 |
| Number under supervision on 31st December, 1896 | 3,501 | 448 | 3,949* |
| | 4,039 | 606 | 4,645 |

* The location of the 3,949 children is shown hereunder:—

The location of the 3,949 children is shown hereunder:—

| | |
|-----|---|
| + { | 2,089 Neglected children were being maintained in foster homes. |
| | 135 " " " institutions. |
| | 181 Reformatory " " reformatory schools. |
| | 646 Neglected children were maintaining themselves at service. |
| | 196 Reformatory " " " |
| | 583 Neglected children were with relatives, &c., without cost. |
| | 71 Reformatory " " " |
| | 48 Children whose present whereabouts are unknown. " |

† A few of these are free from legal control, but being incapacitated from earning their own living are still maintained by the State.

The number of wards of the Neglected Children's and Reformatory Departments, respectively, who were a cost to the State on the 31st December, 1895, and 31st December, 1896, were as follows:—

| | | | | <i>Neglected.</i> | | 1895. | 1896. |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|-------|-------|
| Boarded out | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1,997 | 2,089 |
| In schools... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 142 | 135 |
| Total | | | | ... | ... | 2,139 | 2,224 |

| | | | | <i>Reformatory.</i> | | 1895. | 1896. |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|-------|-------|
| In schools... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 150 | 181 |

Committals.—It will be seen that there has been a very large increase in the number of neglected children committed during the year, which I think may be attributed to the continued depression through which our colony is passing. Want of funds has apparently, in many instances, compelled philanthropic societies and private individuals to pass children on to the State that in more prosperous years they would have cared for in some other way. Very many of the fathers, and in some few cases also the mothers, have left Victoria, ostensibly to seek for employment in the other colonies, leaving their children totally unprovided for, trusting doubtless to their falling into the hands of one or other of the numerous charitable societies or persons, and, failing these, "the schools."

While it is for many reasons undoubtedly very desirable, and indeed imperative, that these parents should be followed up and compelled, where possible, to support their offspring, so soon as federation in whole or in part will permit of this being done, I venture to express the opinion that in numerous instances the character of the parents is such that it will be well for their children, and indeed for the colony generally, if they never return here, their continued absence from our midst being a positive social gain, both from a moral and material point of view. Under these circumstances I would rest satisfied with trying to recover locally what maintenance is possible from such parents without bringing them back to Victoria.

Mortality.—During the year 50 children died, being $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the whole under the care of the department. When it is remembered that 83, or upwards of 15 per cent., of those committed during the year were under the age of twelve months, I think it will be conceded that the mortality is very low, more especially when it is further considered the class of children generally dealt with, and the low state of health in which many of them are received, particularly the infants. As bearing on the latter class of children, I am glad to be able to report that the cases for which provision was made whereby, in special instances, illegitimate infants could be suckled by their own mothers in carefully selected foster-homes, the usual wet-nurse rate covering the cost of both, have fully realised the expectations formed when the policy was recommended on 27th February, 1894. Only two deaths have occurred since that date amongst them; several are being wholly or partially supported by their mothers, while in every instance the latter's attachment to their children has increased, and their general conduct has been highly satisfactory.

Children sent to Service, and their Conduct.—The continued depression and the prolonged drought of the last two seasons have told very considerably on this branch of our work, great difficulty being found in suitably placing the children as they became of an age for service, more particularly in the country districts. Many of the farmers who have hitherto been the chief employers of our children have not been in a position to engage them, and in several other instances employers had to return them on our hands, consequently the children have frequently had to be retained for a longer period in the foster-homes and paid for. Those we have succeeded in placing out in situations had as a rule to go at a very low rate of wages, and in many instances merely pocket-money, in addition to food and clothing, had to be accepted. It was felt, however, that so long as we could secure comfortable homes for the children who were physically fit for service, it was better to let them go even on these terms, it being very desirable to impress upon them as early as possible the fact that to be placed in a position where they could have the satisfaction of in future earning their own living was of infinitely more importance to them than even higher wages. Care will, of course, be taken as matters improve to have all such cases as I have been referring to reviewed from time to time, with a view to our seeing that an equitable and fair wage is paid for the children's services. The general conduct of these service wards has been, upon the whole, satisfactory. Some few cases of serious misconduct have occurred, and been met by transferring those concerned to one or other of the private reformatories.

Children placed with Relatives and Others on Probation under section 30, subsection 5, Act 1121, and section 340, subsection 6, Act 1079.—I am pleased to be able to report that the department is still being relieved of the cost of maintaining large numbers of its wards by placing them under these subsections with relatives or friends willing to receive them, and with very satisfactory results both as regards the welfare of the children and the monetary saving to the State, which is, of course, very considerable.

Transfers from Gaol, section 333 of Act 1079.—Only eight transfers from gaol (six boys and two girls) took place under this section during the year, the various local Benches apparently preferring to commit more young people direct to the reformatory, and fewer to prison than formerly, which I need hardly say is in itself a pleasing and satisfactory step in the line of progress in dealing with juvenile offenders.

With very few exceptions the transferees are continuing to do well, and appear to fully understand and appreciate the advantages of the system by which, subject to their subsequent good conduct, they have been enabled to exchange the confinement of the prison for the comparative freedom of a private reformatory.

Suspension of Sentences by Courts and Release of Prisoners on Probation, under sections 353 and 354, Act 1079.—While it is certainly gratifying to find that sixty-one first offenders (fifty males and

eleven females) were given the benefit of the first of these sections, it would, I submit, be still more so if, by a well arranged but unobtrusive supervision of these probationary careers, some idea of the result of the operation of the section could be obtained, and I venture to express the hope that this will yet be realised. Section 354 seems to have been allowed to remain inoperative for another year.

Receiving Dépôts, Royal Park.—The health and conduct of the very large number of children that passed through the dépôts during the year have upon the whole been satisfactory. The Matron has found herself compelled to ask for an addition to the buildings in consequence of the increased number she has at times to accommodate, and I purpose shortly submitting for your consideration a public-works requisition for two new wards, which I trust will meet with your approval. The thanks of the department are cordially rendered to William Peterson, Esq., and other kind friends for another year's periodical gift of valuable and useful Christmas presents of toys, &c., for the children of these and the other schools connected with the department. In addition to the committee, who visit here regularly, taking the deepest interest in their work, the children have the great advantage of weekly visits from clergymen and ladies and gentlemen, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, for the purpose of imparting to them religious instruction. I regret to say that no outlet has yet been found for disposing with safety to themselves and the general public of the girls to whom I referred in my last and several previous reports, as being mentally and physically unfit to be sent out into the world to earn their living, and yet who are not considered sufficiently deficient to warrant their committal to and detention in an asylum, and for whom we have failed to gain admission to any of the other institutions. There can be no doubt that the continued presence of such girls in a place like the dépôt, where they must necessarily mix more or less with the other inmates, who are mostly young children, is very undesirable. The Matron is continually urging that she should be relieved of them, as, in addition to their incapacity, they are in most instances free from legal control, and consequently cause her a great deal of extra anxiety and trouble in knowing how best to discipline them. I am aware that many other institutions have a similar difficulty on their hands, and are equally pressing for relief; but in the absence of fresh legislation, which apparently is necessary to enable such cases to be more effectually and suitably dealt with than at present, I see nothing for it, so far as this department is concerned, but to do our best to, as far as possible, isolate such girls from the other inmates; and the increased accommodation that the Matron is asking for, and to which I have already referred, will in a greater measure allow of this being done.

Protestant Training-school for Girls.—There is still a larger number of children at this school than in former years in consequence of the reduced demand for young servants prevailing at present, but which it is hoped will gradually disappear as the times improve. Meanwhile the inmates have the advantage of the additional excellent training they receive by their further stay in the school, which will doubtless be of ultimate benefit to themselves and their future employers. The matron, Mrs. Banner, speaks in the highest terms of the conduct and generally of the health of her girls, and she will be glad to receive early applications from ladies who may have an opening for any of them in their service.

Roman Catholic Industrial Schools.—The Reverend Mother Superioress of these schools reports favourably as to the conduct and health of the children under her care, and I have again to thank her for her willingness to receive the cases that are not deemed suitable for treatment in foster-homes, or, having been tried there, are withdrawn for special reasons and sent to her for a time. Thanks are also due to her for the large number of children she is from time to time taking into Abbotsford that would otherwise, in many instances, probably become a cost to the State by drifting into the hands of the police for committal to the care of this department.

Boys' Private Reformatories.—I have in former yearly reports dwelt so fully on the internal working of these private reformatory schools, and their management generally, and also the very excellent results that were being obtained from their establishment, that it seems now only necessary, and it will avoid the appearance of repetition, for me to say that our satisfactory experience of former years is being fully maintained. During the year we had the satisfaction of seeing the "Mount Paradise" Farm Reformatory, for Roman Catholic boys only, opened at Pakenham under the management of Mr. James Millane, who has his mother and several grown-up brothers and sisters associated with him in the good work. They are all taking a deep interest in the lads, and, like those who have been longer engaged at similar work in the other private reformatory schools, feel themselves more or less personally responsible for making the management of their particular school and its results a success.

Brookside Protestant Reformatory for Girls.—Mrs. Rowe's report of the year's work is again full of interest. She has, as in former years, met with a few cases of discouragement, but in the large majority of instances the girls are conducting themselves well, both in the cottages and in their service homes. The continued success of the goldfields opened up recently in the immediate vicinity of the school brings an undesirable population, from a reformatory for girls point of view, in too close proximity, which is necessarily causing considerable anxiety as to the suitability of Brookside in the future as a reformatory for girls. Consequently, Mrs. Rowe has already taken steps to meet such a contingency, should it arise, by opening a sub-reformatory on the 3rd March last, under the management of Miss Faris, and in connection with Brookside, and to which she has drafted twelve or fourteen of her girls. St. Ann's, the name of this new venture, is beautifully situated a few miles from Heywood, in the Portland district, and has an area of about 320 acres, on which ample employment of a suitable and varied kind will at all times be available for the inmates.

Salvation Army Protestant Reformatory for Girls.—The girls at this school are well reported upon as to their conduct and health. They are taught all kinds of domestic work, as at the other schools, and there can be no doubt that a genuine personal interest is taken in their welfare by every officer who comes in contact with them. I understand it is the intention of the Salvation Army authorities to shortly remove the inmates to Pakenham Reformatory, when it is vacated by the boys, who are about to be transferred to a farm at Bayswater, which has lately been opened as a boys' reformatory, and which, I may say in passing, is admirably adapted for the purpose. This will be a change in the right direction, as it will enable the matron to find more varied and suitable employment for her girls in the country than she can in their present quarters.

Oakleigh Roman Catholic Reformatory for Girls.—The Reverend Mother Prioress's report is of interest, seeing that she is able to again give an excellent account of nearly all her girls, both inmates and those at service, as also of many former wards who are out in the world and living respectably, some of them being well married. There were no transfers from gaol to this school during the year, but of those formerly transferred most of them are doing well, and in no instance has one of them been required to return to gaol to complete her sentence. The health of the inmates has been generally good. I would again, on behalf of the Reverend Mother, and indeed of those in charge of all the reformatories, invite ladies and others interested in this important branch of work to visit and see for themselves as to the internal management of the schools and the personal interest taken in the children by those who have their reformation at heart.

The following table will be considered of interest, as showing the average length of time the boys and girls sent to service from these private reformatories during the year had been detained:—

| <i>Girls.</i> | | | <i>Boys.</i> | | |
|---------------|-----|-----------|----------------|-----|-----------|
| Albion | ... | 4½ months | Bukawert | ... | 7 months |
| Brookside | ... | 9 " | Excelsior | ... | 8 " |
| Oakleigh | ... | 18 " | Kingsbury | ... | 6 " |
| | | | Mount Paradise | ... | 3 weeks |
| | | | Pakenham | ... | 13 months |
| | | | Straight View | ... | 8 " |
| | | | Wandin Yallock | ... | 8 " |

Children Boarded Out.—There is nothing very special to relate regarding this important part of the department's work. The placing out in foster-homes of fresh committals, and the transferring of others to more suitable ones, have been carried out by the ladies in the various districts with their usual care and consideration for the welfare of the children. Seeing that the wards of the State in Victoria have been participating in the benefits of the present system for the last twenty-four years, and with the full knowledge that thousands of children are yet being dealt with under the obsolete barrack system in older countries—and in some instances, but I am glad to say to a limited extent, also in the colonies—I venture to again express the opinion that the boarding-out of neglected children in foster families, providing a complete and regular system of supervision is maintained, is the only truly effective method of dealing with them. It gives them while yet young and impressionable the numerous advantages of a healthy family life, and when they reach the age to leave school they can be gradually and imperceptibly merged into the working population of the country—a very desirable end, and one not so easily and effectually obtained in the case of children brought up in the very best managed institution. Of all the many uplifting and ameliorating changes that have taken place in the lot of the children of the poor during the record reign of our beloved Queen, I feel satisfied that this family system of dealing with them will be found to be one of the most naturally and permanently beneficial.

Maintenance Collections.—There has been a slight increase in the maintenance receipts, £931 7s. 9d. having been recovered, as against £917 14s. 7d. in 1895.

Societies Dealing with Neglected Children under Part VIII. of Act 1121.—In the last year's report I referred at some length to the importance of the preventive and rescue work being carried on by these societies, and I have again to thank them for the great assistance they have rendered during another year, no less than 619 children having passed through their hands, as will be seen from the following table, and, as already pointed out, I have every reason to believe only the want of funds in some instances prevented their operations being on a more extended scale.

Preventive Work among Street Children.—

WORK OF PRIVATE PERSONS AND SOCIETIES UNDER "THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN'S ACT, 1890," FOR THE YEAR 1896.

| Name of Society. | Under Supervision on 31st December, 1895. | Admissions during 1896. | | | Under Supervision on 31st December, 1896. |
|---|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | | Court Committals. | Transfer of Guardian-ship. | Voluntary Admissions. | |
| Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society ... | 307 | 4 | 25 | 133 | 250 |
| " Clifden " Society | 37 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 45 |
| Gordon Institute | 218 | 23 | ... | 188 | 161 |
| Try Excelsior Class, Hawksburn | 2 | ... | ... | 115 | 117 |
| Wesleyan Church Neglected Children's Aid Society | 123 | 7 | ... | ... | 115 |
| Burwood Boys' Home | 6 | 4 | ... | 5 | 15 |
| Church of England Deaconesses' Home | 37 | ... | ... | 7 | 37 |
| Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society | 523 | 7 | 18 | 4 | 455 |
| Try Society, St. Kilda | 124 | ... | 1 | 70 | 185 |
| Total | 1,377 | 46 | 46 | 527 | 1,380 |

In bringing this report of another year's proceedings to a close, the cordial thanks of the department are rendered to the various honorary workers, constituting the general and local committees, and more especially to the lady correspondents, who, by their unwearied and cheerful assistance, extending in most cases over many years, have done so much to make the boarding-out system of Victoria the success it is.

I have, &c.,
THOS. M. MILLAR, Secretary and Inspector.

TOTAL EXPENDITURE for the MAINTENANCE of CHILDREN.—Industrial and Reformatory.

[illegible]

† The value of labour performed by the inmates of this school in the manufacture of outfits, &c., is £154 5s. 4d.

AGES, RELIGIONS, BIRTHPLACES, and PARENTAGE of CHILDREN sent to the care of the Department and to Reformatory Schools.

| | Number admitted. | Ages. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Religions. | | Birthplaces. | | | | Percentage. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Protestant. | Roman Catholic. | Australian Colonies. | Great Britain. | United States. | Unknown. | Both in Colony. | | | Both deserted. | | | Both Parents alive. | | | | One Parent alive. | | | | Both dead. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Father. | | Mother. | | One deserted. | | Father. | | Mother. | | One unknown. | | Father. | | | Mother. | | Deserted. | | Unknown. | | Father. | | Mother. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Under 1 Year. | 1 to 2. | 2 to 3. | 3 to 4. | 4 to 5. | 5 to 6. | 6 to 7. | 7 to 8. | 8 to 9. | 9 to 10. | 10 to 11. | 11 to 12. | 12 to 13. | 13 to 14. | 14 to 15. | 15 to 16. | 16 and Over. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

REPORTS ON SCHOOLS.

REPORT of the RECEIVING DÉPÔTS, Royal Park, for Year 1896.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit my report on the operations of the dépôts for the year 1896. The health of the children has been very good, notwithstanding the crowded state of the Girls' Dépôt during the summer months, necessitating my asking for increased accommodation, and which I trust will be provided before the next hot weather sets in. Four deaths of infants occurred during the year. The conduct of all the inmates has been good, and the work done in the different divisions satisfactory.

I have great pleasure in acknowledging the kindness of the following ladies and gentlemen in imparting religious instructions at the Girls' Dépôt—viz., Rev. M. Whitton, Mr. Veal, the Misses Rae, Leitch, McMillan, and Wilson, from the Presbyterian Church, Brunswick, and Misses Simmons, and Maunsell, who come on Sunday afternoons. At the Boys' Dépôt the Rev. M. Whitton and Mr. and Miss Hannay have been most attentive, while the Roman Catholic children in both dépôts have been zealously attended by the Rev. O'Reilly and the Sisters of Mercy.

When the weather has permitted, the children have attended their respective places of worship. The members of the visiting committee were most attentive in their visits, and gave the children their usual annual treat. Mr. Peterson's gifts came as usual and were distributed, giving great pleasure to the recipients. I have also to thank the young ladies of the Presbyterian Church for their entertainment to the children, and to Mr. Hutchinson for his kind present of Christmas and New Year cards.

The Secretary,

JANE WILSON, Matron.

Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools.

REPORT of VISITING COMMITTEE on the RECEIVING DÉPÔTS, Royal Park, for Year 1896.

EARLY in the year there were several changes in the constitution of the committee, caused by the departure and resignation of Mesdames Adam and Bardin and Mr. Loudin. The committee bear their testimony to the care and devotion bestowed by them in their work of visitation during the past year, and desire specially to mention the valuable services of Mrs. Bardin, who acted as honorary secretary since the formation of the committee in 1890 till her severance, owing to her removal northwards, on 31st December, 1895. The appointment of Mesdames Camm, Field, and Fleming, and Messrs. William Howat and William Strong has enabled the visitation of the schools to be carried out regularly.

It is with great pleasure the committee has to report that the excellent order and management of the institution of previous years has been maintained. The internal cleanliness of every department and the surroundings of the buildings have been such as to stamp at once the care and diligence bestowed.

In the Boys' Dépôt very considerable and useful work has been done during the year. The aspect of the grounds are generally such that a visitor sees at once that the boys have been actively employed in useful work. The demeanour of the inmates of the schools has always been exemplary during visitation, and the reports concerning their conduct generally good.

The health of the children has received great attention, and, considering the nature of the cases often admitted, it is with thankfulness so many have been restored to health, and rescued from what would, in all human probability, have otherwise been a path of sorrow and sin.

The annual treat was given to the children early in the year, and was much enjoyed by every one able to take part in it, especially by those for whose benefit it was prepared. The committee cordially thank Miss Wilson and her assistants for the help given on the occasion.

The committee has always had full access to all the compartments of the dépôts, and every assistance has been given by the officers to insure a thorough inspection of the children and dormitories, and the greatest courtesy has been experienced without exception.

It is with pleasure the committee learn from time to time of the general good conduct and comfort regarding the wards of State sent out to service in the homes provided for them. Personal visitation by some members of the committee has also been satisfactory. The religious instructions by visitors to the institution has not been lost sight of, and the committee sincerely thank all the ladies and gentlemen who have so kindly carried out this most important work for the spiritual good of the inmates. The committee is, however, deeply impressed with the great need of a higher conscience in the community on the part of parents, in taking care of and training their own children in paths of purity and righteousness, and that they should, in a much larger measure, feel the responsibility concerning the welfare of their offspring.

On behalf of the Committee,

M. L. HUTCHINSON, Honorary Secretary.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD.

I HAVE the honour to forward my report for the year ended 31st December, 1896.

During the year there has been very little sickness among the children. Two deaths occurred; the causes being heart disease and pneumonia. Very favourable reports have been received of most girls at service. Those far away in the country return for holidays from time to time as recompense for good behaviour. Those within easy distance come to visit about once a month. There was a general reunion of as many as possible of the girls who had left the institution, when all spent a pleasant afternoon and enjoyed a social repast before leaving.

The monotony of school life has been frequently interrupted by special fête days and other treats kindly given by charitable visitors.

Fifty-seven service homes have been provided. The number of applicants for servants far exceeded the number of girls eligible. This in itself is sufficient proof to the outside public that housekeepers value the efforts made by the nuns to fit their charges to battle with the future and to earn a respectable livelihood.

I beg, in conclusion, to offer sincere thanks to all the children's kind benefactors who, at different times, have afforded them pleasure.

MARY V. KENNEDY, Provincial Superioress.

GIRLS' TRAINING INSTITUTE.

I HAVE the honour to submit my report for the year 1896.

It has again been very satisfactory. The girls have enjoyed good health, and their conduct and manners have greatly improved.

I feel very grateful to the kind friends who have helped me and to those who have contributed to the happiness of the girls. Owing to the continual depression, suitable situations have been difficult to obtain.

EMMA BANNER.

OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for your information, a report of the transactions of this institution for the year 1896.

The health of the girls has been excellent. Their conduct, for the most part, has been good. Satisfactory reports of nearly all those at service have been received. As far as possible, regular correspondence has been kept up with the children after their removal from the school to service or otherwise.

His Excellency the Governor and Lady Brassey, Mrs. Freeman Thomas, and Lord Nevill visited the schools, and had much pleasure in hearing the children recite a welcome for them, also going through the "Alphabetical March." They expressed their great pleasure in noticing their colours, brown and white, in the decorations. When leaving, they promised to pay another visit.

We are indebted to some kind friends for increasing the happiness of the inmates by giving them a "magic lantern" concert, &c., during the year.

MARY A. O'SHEA.

The following is a report of the visiting committee:—

We have this day made our annual inspection. As in the past, we have to report that the greatest cleanliness and order prevails throughout the institution, and that the children appear to be extremely happy and contented. Again we are informed that no sickness worth mentioning has taken place during the last twelve months.

JAMES HOGAN.

M. MONANE.

EDWARD O'DONNELL.

N. O'CALLAGHAN.

REPORT OF GIRLS' REFORMATORY SCHOOL, Brookside, for 1896.

I HAVE again to report a very quiet year, though we had a few changes.

We began 1896 with an absconding wave. I think there was probably a disturbing element in the holiday-keeping which made the settling down to steady work appear tiresome. Two girls who absconded first were sheltered by a family within fifteen miles of Brookside. The police prosecuted, and the householder was fined. We consider this action has had a good effect, for in subsequent cases we have soon received information which led to the speedy return of the runaways. The absconder mentioned later as still at large, went from her situation. We lost one by death in May, the fourth since the beginning of the work in 1887.

Two girls came home to prepare for their marriage during the year. They had both been in country situations, and are now the mistresses of comfortable farm homes; notwithstanding the extra excitement of their presence in the cottages for a time, we felt they were an excellent object-lesson for the others. It was very pleasant to see how they confided in Mrs. Downing as to their purchases and preparations generally. Both brought excellent characters with them from employers they had served for some time.

We had to part during the year from our medical officer, Dr. Hilliard Johnson. The girls and the staff parted very sadly from him on his last visit, and wished him all success in his new field. He left us a worthy successor in Dr. Raymond Fox, who is most attentive to any of the cases brought before him. The health of the girls has been exceptionally good. There has been no infectious disease in the cottages during the year.

The Rev. R. Whyte, of Rokewood, whose ministrations the girls attend on Sunday morning, at Cape Clear, has visited as usual. On several occasions he brought a magic lantern, and gave them a very pleasant evening. The Rev. Saloway (Wesleyan) has also frequently visited the Home. The girls are gathered together for a short service on all such occasions. On one of his visits he was accompanied by the Rev. Bickford, President of the Conference, and some of the sisters belonging to the Central Mission. They all professed themselves pleased with the behaviour and appearance of the girls and with their surroundings. Mr. Bird has also continued his kind interest as in other years.

We have had a very busy time among the staff preparing for a new departure in Brookside history, which took effect early in February, 1897, when about ten of those in residence moved, under Miss Faris's charge, to the neighbourhood of Heywood. The diggings on Pitfield Plains are making this district much more populous, and should the mining go on a general migration will no doubt be desirable. We have had another dry season, so that, though the gardens have been kept tidy, there has been very little produced in them for the use of the cottages.

Mrs. Downing remains at the head of the staff still, with Miss King as second. Miss Faris and Miss Watson have gone to the new home, St. Ann's, Heywood, and Miss Curlewis left for Western Australia early in 1897, so we have had our share of changes. I must express my sense of the efficiency of every member of my staff, and of their anxiety for the welfare of their charges.

During 1896 we received twenty-four girls, ranging in age from ten to seventeen years: one from gaol, fifteen of them were new committals, and eight transfers from the Neglected Children's Department. The general behaviour of the girls during the year has been good. Some of them do not keep their places, but we try to work them harder when they come in, so that they may crave for the change and pleasures of an outside life. During the year we have been notified of the marriage of five girls passed out of control. Seventy-four have completed their term since Brookside was established, nearly ten years ago. Of these we can point to fifty-six, or over 75 per cent., who are respectable members of society. More than half the number have married. Of the remaining eighteen, several will no doubt come out all right. Others are, and will be, cause for grave anxiety to those who care for their future, as we do at Brookside. Our numbers in the homes on 31st December, 1896, were thirty-eight.

I do not think there is anything more which requires remark, so sign myself,

ELIZABETH ROWE,

Superintendent, Brookside Reformatory School.

EXCELSIOR HOME for REFORMATORY BOYS, Brighton.

I HAVE the honour to submit for your information my report for the past year.

The health of the boys has been excellent. The conduct of those at service and on probation in most cases has been very good, especially the latter. The boys at Sunday- and day-school have done very well. I enclose a report of their conduct.

The most encouraging part of the work during the year has been the real change in many of the gaol transfers. Some have given cause for great anxiety at times, but I am truly thankful for the marked change in them for the better. During the last three months I have visited no less than nineteen of them whose terms have expired, and are still at service or with friends to whom they had been sent on probation, and found them doing well: others are in very satisfactory positions. Again I have to thank Captain Burrowes for the way in which he has co-operated with me during the year, in watching many cases with a view to transfer.

The demand for boys at 1s. per day in the locality is more than I can supply. The farm which was started about this time last year by the boys themselves (which is called the Boys' Farm) has in many ways been a great success, though the returns for the labour have been very small; but still the boys have taken a deep interest in the work. I must again thank Dr. Simmons for his prompt and generous attention through the year, and other friends who have helped me in so many ways with the boys. There are eight others not connected with the Government at present in the home, who have a good influence with the reformatory wards.

In conclusion, I may say that we are pleased with the success of the past year.

W. GROOM.

DEAR MR. GROOM,—

Brighton.

I feel it incumbent upon me to convey to you my high appreciation of the manner in which you must handle the boys, because we have never had the slightest trouble or unpleasantness with any of them during my long experience of the various boys that you have sent to the church and school; and I can assure you that Mrs. Stone and myself feel a most deep and earnest desire to help them in every way. Trusting and praying that the Lord will long preserve you to carry on your good work,

I remain, &c.,

ROBT. STONE, Supt., Bay Street S.S.

REPORT of KINGSBURY REFORMATORY SCHOOL for the Year 1896.

WE have nothing very fresh to report for the past year. The work has been progressing steadily. There has been a much better demand for our boys during the past year than previously, and all fit for situations have been sent out. I have also other openings awaiting boys when they are suitable. The health of the boys has been very good, with the exception of a few slight accidents, which Dr. Eccles always attended to willingly as usual. There were seven boys in the Home on the 31st December. There were three cases of absconding during the year, but, as they were quickly picked up, did not cause as much trouble as if they had escaped arrest for some time.

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY.

I BEG to report that the condition of this school in its three branches of Fernydale, Olinda, and Hillside continue to give me satisfaction. The general health of the lads has been good, and their conduct, on the whole, has also been satisfactory.

The Fernydale boys had their annual camping-out expedition this summer as usual, a pleasure to which they look forward with keen anticipation, and I desire to tender my best thanks to those who so kindly assisted us with provisions, &c., while we were in camp—namely, Mr. David Syme, Mr. David Mitchell, Mr. Mirey, Mr. G. R. White, Mr. and Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Hand, and Mr. and Mrs. Perrin. Very special thanks are also due to Dr. Syme for his kind offices as honorary physician to the school.

M. McASKELL.

REPORT of the VISITING COMMITTEE on the WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY.

We have to report that the Wandin Yallock Reformatory School (in its three branches at Fernydale, Olinda, and Hillside farms) has been visited by various members of the visiting committee during the past year, and we have pleasure in recording our approbation of the management of the school, and our entire satisfaction with the appearance and demeanour of the inmates of the three farms.

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| ANNIE SYME. | E. M. PERRIN. |
| ARTHUR E. SYME. | GEO. R. WHITE. |
| R. KERR. | F. PARKER. |
| DAVID KAY. | L. E. THOMPSON. |
| F. W. PERRIN. | |

BUKAWERT REFORMATORY.

I HAVE to report that one boy completed his term at the school on 21st of May, and left his situation to go to his friends. Two boys were moved from their situations, and had others found for them, and then had to be returned to the dépôt. Another boy left his place and is still at large. Four boys were admitted during the year; one was placed at service and is doing excellently. The others are in good health, well-conducted, and learning different kinds of work. There is plenty of evidence that the free life in the country is a great improvement on the old barrack life, both mentally and physically, for the boys, making them feel their responsibility as to work, and giving them a taste for rural sports and employments.

H. B. SADLEIR, Superintendent.

STRAIGHT VIEW FARM REFORMATORY.

I HAVE the honour to report that our work at the Home for the year 1896 has been fairly satisfactory. The boys' conduct has been good, even better than last year. The health of the boys was very good, with the exception of a slight accident and a case of abscess; in connection with these, I beg to thank Dr. Hill, of Castlemaine, for his kindness in attending to them during their illness at the hospital.

Of the boys placed out during the year, the majority are reported to be doing well. Situations are very difficult to get during the winter months, but in the spring-time the boys are readily employed by farmers for milking, &c. The boys have lessons every night during the week, which some of them need badly, as they frequently can neither read nor write. The Rev. Father Murphy visited us on several occasions.

PETER McMAHON.

ALBION REFORMATORY.

I AM happy to be able to report most excellent progress in the Albion Reformatory. The work has been making vigorous strides towards perfection, and still better things appear to be in store in the immediate future.

During 1896 the general conduct of the inmates of the Home has been distinctly satisfactory; with but two or three exceptions being very good indeed. The whole tone of behaviour has been unquestionably improving. During the past year, thirty new cases have been received from the dépôt. Of this number eighteen have been placed in service. No less than sixty-six situations in all have been secured. The terms of four girls have been completed through the expiration of time. These are all, we believe, doing well. Four girls have been sent to their friends on probation; these are also progressing satisfactorily, we understand. The general health of the inmates has been all that could be wished, with but three exceptions. These were transferred to the hospital, but returned to the Home entirely cured. The industries of the Home are in a flourishing condition, with promise of more successful development. Knitting and sewing provide considerable and constant employment throughout the year, and domestic work enables us to train many for service in the future.

I propose, almost immediately, to transfer the Homes into better and more suitable spacious quarters in the country, where they will be further removed from the associations of the city, and have abundant fresh air and health-giving surroundings. I trust the institution will prove, by the grace of God, a very haven of deliverance and fresh inspirator towards a nobler life for many hundreds of sin-stained and temptation-harassed souls. We find it is necessary, more than ever, to aim especially at the heart—the citadel of existence, the source of action. We have endeavoured to deepen the spiritual impressions, and to permanently implant the principles of true religion. Among the younger girls, especially, the results have been wonderfully marked. Praying the Lord may abundantly bless you,

CORNELIE BOOTH.

PAKENHAM REFORMATORY.

I HAVE the honour to report that the last year's work in this Home has been very successful in very many ways. During the year we received nineteen boys from the Royal Park, and have every reason to believe that a fair percentage of them will turn out well and appreciate the efforts made on their behalf. A few of those received during the year have shown extraordinary leanings to vice and crime, and consequently have caused the officials a good deal of care and worry; yet we are glad to say that in several of them there is a marked improvement.

Three boys have been allowed home on probation and are giving satisfaction. The general health of the lads has been excellent, there being only one sorrowful exception—viz., one of the boys accidentally ran a thorn into his ankle, and, although treated in the Melbourne Hospital, blood-poisoning set in, and he died in that institution. We buried him in the Heidelberg Cemetery, all the boys being present, and each placed a bouquet of flowers on the coffin of their late mate. A few lads are doing well at their situations. The greatest trouble to deal with is the restless dispositions of the lads, and their desire for the life of the city. Now and then an extra wave of feeling seems to sweep over them, and results in a few absconders; these we endeavour to have returned quickly, and the Home soon assumes its usual condition. We expect our next year's work to surpass anything of the past, as plans and schemes are now being prepared which will provide for giving the boys a thorough training in agriculture and dairying at our new reformatory farm for lads at Bayswater.

C. H. JEFFRIES.

MOUNT PARADISE FARM REFORMATORY.

SINCE starting, in September last, with two boys, I have gradually added to them until, on the 31st December, the number remaining in the school was five. The boys are taught all kinds of farm work, including ploughing, harrowing, potato-digging, chaff-cutting, &c., also fruit-picking, grading, packing, case-making, pruning, and spraying, which they like very much, and one coming on to the farm would never think that the boys were but a few weeks ago running about the streets of Melbourne. Their conduct in the past has been highly satisfactory, showing a great improvement in the demeanour of the lads under our care.

Even opportunity is taken of carrying on the boys' education, and instilling moral and religious principles into them. They are instructed in the "Christian doctrine" at home, and prizes are given for the best at catechism and school work, which encourages them to learn and forget their roving disposition. They are very contented, and some of the boys have been visited by their parents, who did not know them, they had grown so strong. The boys are allowed to ride and drive to mass, and are very trustworthy; also are visited at home by Father Lee, of Dandenong. Those placed at service are reported to be doing well. They are also all in perfect health.

J. J. MILLANE, Superintendent.

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