

It must ever be remembered that the boys and girls not boarded out are those that have shown that they need very careful control, and it is a matter of common experience that industrial schools containing such boys and girls if carried on separately can be managed with greater ease and efficiency; obviously, for instance, a much greater amount of liberty can be allowed to the inmates than if the schools were on the same premises. As a matter of fact, although still at Caversham (and till lately at Burnham) the boys' and girls' schools have been in juxtaposition, they are practically distinct in working. There is therefore very little in the objection that the separation of the schools means the separation of brothers and sisters; how little there is in it, indeed, will be more clearly recognised when it is understood that at the present time (August, 1901) there is only one case (that of two brothers and a sister) to which the objection can apply. As regards children belonging to the same family who are boarded out, there is, of course, in general no occasion for breaking up the family, and whenever it is possible such children are and will continue to be boarded out in the same foster-home.

The site of the industrial school at Horowhenua consists of about 400 acres of good land devoted by the Government to the purpose. As it is desired to avoid anything like a barrack life, the boys there will not be all congregated in one building, but the institution will consist of a series of cottage homes, each suitable for the accommodation of from twelve to twenty boys under the charge of a married couple. The conditions under which they will live will therefore approximate to those of ordinary home-life. They will attend a common school, and, besides, when they reach a suitable age, will receive definite training in farming and other industrial pursuits.

I attach to this report a copy of a circular explaining the purposes of the various Government industrial schools which the Department of Justice was good enough to send, on behalf of this Department, to Stipendiary Magistrates.

I have thought it well to explain at some length the policy that, with your approval, is being adopted by the Department. I may be permitted to point out one or two directions in which I venture to think further extension should take place.

Inasmuch as the nomadic habit is generally recognised as the incipient stage of juvenile delinquency, the establishment of truant schools in our chief centres would probably serve to bring home to parents the need for the exercise of more thorough and regular control over their children, and so avert the necessity at a later age for their committal to an industrial school or reformatory. It would be a great advantage, therefore, if the Legislature saw fit to include in the School Attendance Bill now being considered some provisions for the establishment of truant schools.

The Department hopes soon to secure a private house in a healthy situation as a home for epileptic girls. Such a home should be situated where the climate is good, and should have enough land attached to it to enable the inmates to engage for the greater part of the year in those outdoor pursuits that form the best antidote to their malady. I regret that the many other urgent matters that have occupied the attention of the Department have so far hindered the making of arrangements for the care of defective and imbecile children; but the question is one that should not much longer wait for a solution. It is one that appears to belong partly to this Department and partly to the Lunacy Department; but I do not think there will be much difficulty in delimiting the proper province of each.

As will be seen from Table T, there is a difference between the private and the Government industrial schools in respect to the numbers of inmates actually resident and of inmates boarded out or otherwise disposed of. Even counting the reformatories—from which none are boarded out—in the case of the Government schools not quite 20 per cent. are actually resident in the schools; 74 per cent. are in foster-homes, with friends, or at service (34·6 per cent., 6·7 per cent., and 32·4 per cent. respectively). In the private industrial schools, on the other hand, 68 per cent. are resident, and 30 per cent. are in foster-homes, with friends, or at service (1·1 per cent., 11·1 per cent., and 17·6 per cent. respectively). There does not appear to be any reason to doubt that the boarding-out system would be as successful for the inmates of private industrial schools as it has proved to be for those belonging to Government schools, although a change of policy, especially if made suddenly, would undoubtedly entail many difficulties at the outset. In the case of very young children, however, there is, it appears to me, urgent need for making the change at once. The Sisters in charge seem to spare no efforts in their endeavour to do their best for the children; yet their success in dealing with infants falls far short of that attained in the average foster-home. It is not a question of neglect, or even of ignorance, but chiefly a question of the home *versus* the institution as a suitable place for the rearing of infants.

The boarding-out of all suitable cases is in reality one of the chief elements in a proper scheme of classification. The separation of reformatory cases from industrial-school cases is, as pointed out above, another very important element in such a scheme, and many of the transfers from the Stoke School to Burnham during the past year have been of this description.

There has been no objection on the part of the managers of private schools to the transfers that have been made, and the managers of those schools have received willingly, and for the most part apparently endeavoured to carry out loyally, the directions which have been issued from time to time by the Department, and which now in a codified form are awaiting final approval before being gazetted as regulations.

The effect of these regulations will be to bring the two sets of institutions into line as regards the general treatment of inmates. I trust therefore that, while it may not be possible or even desirable to make private industrial schools mere duplicates of corresponding Government schools, the Department will have no difficulty in persuading the managers of private schools that a nearer approach to the lines of policy indicated above should be regarded as necessary for effective work. There will, however, be many points of detail to arrange before the boarding-out system can be as fully carried out as it is in connection with the Government schools.