

ST. MARY'S, AUCKLAND.

Takapuna Branch (Boys).

Visited four times during the year ended 31st March, 1901. Mr. R. H. Pope, Assistant Inspector, paid an unannounced visit on the 11th March, 1901. He reports to the following effect: The new day-school being built will allow of greater dormitory space in the main building, which at present is not sufficient, boys in some cases sleeping together. The means of fire-escape is defective; the manager promised to consult an expert. The food is good, but it is an objectionable feature that the dining-room is underground; it appeared, however, to be dry. The boys receive no industrial training, except that they are taught to milk. Some boys were examined when stripped; they were in good condition. The drain from the building needs ventilating. The closets were in a bad state. The absence of trees or of cultivation about the building makes it look bare. The boys are evidently on good terms with the Sisters in charge. The medical officer visits the school only when asked to do so. Corporal punishment is said to be infrequent, and very mild. There is no library, but the boys see a few periodicals. Speaking generally, the school seems to be well conducted, and the boys to be considerably dealt with.

Ponsonby Branch (Girls).

Visited 12th March, 1901, by Mr. R. H. Pope, Assistant Inspector. Dormitories: Beds had only one sheet each, and pillow-cases were not very clean; the bedding was otherwise in good order. The ventilation should now be sufficient, having been recently improved, but it is doubtful whether the means of fire-escape are sufficient. Bishop Lenihan will have this matter inquired into by an expert. There is proper provision for the supervision of the dormitories. The girls were neat and clean, and apparently healthy. Dinner consisted of cold meat, potatoes, and tomatoes. There seemed to be as much food as was required, but the girls' appetites were evidently not good. There were four cows in milk; the garden, it is said, produces sufficient vegetables, but there was only a small quantity growing. The drainage is defective; it is not ventilated, and the sewage discharges on the hillside not far away from the buildings. Girls have warm baths weekly. Cookery classes were about to be started under competent instruction. This school appears to disadvantage when compared to the Takapuna branch, but the girls are evidently considerably treated by the Sisters.

The wages accounts of both branches of the school were audited. The books have been kept in a faithful manner, though not in the form required by the Department. A book in the prescribed form has now been sent to the manager. Every facility was given to enable the Inspector to make a thorough examination of the books. Bishop Lenihan takes a keen interest in both these schools, and frequently visits them. He seems to be more in touch with them than the recognised manager, between whom and the Sisters there is evidently but little co-operation.

ST. JOSEPH'S, WELLINGTON (GIRLS).

Visited by Inspector-General, 24th August, 1900 (surprise visit in company with Mrs. Dick, the official correspondent for the Wellington district). The buildings on the whole are well suited for their purpose, and the supervision seemed kindly and sufficient. The dormitories were in good order, but somewhat crowded; and the ventilation was hardly sufficient. A good dinner was provided. The Government regulations are observed in regard to punishments. Girls' clothing was examined by Mrs. Dick, and found to be satisfactory except that the garments worn next the skin should be woollen. There is an air of cleanliness, briskness, and cheerfulness about the place. The inmates are evidently well cared for.

Visited by Mrs. Dick, 25th March 1901. The dormitories are now well ventilated. The dinner was good; the inmates were neatly dressed and looked well.

ST. MARY'S, NELSON.

Nelson Branch (Girls and Young Boys).

Visited three times during 1900 and twice since 1st January, 1901. Summary of report on visit paid 24th January, 1901, by Mr. R. H. Pope, Assistant Inspector, accompanied by the lady official visitor: None of the dormitories give sufficient air-space; but the ventilation has been improved. The inmates are healthy and well clad. The dinner was of good quality.

On the 18th July Mr. Pope found the institution clean and in good order. Some of the little boys had skin eruptions. The babies are the unsatisfactory feature, as it is impossible to provide for them adequately in such an institution, however well-intentioned be the care exercised over them. Moreover, there is an absence of the tie that is formed in the case of infants boarded out, where a foster-mother frequently becomes almost as fond of the child as of her own. Statistics show that in the last ten years and a half, with an average of thirty-six children under four years belonging to Government schools, there have been seven deaths; while at private schools, which have had an average of only thirteen, there have been ten deaths. The former are boarded out; the latter kept in the institutions. The facts therefore afford strong evidence in favour of boarding out. Boarding out from private schools should have serious consideration; it is the best and most natural way of treating infants.

The girls were neatly and comfortably dressed; but, taking the inmates as a whole, they seemed to be less healthy-looking than at some other schools. The ventilation of the day-school room is defective. The inmates seem happy and contented.