

No. 5.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF ADVICE OF THE BURNHAM INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 6th June, 1902.

The members of the Burnham Board of Advice would like to put before you some of their impressions concerning the work done at Burnham during the last two years.

For some time previously to April, 1900, things had been in an unsatisfactory and unsettled state, owing to the separation of the girls from the boys and consequent reorganization of the staff. For some time longer things did not work smoothly with the staff, resignations being frequent and complaints rife. However, on further inquiries, these complaints were found to have been largely exaggerated, and due in some cases to stories concocted by the boys. At the present time the Board is glad to say that a much better state of matters prevails, harmonious relations apparently existing between master and staff.

Soon after the formation of the school into a boys' reformatory a further classification was begun, that of dividing the boys who were less hardened from the more criminal ones. This plan has now been accomplished by means of the two cottages of the labour-master and shoemaker, to which are attached dormitories and sitting-rooms, where the better class of boys sleep and where they can employ themselves, all, however, having meals together in the dining-hall. The Board would like to say that it hopes this classification will yet be completely carried out to the entire separation of these two classes of boys.

Workshops for carpentry, tailoring, and shoemaking were also started building, and are now in full working order. These shops supply a long felt want, opening up as they do to smart, intelligent boys interesting and profitable occupations, instead of their being compelled, as formerly, to take to farm labour, irrespective of individual tastes. On the last visit of the Board to Burnham it was particularly struck by these good workshops, where the boys were busily engaged under their respective teachers in turning out creditable work. In the carpenter's shop a dray was in course of construction; in the shoemaker's boots of a good working kind were hanging on the wall, which had been made by the boys; and in the tailor's piles of working moleskins and white kitchen suits were being made up.

Amongst the changes during the process of reorganization was one—that of the loss of the bandmaster—which interfered much with the efficiency of the band. From a good standard it fell considerably. However, quite recently a new bandmaster has taken charge, and already a marked improvement is shown, which it is hoped will continue.

The Board, on its visits to Burnham, has gone through the different parts of the building, and has always found everything clean and in good order; the boys also being healthy and looking well cared for.

In connection with the attendants, the Board would like to bring under your notice the long hours worked by them. The nature of the work in Burnham, requiring as it does constant watchfulness, is trying, and when to this is added a long day of ten hours, after deduction of meal-hours, it will be seen that it is small matter for surprise when attendants get dissatisfied, and on small provocation are more anxious to leave than they otherwise might be; while, in the case of the tradesmen in charge of the workshops, their hours compare unfavourably with those of others in the open market.

The Board would like to express its satisfaction at the way in which its suggestions have been met hitherto.

I am, &c.,

EMILY K. BLACK,

Hon. Sec., Burnham Board of Advice.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.

No. 6.

EXAMINATION REPORTS.

ST. MARY'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, AUCKLAND (GIRLS' BRANCH), (examined 16th December, 1901).

Pass-subjects.—Presented: Standard IV., 2; Standard III., 16; Standard II., 12; Standard I., 6; Preparatory, 11. Examined in Standards: Standard IV., 2; Standard III., 16; Standard II., 12; Standard I., 6. Passed: Standard IV., 2; Standard III., 15; Standard II., 10; Standard I., 4. The work of Standard IV. was very satisfactory throughout: reading, spelling, writing, and composition were all very good. In Standard III. reading was very good, writing fair, and composition fair; there was some falling-off in spelling in this class; arithmetic was on the whole well done, though the problem-work proved too much for some; I am of opinion that the writing shown was in too large a hand for Standard III. In Standard II. the reading was satisfactory, though the children would do better were they to speak out with a little more boldness; spelling was very satisfactory here, as was also the writing; mental arithmetic was not so good, though the children did well in their set work, and generally well in numeration and tables. In Standard I. arithmetic was good; spelling rather weak, writing good, and, with two exceptions, reading satisfactory.

Class-subjects.—Geography was not at all satisfactory. Allowance may be made in cases of girls who do laundry-work and cooking; but the work of Standards III. and II. was exceedingly disappointing after the other work shown. It may be stated that the teachers have not had a copy of the Standard Regulations to guide them; but even on the work presented by the teachers more might have been expected in the way of definite answers by the children. The grammar of Standards IV. and III. was fair. Knowledge of object-lessons was not so good as one could wish. In the lower classes there was plenty of fluency; but, as most of the children's recitation was