

I do not say that any of these difficulties are insuperable, but they are certainly so real as to induce one to seek whether there may not be a third system that will be more devoid of risk.

As touching this question of boarding-out, may I be here permitted to again quote from one of Dr. MacGregor's reports. In the year 1891 he said: "There has thus grown up, in an irregular, unsystematic way—*i.e.*, so far as one general plan is concerned—a boarding-out system, managed by each Board for itself. After having visited in their homes all the children boarded-out in the chief centres, except Auckland, I have come to the conclusion that, while there is no doubt that the boarding-out system is the best, yet it ought not to be left to the local Boards to manage. It is absolutely necessary that a comprehensive system of supervision should be established, and in our present circumstances I believe this can be done effectually only by the Education Department, whose existing machinery ought to be developed and strengthened to deal with this work. As things are at present, I fear that the parsimony of the Boards is being allowed to affect disastrously the children. . . . I am convinced that it is mistaken economy to deal in this way with the young. Be as hard as you like with the adult sturdy beggar; but it will save a great deal of future expense in our gaols, hospitals, and asylums if we deal generously with the children." These remarks are as true to-day, and as well worthy of deep consideration, as they were fifteen years ago, when they were penned.

3. COTTAGE HOMES.

It seems to me that this is the ideal system of dealing with dependent children. There is abundant evidence that wherever these homes have been established in England, properly equipped and properly managed, they have been an unqualified success. I am aware that the matter of expense will be urged in this connection; but where the results are so admirable, surely we need not scruple over some slight extravagance for the benefit of the "little children."

I have lately read most interesting articles under the heading of "The Children of the State," in "The Municipal Journal" and in "The Councillor and Guardian," being mainly descriptive of what is termed "The New Policy," as evidenced by the establishment of cottage homes. One of these articles, which is headed "Sheffield's Successful Experiment," will well repay perusal by all those who are interested in the subject. I can well imagine the Waltham Orphanage being turned into and kept as a model cottage home, quite up to the standard of those I have referred to. All the elements of success are there. They only require the right handling and development.

It may, of course, be considered impossible, on the score of expense, to carry out the cottage-home system on a large scale throughout the colony; but it would, I think, be a most distinct advance upon the present condition of things if the three systems to which I have referred were worked together on a modified scale. There would seem to be nothing whatever to prevent this.

Re TECHNICAL TRAINING.

I may say, too, here that I feel very strongly that no system can possibly be complete, and in the best interests both of the child and of the State, that does not provide for the technical training of dependent children at a suitable age.

Re OLD-AGE PENSIONERS.

A very great deal of evidence has been given in the course of this somewhat lengthy inquiry, and the greater portion of it will well repay perusal and study. Looking to the importance of the subject, to the general interest aroused, and to the fairly wide scope of my Commission, I did not deem it desirable to shut out any matter that might be considered, even in a remote degree, cognate to the inquiry. Considerable reference was made, at one stage, to the treatment by the Board of old-age pensioners in the homes, as regards the cost of maintenance, &c. This was only admitted as showing the methods of the Board, and with a view to test the accuracy of certain other returns put in by the Board in connection with Orphanage matters. The result has been to emphasize the need for the whole question being put on a proper footing—fair both to the Board and to the pensioners.

Re WOMEN MEMBERS OF BOARD.

Another question much discussed has been the presence of women—"progressive women," as they have been termed—on the Board, and their treatment by some of the more conservative of their fellow-members. It is no part of my duty to criticise the actions of any individual members of the Board, but I may perhaps be permitted to venture the opinion—a very diffident one, and as a "mere man"—that the presence and work of these women on the Board has been of distinct advantage. All reformers are necessarily enthusiastic, and these particular "progressives" have, no doubt, shown themselves