

1898.

VICTORIA.

---

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND  
REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

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R E P O R T

OF THE

SECRETARY AND INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1 8 9 7 .

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PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ACTS 54 VICT. No. 1121, SEC. 10,  
AND No. 1079, SEC. 320.

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# R E P O R T.

*To the Honorable the Chief Secretary.*

Department for Neglected Children and Reformatory Schools,  
Melbourne, 21st June, 1898.

SIR,

In accordance with the provisions of Acts 1121 and 1079, I have the honour to submit for your consideration the Annual Reports of this Department, together with the necessary Returns, Statement of Accounts, &c., for the year ended 31st December, 1897.

The transactions of the year are set forth on the following Table, which was first used in its present form the previous year, and found to be sufficiently comprehensive and more easily understood than that formerly in use :—

## STATEMENT OF ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES, ETC., FOR THE YEAR 1897.

	Neglected Children.	Reformatory Children.	Total.
<b>ADMISSIONS, ETC.</b>			
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1896	3,501	448	3,949
New committals	770	57	827
Transfers from Gaol	...	9	9
"    "    Neglected Children's Department	...	61	61
"    "    Reformatories	8	...	8
Returned absconders, &c.	29	4	33
	4,308	579	4,887
<b>DISCHARGES, ETC.</b>			
From Institutions, Foster-homes, Service, &c., as follows :—			
By Order of the Governor in Council	166	8	174
"    Death	42	2	44
"    Effluxion of time	234	104	338
"    Transfer to Asylums	2	1	3
"    "    Reformatories	61	...	61
"    "    Neglected Children's Department	...	8	8
"    Absconders during 1897 not returned	32	44	76
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1897	3,771	412	4,183*
	4,308	579	4,887

\* The location of the 4,183 children is shown hereunder :—

† {	2,379	Neglected Children were being maintained in foster-homes.
	107	"    "    "    "    "    "    institutions.
† {	186	Reformatory "    "    "    "    "    "    reformatory schools.
	700	Neglected Children were maintaining themselves at service.
	153	Reformatory "    "    "    "    "    "
	585	Neglected Children were with relatives, &c., without cost.
	73	Reformatory "    "    "    "    "    "

† In addition to these, 27 who are free from legal control are still being maintained by the State, as they are incapacitated.

The number of wards of the Neglected Children's and Reformatory Departments respectively who were a charge to the State on the 31st December, 1896, and 31st December, 1897, were as under :—

		<i>Neglected.</i>	1896.	1897.
Boarded out	...	...	2,089	2,379
In Schools	...	...	135	107
	Total	...	2,224	2,486
		<i>Reformatory.</i>		
In Schools	...	...	181	186

*Committals.*—While it is gratifying to be able to report a considerable decrease in the reformatory committals—57 against 80 in the previous year—I deeply regret having to draw special attention to the very large increase in the number of neglected children committed during the same period, no fewer than 770 as against 551 in 1896, 485 in 1895, 490 in 1894, and 437 in 1893. It is difficult to offer any adequate explanation as to the actual cause for this large increase, amounting in one year to nearly 40 per cent., exclusive of course of those children dealt with by the Orphanages and the various societies under Part VIII. of the Neglected Children's Act, and whose operations are referred to in another portion of this Report. Doubtless the continued depression through which Victoria is passing, and which has now extended over several years, will account for a good deal of it, but it is feared much must be attributed to a wholesale undermining of that strong feeling of reliance on personal and local effort in times of trouble and adversity which was so conspicuous a feature in the earlier days of our colonies.

*Mortality.*—Forty-four (44) deaths occurred during the year, being 1.05 per cent. of the whole children under the legal control of the Department, and when it is borne in mind that, of the 770 neglected children received from the courts during that period, 169, or nearly 22 per cent., were infants under two years of age, the mortality rate must be considered very small, and all the more so when the low state of health of many of the children when received—more particularly the infants—is taken into consideration.

In connexion with the liability of infants to succumb when being artificially fed, even under the most favorable circumstances, and the far better prospects they have of passing safely through the first stage of childhood even during such a trying season as we have just experienced when given their natural food, it is worthy of record that not one child was lost in the case of the young mothers who are encouraged to suckle their infants in foster-homes specially found for them by the Department, a system to which satisfactory reference was made in last year's report. This humane plan, a trial of which was first approved of early in 1894, and which, from every point of view, has proved an unqualified success, points conclusively, in my opinion, to the desirability of its adoption, as far as possible, in a much more general way, if, as a Christian community, we are really genuine in our expression of horror at the present wholesale destruction of infant life, and are earnestly determined at any cost to use the most effectual means at our disposal of decreasing it, for I fear it is too Utopian to expect to wipe it out entirely.

As bearing on this all-important and, at the same time, difficult subject which appears to be forcing itself into prominence in all great centres of population, I have thought it well to here quote from a statement made by Dr. Sheard, the experienced Health Officer of the city of Toronto, who, after dealing with baby farming generally, closes with these weighty remarks (*vide* Report of Superintendent Neglected and Dependent Children, Ontario, 1897, pages 28 and 29):—

While I do not propose that the municipality be taxed to rear the illegitimate children that are yearly born in this city, still some way of protecting these unfortunate little creatures must be instituted. Adoption out to irresponsible parties must be stopped. Each child must get a chance, even if we have got to pay for it. Detail is a matter for after consideration.

I have no desire to hound or hunt down any poor creature who comes here to hide her disgrace.

Probably 500 illegitimate children are born every year in Toronto according to my report. The municipality takes care—through its various institutions—of many of these ultimately, that is, after the persons they are farmed out to for ten dollars or so tire of their bargain.

Of course we cannot overload the city and ask it to rear the illegitimate children of the country, but we must protect the children. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that these innocent and unoffending creatures are in this world, and will continue to come into this world. There is no wiping out of immorality. The situation must be faced, and reason, judgment, and humanity brought to bear on it. The only policy to pursue is to protect the children without overtaxing the community. I see no reason why this cannot be done in time.

While some may not be able to subscribe to the foregoing in its entirety, I feel sure the dictum there laid down, that “each child must get a chance, even if we have got to pay for it,” will meet with universal approval.

*Children sent to Service, &c.*—There has been no general improvement in the demand for our service-children, rather the reverse, the continued depression and severe seasons the farmers and others have had to contend with for the last three or four years having compelled many of them to dispense with all but the minimum amount of labour, and even that is retained in many instances at little more than board and clothing and a little pocket-money.

Several of our oldest employers have had to give up their holdings practically ruined, and I regret to say, in some instances, we have been unable to recover the wages outstanding. As was pointed out in last year's Report, this difficulty of finding openings for our children, as they become eligible for service in point of age and education, is a serious matter, seeing that the absence of situations necessitates their retention for a longer period in their foster-homes and at a further cost to the State. However, there is apparently every sign that the prolonged drought which has had such disastrous effects throughout this and the neighbouring colonies is breaking up, and we may, therefore, it is thought, look forward hopefully to better times for the farmers and employers generally, and a correspondingly brisker demand for the labour of our children. It need hardly be repeated here that every care is being taken to see that those wards who have suffered a temporary disability by being placed at service at low rates during the depression have their wages reviewed from time to time, with a view to their receiving, as soon as possible, higher and more adequate rates. The conduct of those at service has, upon the whole, been satisfactory. The very serious cases of misconduct were recommended to you for transfer to one or other of the various private reformatories.

*Children placed with Relatives and Others on Probation under section 30, sub-section 5, Act 1121, and section 340, sub-section 6, Act 1079.*—Under this very useful section of the Neglected Children's Act, which permits of children being placed on probation with respectable relatives or others, the Department is gladly restoring children to suitable friends, and, while, in some few instances, the children have subsequently had to be withdrawn, the system is upon the whole working satisfactorily both as regards the children themselves, those to whose care they have been intrusted, and, last (but certainly not the least interested in its success), to the State, there being no fewer than 658 of its wards (585 from the Neglected Children's Department, and 73 from the various Reformatories) thus out at no cost to the Department.

*Transfers from Gaol, section 333 of Act 1079.*—This system of transferring to Reformatories juvenile offenders who may have been committed to gaol and yet be considered suitable for reformatory treatment is, with comparatively few exceptions, continuing to give satisfaction to those specially interested in the important work of diverting into freer and healthier surroundings these young beginners in the criminal course, apart altogether from the direct and prospective monetary saving effected by their transfer. Seven youths and two girls were thus dealt with during the year.

*Suspension of Sentences by Courts and Release of Prisoners on Probation under sections 353 and 354, Act 1079.*—Seventy-eight (78) offenders—70 males and 8 females—were given the advantage of the former section, but apparently there is no reliable means of ascertaining how they have conducted themselves.

It will be observed with regret that the latter section has been again inoperative, as indeed it has been with three (3) exceptions, since the passing of the Act. It should be remembered that fifty (50) or sixty (60) years ago, convicts sent to the colonies from the old country, and some of whom were hardened criminals, were, subject to their good behaviour, permitted, under the "ticket of leave" system then in operation, to earn their own living at liberty in the service of the settlers, and in many instances with the best results, some, indeed, turning out excellent colonists; consequently, with this far away precedent before us, and, above all, the later experience of the successful working of the Probationary Act of New Zealand, to which I have referred in former reports, it is, I respectfully submit, to be greatly deplored that this beneficent clause of the Crimes Act, which humane legislation intended should be put in operation for the purpose of giving certain "first offenders" an opportunity of redeeming their characters, by being placed out on probation, should remain practically unused.

*Receiving Dépôts, Royal Park.*—The health and conduct of the children generally have been satisfactory. The Matron finds herself at times very considerably hampered for room, the additions which it was believed would have been available long ere this, not having yet been built. However, it is earnestly hoped they will be completed and ready for occupation before the hot weather is again upon us. Our cordial thanks are due to the many kind friends of the children for the numerous suitable presents and entertainments provided for them during another year; also to the members of the visiting committee and the various Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen and lay helpers for their systematic visitation to, and kindly interest in, the

inmates generally. It was noticed with deep regret the great loss our children have recently sustained in the death of their kind friend and benefactor, William Peterson, Esq., who, for nearly thirty (30) years has, in the most unobtrusive and yet munificent way, provided each of them with a yearly Christmas present.

The difficulty as to the proper disposal of the mentally weak children, to which Mrs. Rowe draws attention, and to which I have referred at length in my last and previous reports, is still unsolved, but I have every hope of some scheme being devised which, while relieving the Matron and the other schools of unsuitable inmates, will make better provision in every respect for their comfort and training, &c. In fact, I have been for some time in communication with Dr. McCreery, the Inspector-General of the Lunacy Department, on the subject; Dr. Shields, the Government Medical Officer; and other experts, who have in the kindest manner given me the benefit of their experience and advice; and the result I hope to have the honour of submitting shortly for your consideration and, I trust, approval.

*Protestant Training School for Girls.*—The Matron gives a satisfactory account of the children under her care during the past year, both as to their health and, with few exceptions, their conduct. It was with extreme regret the committee had to refuse to any longer retain in the school one or two girls who were morally bad, and having a contaminating influence on the other inmates. Further investigation of their cases resulted in their having to be sent to one of the Reformatories in the country. Mrs. Banner has, I regret to say, quite broken down in health, and been compelled to take a complete rest for six (6) months. In her absence the committee has been fortunate in securing as acting matron the services of Miss L. N. Watson, who was for some time assisting Mrs. Rowe in her reformatory work at Brookside.

*Roman Catholic Industrial School.*—The Reverend Mother Superioress is also able to give a good report as to the health and conduct of the children under her care during the year. The Department has been again glad to avail itself of the outlet afforded by this school to transfer to it, for a short time, Roman Catholic children requiring stricter discipline than they would in ordinary cases be likely to receive if at once placed in foster-homes, and I have again to thank the ladies for being at all times willing to assist me out of a difficulty which occasionally arises as to the most suitable way of disposing of troublesome children that we are anxious, if possible, to avoid sending to a Reformatory.

*Boys' Private Reformatories.*—A perusal of the various Superintendents' reports will be of interest, showing, as they do, the continued all-round success of this more natural system of dealing with our criminal and depraved boys. I am happy to be able to add that in my own periodical visits during the year I found things generally in a highly satisfactory state, and the lads, with few exceptions, settling down and conducting themselves well. During the year the Salvation Army opened their new Reformatory Farm at Bayswater, to which they removed the lads formerly at Pakenham. I may mention that the army authorities, having secured an exceptionally valuable area of about 350 acres of high-class agricultural land at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, have gone to considerable expense in putting up the necessary buildings, &c., in order to make every branch of the work on this model farm as perfect in itself as possible, and with a view to the lads we place in their care from time to time having the advantage of a full and complete training in high-class dairy farming. As showing the very valuable results likely to accrue to the country from passing our fallen lads through the training, &c., of this farm, I think it right to quote from an interesting article in the *Age* of the 4th of April last, giving an account of a special visit of inspection to it—

. . . . . A great number of improvements have been effected since the army came into possession. A splendid homestead has been erected upon a picturesque knoll at the foot of the highest peak, and well ventilated dormitories, fitted with all the necessary appurtenances for cleanliness and comfort, have been built for the use of the boys, as well as substantial cow-sheds, a model dairy, an ensilage silo capable of holding six hundred and fifty (650) tons, and other buildings necessary to a well-managed farm. The whole of the farming plant is built upon the most modern lines, and supplies every facility for the utilization of by-products. Water, which is pumped by machinery from the Dandenong Creek, is laid on to every part of the ground; chaff-cutters, potato-digging machines, elevators, and various kinds of labour-saving machinery are brought into use, and all means are adopted to prove the value of intense culture.

The farm is certainly an object-lesson as far as system is concerned. Various classes of work are controlled by different departments, and if only a load of manure be taken from the cow-shed to the vegetable garden, the garden is debited with it, so that the exact profit or loss from each division may be exactly ascertained.

Before leaving this subject I would venture once more to strongly urge those who may be specially interested in the all-important question of how best to deal with refractory and criminal children to visit Bayswater, and, as far as possible, the other private reformatories, and judge for themselves as to the whole system and the effective nature of the reformation work being carried on in our Victorian private reformatories.

*Brookside Protestant Reformatory for Girls.*—Mrs. Rowe's annual report, which is generally of great interest, is exceptionally so on this occasion, and will well repay perusal, seeing she is able to give unquestionable evidence of the continued good results following on another year's operations both at Brookside itself and at St. Ann's, the affiliated sub-reformatory near Heywood, in the western district, which was opened last year.

*Salvation Army Protestant Reformatory for Girls.*—The change contemplated of removing the girls of this school to the more healthy surroundings of the country at Pakenham, and to which reference was made in last year's report, has taken place, and with the most beneficial results, as will be seen from a perusal of Mrs. Booth's interesting report; and here I would like to say how much we are indebted to this busy, large-hearted, kindly lady for the great personal interest she is taking in these poor fallen girls of the State. She devotes much of her valuable time to frequent visits of encouragement to them; and those who know the loving magnetic influence she possesses in so eminent a degree will realize in a measure how all-important to these girls her visits are likely to be. The sub-reformatory at Heidelberg, which is affiliated to Pakenham, and to which the less depraved girls are sent, has had an equally successful year. Both schools being in the country and some distance from the city, the officers find the inmates are more inclined to settle down and become reconciled to the kindly but firm discipline they meet with. More varied and suitable employment can also be readily found for them than was the case when they were located at the Albion Reformatory, Brunswick.

*Oakleigh Roman Catholic Reformatory for Girls.*—The report of the Reverend Mother Prioress shows that very successful work has been carried on during the year, and that the health and general conduct of the inmates, and those sent from the school, have been good. There were no transfers from gaol during the year, but the Reverend Mother informs me that those previously received from that source have almost without exception turned out well.

*Children Boarded Out.*—I am glad to be able to report that this important system, under which the great bulk of the children of the State are disposed of, is working with all the smoothness of past years, and with equally satisfactory results in every other respect. We are still able to place the children in the best of homes, having, as in former years, more applications specially recommended than we can supply. The foster-mothers, of whom there are about eleven hundred (1,100), receiving payment are doing their duty by their children, and only in a very few instances had any to be removed in consequence of the homes being unsuitable, and some few such cases may reasonably be expected out of such a large number. The health and conduct of the boarded-out children have, upon the whole, been satisfactory, and the warm attachment between many of the children and their foster-parents, referred to in former reports, is still observed by the ladies and the visiting-officer, and is certainly one of the most prominent and gratifying features of this family system, and the one likely to have the greatest influence on the after-career of the children.

On behalf of the Department I would like, with your permission, to here avail myself of the opportunity of again thanking the many ladies throughout the colony who supervise the 2,379 boarded-out children and their foster-homes, in addition to the 700 at service and 585 on probation with their friends, for their kindly assistance during another year. It will be very readily understood that to carry on their duties conscientiously, year after year, entails upon these devoted honorary workers of the State a vast amount of labour and encroachment upon their time, more especially in the case of their correspondents, consequently it is extremely gratifying to know that there are still so many ladies willing, in the very heartiest manner, to afford so much of their time to this all-important work, and that they so fully realize that upon them mainly devolves the great responsibility of seeing that those in whose care the Department places its wards do their duty by them. This question of "systematic

supervision" of foster children and homes by the visitors is indeed the "keystone" to the whole system, and, in my opinion, cannot be given undue prominence to, or insisted upon too strongly in this part of the yearly report of the Department's work.

*Maintenance Collections.*—There has been again an increase in the amount recovered during the year from the parents of the children, £1,087 13s. 6d. having been recovered, as against £931 17s. 9d. in 1896.

*Societies Dealing with Neglected Children under Part VIII. of Act 1121.*—Cordial thanks are due to these hearty workers among street children who are still rendering excellent and substantial assistance to the department, as will be seen from the following Table of their year's operations. There can be no doubt that but for the existence of such societies the stream of committals to the care of the State would be much greater than it is.

WORK OF SOCIETIES UNDER PART VIII. NEGLECTED CHILDREN'S ACT, NO. 1121,  
FOR THE YEAR 1897.

Name of Society.	Under Supervision on 31.12.96.	Admissions during 1897.			Under Supervision on 31.12.97.
		Court Committals.	Transfer of Guardianship.	Voluntary Admissions.	
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	250	2	14	113	337
"Clifden" Society, Wedderburn ...	45	...	1	4	50
Gordon Institute ... ..	161	9	3	90	140
Try Excelsior Class, Hawksburn ...	117	...	..	136	134
Wesleyan Church Neglected Children's Aid Society ... ..	115	23	...	...	138
Burwood Boys' Home ... ..	15	1	...	20	28
Church of England Deaconesses' Home ...	37	...	3	11	35
Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society ... ..	455	13	12	4	404
Try Society, St. Kilda ... ..	185	...	2	58	120
Fitzroy Street's Mission ... ..	2	...	...	3	5
Geelong "Try" Boys Brigade... ..	...	...	...	252	252
Latrobe-street Ragged School Mission ...	14	...	2	211	12
St. Joseph's Home, Surrey Hills ...	142	...	...	27	192
Total ...	1,538	48	37	929	1,847

In conclusion, it remains for me to express my great indebtedness to the valuable and efficient co-operation afforded me by the officers in charge of the several schools, and generally by the officers of the Department. To the invaluable labour so cheerfully undertaken and performed by the ladies, I have already referred.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOS. M. MILLAR,

Secretary and Inspector.



TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF CHILDREN—INDUSTRIAL AND REFORMATORY.

Items.	Industrial Schools.					Total.	Reformatory Schools.										Total.		
	Head Office.	Boys' and Girls' Receiving Depots.	Abbotsford	Servants' Training School.	Service Children.		Boarded-out Children.	Paken-ham.	Oakleigh.	Brookside.	Bayswater.	Excelsior.	Wandin Yallock.	Kings-bury.	Straight View Farm.	Bakawert		Mount Paradise.	Service Children.
Average strength	...	86	51	25	...	2,234	37	30	39	22	15	15	6	6	2	10	...	...	
Provisions	£ s. d.	421 13 0	...	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Clothing and Bedding	...	62 5 3	...	...	...	773 5 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fuel, Light, and Water	24 16 9	246 14 1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Stores, Stock, &c.	108 8 3	122 15 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Medical Attendance, &c.	...	1 17 1	...	...	...	1,644 2 7	...	39 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	39 0 0
Incidentals, &c.	197 5 11	195 9 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Transport and Travelling Expenses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Telephone Services	6 5 0	6 5 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Salaries and Wages	3,404 10 8	1,121 17 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maintenance	...	...	690 2 7	326 3 9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	3,741 6 7	2,178 17 8	690 2 7	326 3 9	1,530 14 2	33,121 2 3	4,158 8 7	1,024 16 7	757 3	938 7 15	749 6 3	147 19 11	151 13 1	54 1 0	254 19 9	1,036 2 3	162 4 2	6,070 1 2	
Deduct—Maintenance recovered from Parcels	...	...	...	...	...	...	932 18 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	154 14 8
All other Receipts	...	15 14 7	...	...	...	4 3 10	19 18 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	30 9 9
	...	15 14 7	...	...	...	4 3 10	952 17 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	185 4 5
Net cost	3,741 6 7	2,163 3 1	690 2 7	326 3 9	1,530 14 2	33,116 18 5	4,063 5 9	4,786 17 6	757 3	938 7 15	749 6 3	147 19 11	151 13 1	54 1 0	254 19 9	1,005 12 6	162 4 2	5,884 16 9	

\* Under Part VIII. of Act.

† The value of labour performed by the inmates of this school in the manufacture of outfits, &c., is £157 6s. 4d.

AGES, RELIGIONS, AND BIRTHPLACES OF CHILDREN SENT TO THE CARE OF  
THE DEPARTMENT IN 1897.

## AGES.

	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.	Total.
Neglected ...	120	49	46	58	71	55	53	61	45	39	48	39	28	22	16	12	8	770
Reformatory ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	2	7	7	8	7	14	18	66
Total ...	120	49	46	58	71	55	53	61	45	42	50	46	35	30	23	26	26	836

## RELIGIONS AND BIRTHPLACES.

	Number Admitted.	Religions.		Birthplaces.			
		Protestant.	Roman Catholic.	Australian Colonies.	Great Britain.	Germany.	Unknown.
Neglected ...	770	523	247	760	2	1	7
Reformatory ...	66	53	13	61	1	...	4
Total ...	836	576	260	821	3	1	11

## PARENTAGE OF CHILDREN SENT TO THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1897.

Particulars supplied with Order of Committal	Neglected.	Reformatory.	Total.
Parents dead ...	27	4	31
" unknown ...	21	1	22
" deserted ...	19	1	20
" in gaol ...	2	...	2
" poor ...	125	31	156
" in fair circumstances ...	5	2	7
" in other colonies ...	1	...	1
" in hospital ...	3	...	3
Father dead, Mother poor ...	203	11	214
" " in good circumstances ...	1	...	1
" " in gaol ...	2	...	2
" " in hospital ...	1	...	1
" " deserted ...	...	1	1
Father unknown, Mother poor ...	22	1	23
" " deserted ...	9	...	9
" " dead ...	13	2	15
" " in gaol ...	3	...	3
Father deserted, Mother poor ...	166	6	172
" " dead ...	25	1	26
" " in lunatic asylum ...	5	...	5
" " in gaol ...	10	...	10
" " a cripple ...	4	...	4
Father in gaol, Mother poor ...	14	...	14
" " dead ...	3	...	3
" " in hospital ...	6	...	6
" " deserted ...	3	...	3
Father in lunatic asylum, Mother poor ...	5	...	5
" " " dead ...	1	...	1
Father poor, Mother in gaol ...	5	...	5
" " " lunatic asylum ...	4	...	4
" " " dead ...	41	2	43
" " in England ...	...	1	1
" " deserted ...	10	...	10
Father in fair circumstances, Mother dead ...	...	1	1
Father in good circumstances, Mother in gaol ...	1	...	1
" " " " dead ...	3	...	3
" " " " poor ...	3	...	3
Father in another colony, Mother poor ...	4	1	5
Total ...	770	66	836

## REPORTS ON SCHOOLS.

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### RECEIVING DEPÔTS, ROYAL PARK.

I have the honour to submit my report for the past year 1897.

The health of the inmates was good, notwithstanding the crowded state of the wards, which had a trying effect on the younger children during the very hot weather we have just passed through. We had nine (9) deaths of infants during the year.

The work in the different divisions has been satisfactory and conduct good.

I have again to express my thanks to the various ladies and gentlemen of the Protestant denominations, and to the Rev. Father O'Reilly and the sisters of the Roman Catholic religion, who have given religious instruction and kind advice to the children.

The visiting committee maintained their interest in the welfare of the children, and gave their annual treat, which was much appreciated, and through the kindness of Mr. M. L. Hutchinson each child was supplied with a medal at the Jubilee celebrations.

(Signed) JANE WILSON, Matron.

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### INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ended 31st December, 1897.

During the year very little worthy of note has happened to break the ordinary routine of the school. The health of the girls has been good on the whole.

In June the children took their part in the general rejoicings occasioned by the Jubilee of Her Majesty.

Some time previous two kind benefactresses (Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Hall) charitably volunteered to give sufficient material to make each child a new dress for the festival. On the day of the celebration these generous ladies visited the school and were entertained in the class-room with songs, tableaux, &c., by the girls, who looked bright and happy attired in their pretty new costumes.

At the annual reunion of the girls who were former inmates of the school, and now in service, sixty (60) were present. It is always a pleasure to see these girls returning to their "old home" on such occasions, as it is generally a sign that they are doing well, and it is also an encouragement and help to keep them steady.

With grateful acknowledgment to all charitable visitors who have contributed towards the happiness of the little ones in various ways.

(Signed) MARY F. CORBETT.

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### GIRLS' TRAINING INSTITUTE.

I have the honour to submit my report for the past year.

I have at present twenty girls in the school. During the year their health has been very good, and their conduct on the whole satisfactory.

I have again to thank Mr. Petersen for his Christmas gifts, which were received by the girls with delight and gratitude. I have most satisfactory reports of the girls at service, few having changed their situations during the year.

The ladies of the committee have, as usual, visited constantly, and I wish to acknowledge their valuable assistance so readily accorded at all times, and also that so cheerfully rendered by the honorary medical officers, Dr. Jeffreys Wood and Dr. Webster.

(Signed) EMMA BANNER, Matron.

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### BROOKSIDE REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

There are a good many items of interest to report this year, though on the whole it has been a quiet time as far as the girls themselves are concerned. By the end of February, Miss Faris was established in the new buildings, now known as "St. Ann's sub-Reformatory," Heywood, with ten (10) girls. On the 1st of September, Miss King moved to a new cottage on the Brookside property. It is known as No. 2, Brookside. She has accommodation for sixteen (16) girls.

This marks a new departure in our work, as these two ladies are working their homes on their own lines and administering their own finances. The land at St. Ann's is much easier to cultivate than that at Brookside, and in ordinary years their rainfall is much more. I hope that this home may prove in a few years nearer self-supporting than it is at present. No. 2, of course, reaps some benefit from being on the property, in the way of milk, firewood, &c. The use of my buildings must also be considered. The internal administration of both these homes is left now to the two ladies named, and so far the change has proved to be very satisfactory.

The returns for the group are still made up by Mrs. Downing, at No. 1, Brookside, consequently the change does not entail extra trouble at the office. Should circumstances prevent my carrying on the work, I feel now that there is the beginning of a provision for keeping it going.

The condition of the homes on the 31st December, was, as follows:—No. 1, sixteen (16); No. 2, fourteen (14); "St. Ann's," twelve (12); at service, thirty-five (35). We have, unfortunately, one absconder at large. We had another, but her time expired in December, and she declared herself since the beginning of this year, asking that her box might be sent to her. We received information of the marriage of another girl whose time had expired. She is doing well.

During the year we received three service girls, who had ceased to be wards of the Department, on a visit. They expressed themselves as very pleased to be with us, and brought home good characters.

I obtained the discharge of one girl who went to her brother in Sydney. She had been four years in service, three of them in one situation. She is doing very well indeed. Both she and her brother wrote after her arrival, expressing great thankfulness for kindness received by her.

During the year we received fifteen (15) girls for the first time, ten (10) being new committals, and five (5) transfers from the Neglected Children's Department.

We sent thirteen (13) to situations for the first time, and replaced thirty-two (32). These numbers mean a good deal of work in the way of outfits. Those going out again often require as much done for them as they did when they first left us.

There is a good steady demand, notwithstanding the bad times amongst the farmers, for our girls, but we are obliged to exercise extreme caution in placing them.

On careful investigation I find we can claim to have 67 per cent. of those whose terms have expired merged in the general population and doing well. The other 33 per cent. are not by any means all bad, but I have been very rigid in classing them. Several will, in fact, appear next year on the "doing well" list, as they have altered their position materially already.

The health of the girls has been exceptionally good during the year. Dr. Fox has been most attentive. The Rev. R. Whyte, Church of England, and the Rev. H. Salway, of the Wesleyan Church, have been, as before, regular visitors, and have conducted services with the girls. Mr Bird has also been very kind in visiting and conducting short meetings for their benefit. My staff shut up Brookside altogether on the 2nd December, and were conveyed with the girls to the beautiful gardens in Ballarat for the day. I chartered a coach for the occasion, which took them there and back. Brookside is twenty-four (24) miles from Ballarat. I also engaged a steamer to give them a run round the lake. I met them at the gardens and saw them get their dinners. They were very pleased with their day out, behaved themselves perfectly, and were not a bit troublesome after. They met with kindness from all who saw them. The curator at the gardens made them free of the swings, which are usually paid for, when he heard who they were. By making our holiday trip thus early we avoided the heat at the end of the month and the general rush of holiday makers.

Christmas time passed very quietly with occasional picnic teas on the place, and afternoons or evenings of outside or inside games.

I should like to say that my mind has been very much occupied as to the future of this work. There is no doubt now as to the good of dealing with Reformatory wards on our lines. When other people take them in hand the question of employing them profitably enough to make the grants keep them and give a reasonable salary to the person who takes charge of them will crop up. Washing is the first occupation which naturally suggests itself. Brookside does me about ten (10) shillings worth of washing a week, but that would be a mere bagatelle compared to the quantity that would have to be done if washing were regularly taken in. I do not like washing for them. The physique of most of the girls is not such as to warrant keeping them on their feet, either washing or ironing, for long hours. If it is to be well done an expert is required to teach the girls, and when they are taught their tendency will be to drift into big town laundries, where they will have time for their own devices after working hours. Sewing presents, to my mind, quite as many objections. The girls should not be employed at any sedentary occupation for more than three (3) hours per diem. The mending and making, when we had the larger number at Brookside, very nearly kept all the girls employed for that time in the afternoon. I think they should be able to do plain sewing neatly, make their own plain underclothes well, and put together a working dress. One in twenty may perhaps make sufficient progress to be allowed to work a machine occasionally. I do not desire to have them taught more at Brookside, for there is nothing gained by keeping them indoors too much, and unless the superintendence is very strict there is too much opportunity for conversation. Their minds, in fact, want to be employed as well as their fingers. This difficulty is partly met by reading to them, but every one who has superintended a work-room knows that the necessary guidance and direction of a room full of girls at work cannot always admit of a book. We find that very few of the girls, on admission, can do more than hold a needle.

My aim is to get a girl launched out somewhere as speedily as possible. The tendency, if washing is taken in, is to keep one who is good in the laundry. This course is an injury to the girl herself, who should be making her little effort to work and behave herself well, where she will find outside friends and a new home away from the shadow of the word Reformatory.

I must mention one more fact. I am very careful about associating them with children—the very nature of the work requires one to be so—and yet I often feel I am depriving them of the very blessed influence they so much require. A friend who stayed a fortnight with Miss Faris told me that she never heard a wrong word during her visit. There is a little waif at St. Ann's about two years of age. Miss Faris told them that if ever she heard her say anything she should not she would send to me, and get her boarded out elsewhere at once. Two or three of the girls were very indiscriminate in their language, but they all combine in being careful of the little one, and their anxiety has had the best effect on themselves.

I am sorry to say that nothing has been done yet about the safeguarding of those unfortunates who are not exactly imbecile, but are considerably wanting in intelligence, and who are really not responsible agents. I have several at present of various ages. Two or three will have to be sent out shortly if the Government does not see its way to move in the matter.

(Signed)

ELIZABETH ROWE, Superintendent.

## GIRLS' REFORMATORY, PAKENHAM.

The removal of the home in the early months of the year from Albion-street, Brunswick, to the midst of the invigorating and health-restoring atmosphere and surroundings of the Pakenham institution has been emphatically a change for the better. The beneficial effect upon the health and spirits of the girls was distinctly marked, and, in addition to the improvement in the physical condition of the inmates, this transfer from the city to the country has enabled us to provide a much wider variety of employment whilst they remain with us. Moreover, seeing that the majority of the girls are afterwards engaged in country situations, our facilities for training them for their coming duties have been greatly enhanced, and we are in a better position to secure their future usefulness to their employers.

Various new cases have been admitted from the dépôt, some of whom have been transferred to situations successfully. Suitable situations have also been obtained for many others among the inmates.

A close and careful oversight, is kept of these girls in service by personal visitation and by written correspondence, and gladly I can report that, with few exceptions, those who have left our roof are working to the satisfaction of those by whom they are engaged.

The terms of some of the older inmates have expired during the year, some of these have returned to their friends, and others remain contentedly in good and comfortable situations.

One girl, with the sanction of the Department, has been married to a young man in respectable circumstances.

Interesting and instructive limelight services have been displayed, much to the amusement and admiration of the girls, making a welcome break from time to time in the steady routine of the daily round of duty. By this means, as well as by constant, varied, and unwearying effort, we have laid siege to the heart and soul of each individual committed to our care, ever believing that our great hope of permanent success lies in our ability to rouse the nobler and spiritual nature that often simply slumbers beneath the roughest exterior and within the breast of those who are apparently most helpless and depraved.

The general conduct of our large family throughout the year has been excellent, taking all circumstances into consideration, and we cannot but feel our hearts throb with gratitude to Almighty God for the far-spreading evil he has enabled us to prevent, and the unmistakable good that has been achieved.

Yours, seeking the lost,

(Signed)

CORNÉLIE BOOTH.

## OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

I have the honour to submit the following report for the year ended 31st December, 1897.

The health of the inmates was excellent. Their conduct, for the most part, has been very satisfactory, and those at service have done well.

It is with great satisfaction we have to report that the girls, whose terms have expired, have shown by their behaviour that they have profited by their time in the school. None of them have returned to their former bad life.

I desire to sincerely thank all who have shown a kindly interest in the work of the school.

(Signed)

MARY F. CORBETT.

*The following is a Report of the Visiting Committee:—*

We are much pleased to report that we have found the establishment as worthy of commendation as on former visits, both as regards the cleanliness and order of the place as well as the appearance of the inmates, who look cheerful and happy.

We are also gratified to receive an excellent report of the industry and good behaviour of the girls, and to know that there is no case of sickness of any kind in the place.

(Signed)

N. FITZGERALD.  
JAMES HOGAN.  
EDWARD O'DONNELL.  
H. O'CALLAGHAN.

## BOYS' REFORMATORY, BAYSWATER.

I have the honour to report that during the year our boys have been transferred from Pakenham to Bayswater, and the change has proved very beneficial. At no previous time in the history of our institution for dealing with this class of boys have we had such pleasing evidence that the system adopted is proving of immense value to them. They are trained in all kinds of dairy and farm work, and also market gardening, and we have every reason to believe that a thorough reformation is taking place with many of them.

Commandant and Mrs. Booth take great interest in the welfare of the lads, and every now and then they give an evening entertainment with the magic lantern or limelight views. The cinematographic and phonograph have also been brought out, and other pleasing evidence of their interest has been shown.

The boys' health has been excellent, and their conduct far better than in any previous year.

The boys at service and on probation have given satisfaction.

We have, therefore, reason to hope for a very successful year in 1898, especially so considering the excellent arrangement for training the boys in rural industries at Bayswater.

(Signed)

JAMES H. BRAY, Superintendent.

## EXCELSIOR HOME FOR REFORMATORY BOYS, BRIGHTON.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1897. It has been a very satisfactory one, and, considering the many bad cases taken in hand, I have cause to be pleased with the work done.

I sincerely thank Captain Burrowes, Dr. Praagst, Mr. a'Beckett, and many other good friends who have helped in the work during the year.

I am glad to say that absconders are almost unknown.

(Signed)

W. GROOM, Superintendent.

## WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY

I have the honour to place before you the report of our transactions for the past year, and am happy to be able to state that the results of this school, embracing Fernydale, Olinda, and Hillside Homes, have given general satisfaction.

I am thankful to record that the health of the boys has been good, and their conduct on the whole has been satisfactory, with the exception of one or two incurables.

The majority of the boys placed out continue to give satisfaction, and I am in receipt of numbers of applications for similar lads.

The three homes had their annual camp out on the river as usual, and all enjoyed themselves, our old friends again remembering us kindly with provisions, &c., for the occasion, for which I here thank them, and also for the general interest they have always taken in the welfare of the boys.

I sincerely thank Dr. Syme for his services so kindly given up to the present.

(Signed)

M. McASKELL, Superintendent.

## KINGSBURY FARM REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

I have the honour to submit my report for the past year.

The health of the boys in the home has been very good, with the exception of slight colds, &c., and one case of St. Vitus' dance, which had to be treated at the Castlemaine Hospital. There were, however, four cases of serious illness among those at service, one of which resulted in death (the first I have had), after an operation at the Eye and Ear Hospital. The other three boys, I am pleased to say, recovered.

The conduct of those at service has been good upon the whole, with one or two exceptions, which gave cause for much anxiety at the time, but I am glad to say they were doing well at the close of the year.

We had several cases of absconding early in 1897, owing, I think, to two boys, who ran away from their situations some weeks before, not having been picked up, coupled with the fact that we had a restless little fellow who would not rest contented anywhere for more than a week or two at a time, and was afterwards transferred to Melbourne. The two boys referred to having been returned, there was little trouble from this source for the remainder of the year, although it is very hard to wean some of them from town life.

Five new boys were admitted during the year, seven were sent to service, four completed their time with the Department, three of whom are doing well with their old employers, and one removed to Gippsland.

There was a good demand for boys during the spring months for milking, &c., but I consider six (6) months too short a time to fit some boys, while others can be recommended in four or five months for service.

We still continue our night school, which has proved a great help to those whose education has been neglected (several cannot read or write, although twelve or thirteen years of age), although in all cases not so acceptable to them as work of another kind.

Our Sunday school also keeps up its attendance, supplemented by neighbours' children, and our boys who are at service in the district.

I have again to thank Dr. Eccles, of Newstead, for his prompt and kind treatment of those in need of his services, also Mr. Barber, of the Gordon Institute, Captain Norris, Mr. Parker, and other kind friends who visited and helped in many ways.

There were 24 on the roll at the close of the year, viz., sixteen at service, six in the Home, and two who absconded from their situations. The latter were returned early in the New Year.

(Signed)

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

## STRAIGHT VIEW FARM REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to report that the past year's work at the home has been very satisfactory.

I am glad to say that there has been a much better demand for the boys during the past year. It being a more favorable season they were readily employed by farmers for milking, &c.

The health of the boys has been very good, with the exception of one boy who had the misfortune to have his arm broken while in a situation. Dr. Hill attended to his case willingly.

The conduct of the lads has been very good, with the exception of two of them who absconded from the home, and told a lot of untruths, which caused a good deal of worry and anxiety.

The boys have home lessons every night during the week. They have been visited by the Rev. Father Murphy, of Castlemaine, on several occasions.

(Signed)

P. McMAHON, Superintendent.

**BUKAWERT REFORMATORY.**

During the year 1897, four (4) boys were admitted to this Reformatory. Three boys were sent to service and are doing very well. Three (3) absconded, but two (2) of them were caught and returned to Royal Park, and one is still at large. One was given up to his friends, and only one lad was left on the 31st December.

Our boys have, as usual, been instructed in farm work, milking, riding and driving horses, feeding pigs and poultry, clearing scrub lands, picking up and burning. With the exception of absconders their conduct has been excellent.

They have plenty of amusements, bathing and fishing, and we have had a very pleasant boating picnic across Corner Inlet to some of the Wilson Promontory ranges.

I am happy to say that there has not been a single case of sickness during the year.

(Signed)          H. B. SADLEIR, Superintendent.

**MOUNT PARADISE FARM REFORMATORY.**

I beg to report that the last year's work has been very satisfactory. A few of the boys have shown a great leaning to vice, but I am glad to say that there is a great improvement in their conduct.

The general health of the lads has been perfect.

The greatest trouble is the restless disposition of some of the lads and their eagerness for city life, which results in a few abscondings.

The boys placed at service are doing excellent.

The rural life for the boys is a great improvement on the old system of barracks, both mentally and physically.

(Signed)          J. J. MILLANE, Superintendent.