

1903.
—
VICTORIA.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND
REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

R E P O R T

OF THE

SECRETARY AND INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1902.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ACTS 54 VICT. No. 1121, SECTION 10,
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DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

Melbourne, 30th June, 1903.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit herewith the Report of this Department for the year ended 31st December, 1902.

Appended are the usual statistical tables and reports from the various institutions which are subsidized by the State for their care of Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders.

This Report must necessarily be but little more than a bare record of the transactions of the period under review, in consequence of the regretted death of the officers under whom the work was carried out, viz., the Secretary, Mr. T. M. Millar, on 5th December, 1902, and of the Chief Clerk, Mr. C. M. Lilburne, a month later. Both officers had occupied prominent positions in the Department for many years, and materially assisted in inaugurating the existing very satisfactory system of "boarding-out," and on all sides I find evidence of the kindly and sympathetic discharge of their duties.

Mr. E. C. Connor took charge of the Department in succession to the late Mr. Millar, and on his promotion to the Penal Department, as Inspector-General, I was appointed to the office on 1st April, 1903.

I may, however, mention a few salient points brought out by comparison of the statistics with those for past years, and some suggestions are made founded on my own experience.

(1) Dealing with both Neglected Children and Juvenile Offenders, the new committals during 1902 numbered 894 against 1,217 for the preceding year, which may be considered a satisfactory diminution. As it can hardly be said that there was any notable increase in the prosperity of the country during the year, this decrease in committals would appear to be due to more care and discrimination being exercised in dealing with children brought under the notice of magistrates and the police as "neglected."

(2) The number of children under the supervision of the Department on the 31st December, 1902, was 5,745. Of this number 4,092 were a charge to the State, the remainder were maintaining themselves at service, or were on probation with relatives without cost for their care. The following table will show the number of Neglected and Reformatory wards who remained a cost to the State on 31st December, 1901, and 31st December, 1902, respectively:—

NEGLECTED.						
				1901.		1902.
Boarded-out	..	..	..	3,701	..	3,753
In institutions	..	..	..	126	..	140
Total	..	..	..	3,827	..	3,893

REFORMATORY.						
				1901.		1902.
In institutions	..	..	..	190	..	199

I learn from the report of the "State Children's Relief Board" of New South Wales for year ending 5th April, 1902, that the total number of children under the Board's control was 6,985—of whom 3,720 were provided for apart from their parents, and 3,265 were with their own mothers—widows or deserted wives—who receive monetary allowances towards their support at rates determined by the Board according to the merits of each case.

(3) *Boarding-out Children.*—This important work was carried out in a very satisfactory manner during the year, and I can indorse all the highly appreciative notices of my predecessor regarding the services rendered by the ladies' committees throughout the State in supervising children placed in foster homes and in assisting in obtaining situations for the older boys and girls.

(4) *Children at Service*.—Seven hundred and thirty-six children were maintaining themselves at service and are still under the supervision of the Department, as against 751 for the preceding year. The Department arranges that the boys and girls receive a fair rate of wages, and a deduction is made by the employer and sent quarterly to this office, the amount being paid into the Savings Bank in trust for the children until they cease to be wards of the State. There are now 1,300 separate accounts in the office books, with credit balances up to £28 and £30, aggregating the sum of £7,000. Some of the amounts belong to ex-wards who do not wish at present to withdraw the money. With few exceptions the boys and girls continue to be useful members of the community when free of State control.

(5) *Children placed with relatives, &c.*—These children are placed on probation, and are liable to be returned to the Department if their conduct should be bad or their surroundings unsuitable. Eight hundred and twenty-five children were so placed at the end of the year.

(6) *Transfers from Gaols*.—There were ten transfers from gaols to reformatories during the year. Mr. Groom and Major Bray are deserving of grateful thanks for the sympathetic interest they have taken in endeavours to promote the welfare of these juvenile offenders.

(7) *Mortality*.—The deaths numbered the same as during the preceding year (75), which was considered to show a low rate of mortality. There were no cases calling for special inquiry or comment.

(8) *Inspection*.—I have not been able to visit all the institutions subsidized by the State and having the care of children from this Department, but I have learned sufficient during my short occupation of office to appreciate the excellent work done in the Industrial Schools and Reformatories. The reports of the officers in charge, which are attached to this Report, give detailed information as to the numbers and results.

(9) *Receiving Depot, Royal Park*.—The erection of a brick cottage for the boys is recommended, the present wooden buildings to be utilized for other urgent requirements for which they could be admirably adapted. The water supply is plentiful for domestic purposes, but the pressure is quite inadequate to cope with any serious outbreak of fire. Efforts are being made to place the garden and farm work on a more satisfactory basis. The work of the Depot in receiving and dealing with children has been carried on in the usual lines and does not call for comment.

(10) The sum of £1,791 18s. 3d. was collected during the year from relatives of children liable for their support. This was an increase of £128 5s. 1d. over last year's revenue from the same source. Magisterial orders have been made against parents and others liable for maintenance, but when it is mentioned that the sum of £30,000 is in arrears the difficulty of collecting may be understood. This sum is the accumulation of arrears for many years, as no amount can at present be written off except on the application of the debtor himself. In New South Wales the year's collections from parents amounted to £1,542 2s. 1d.

(11) The total expenditure of the Department for the year amounted to £72,011 3s. 6d. Deducting maintenance collections, the actual cost to the State was £70,219 5s. 3d. In New South Wales the expenditure was £66,261 19s. against which has to be credited a revenue derived from parents of children of £1,542 2s. 1d. The amount paid in salaries for administering the Department, including the officials at Royal Park Depot, was £5,393 16s. 3d. against an expenditure of £7,694 11s. 5d. in New South Wales. The comparatively small allowances made to widows and deserted wives in New South Wales would account for the lower expenditure as compared with Victoria. Every exertion is being made by careful administration to reduce the expenditure in this State, but probably the most economical plan would be the adoption of a system of temporary relief to widows and deserted wives with families, instead of the present course of taking control of the children as "neglected," and undertaking their education and maintenance for many years. In the past, parents and other relatives have no doubt been too ready to cast on the State the responsibility of maintaining their helpless children, not evincing any interest in them until they are able to earn wages or to help in housework.

(12) *Societies dealing with Neglected Children under Part 8 of Act 1121*.—These societies continue to carry on their very useful and philanthropic work, and without doubt they have undertaken the care of many waifs and strays who would, in the absence of their intervention, have been made charges on the State.

NEW LEGISLATION REQUIRED.

It will be observed on reference to Table 1 that there are 34 "children" stated to be "free from legal control," but still maintained by the State, as they are "incapacitated."

These are ex-wards of the Department, who have been found to be so weak-minded or physically infirm that, on the expiration of their period of detention (*i.e.*, at twenty years of age), they were considered quite incapable of earning a livelihood, and there was a difficulty in medically certifying them as fit subjects for a lunatic asylum. A number of younger children of the same class are now "legally" detained, as they are under the statutory age of twenty years. It is hardly necessary to say that these children require special treatment for their mental and physical development in an institution worked on the same lines as the Asylum for Idiots at Kew, instead of being allowed to "vegetate" as at present.

Another grade of abnormal children, however, committed chiefly for reformatory discipline, and frequently described as vicious from childhood, with precocious sexual habits, requires special attention, as their discharge from control under the existing arbitrary law at the age of twenty years is a positive danger to the community. Many of the boys and girls at eighteen and nineteen years of age came under this category.

The boys are apt to join the criminal ranks, and the girls, sometimes euphemistically described as of "amorous propensities," bear numerous children who from birth become burdens on society. Some five years ago, I discussed this subject with the late Mr. Millar and the Government Medical Officer, both of whom described the girls then under notice as victims to "moral insanity"—they were certainly degenerated, and their responsibility limited, but they could not, under existing laws, be certified for treatment in a lunatic asylum. The law is unchanged since that date, although the necessity for amendment is greater than ever. Without going into further details in this Report, I am of opinion that some decided action should be taken not only to protect the community from further mischief, but to give the boys and girls themselves a chance of being educated, and steadying down to a useful life. The period of detention might well be extended in many cases to, say, 30 years of age, the time to be spent in a reformatory founded on the Industrial Colony System, with a large area of land, where the inmates would be under educative influence suited to their needs, and well employed in useful occupations, so that when discharged they, having been strengthened mentally, morally, and physically, would be able to provide for their own livelihood.

I am indebted to the Journal of Mental Science for the following apposite information with reference to the question of reforming young offenders:—

"Dr. Morel's statistics show that delinquency is most frequent between the ages of 18 and 30 years, also that the majority of criminals examined by him had received little or no primary instruction, and it follows that the treatment of the degenerate, the future candidates for crime, should begin in their youth. He formulates these conclusions:—

1. "As a measure of social hygiene, the authorities should supervise backward children, and children living in corrupt environment, in order to withdraw them from the control of their parents, and remove them to healthy and honest surroundings.

2. "In case of necessity, in the interests both of society and of the backward and degenerate individuals themselves, they should be sent to a medico-pedagogic institution fulfilling all the conditions which can contribute to the regeneration of those presenting unquestionable signs of degeneracy.

3. "Parents whose children by their conduct or intelligence inspire fears for the future should have the right to ask for their committal to a medico-pedagogic institution, or to some special asylum until they have attained an age to be subsequently determined.

4. "The motive of retaliation being inapplicable in the case of the degenerate should be replaced by the idea of reformation and education. The personal responsibility of degenerates being suppressed, they will be committed to the care of the State for an *indefinite* period.

"It is obvious from Dr. Morel's statistics that the recognition of the right of detaining juvenile criminals until they can be regarded as *seriously* qualified to fill a useful place in society would in a few years reduce crime to a half or even a quarter of its present dimensions."

PARENTAGE OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE
DEPARTMENT IN 1902.

Particulars furnished with Order of Committal.	Neglected.	Reformatory.	Total.
Parents dead	16	5	21
" unknown	12	3	15
" deserted	12	...	12
" drunkards	3	1	4
" poor, but of good character	41	13	54
Father dead; Mother poor, but of good character	290	3	293
" " in lunatic asylum	5	...	5
" " in hospital	2	...	2
" " an imbecile	1	...	1
" " deserted	10	1	11
" " a drunkard	11	1	12
" " in gaol	12	...	12
" " immoral ... ..	...	1	1
Father poor; Mother dead	26	8	34
" " in lunatic asylum	5	...	5
" " an imbecile	1	...	1
" " deserted	2	1	3
" " a drunkard	5	...	5
" " immoral	5	...	5
Father deserted; Mother poor, but of good character	151	3	154
" " dead	18	1	19
" " in hospital	2	...	2
" " in lunatic asylum	1	...	1
" " an imbecile	10	...	10
" " unknown	1	...	1
" " a drunkard	9	1	10
" " in gaol	5	1	6
" " bad character	5	...	5
Father a drunkard; Mother poor, but of good character	19	3	22
" " dead	12	2	14
" " deserted	4	...	4
" " in gaol	3	...	3
Father unknown; Mother poor, but of good character	12	...	12
" " dead	6	1	7
" " in lunatic asylum	2	...	2
" " in hospital	1	...	1
" " an imbecile	3	...	3
" " in gaol	2	1	3
" " deserted	10	...	10
" " a bad character	2	...	2
Father in gaol; Mother poor, but of good character	10	...	10
" " dead	10	...	10
" " deserted	1	...	1
" " a drunkard	3	...	3
" " a bad character	6	1	7
Father in lunatic asylum; Mother poor, but of good character	16	...	16
" " " in hospital	2	...	2
Father in hospital; Mother poor, but of good character	16	...	16
" " dead	4	...	4
Father a cripple; Mother poor, but of good character	3	...	3
" " deserted	3	...	3
Father an invalid; Mother poor, but of good character	24	...	24
" " deserted	1	...	1
Father a bad character; Mother dead ... ..	...	1	1
" " " poor, but of good character	1	...	1
Father blind; Mother poor, but of good character	3	...	3
Father imbecile; Mother in gaol	2	...	2
Total	842	52	894

AGES, RELIGIONS, AND BIRTHPLACES OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1902.

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	Over 16.	Total.
Neglected ...	143	54	63	60	57	65	72	61	58	60	47	40	25	17	5	8	7	842
Reformatory ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	2	4	12	6	10	15	52
Total ...	143	54	63	60	57	65	72	61	58	62	48	42	29	29	11	18	22	894

RELIGIONS AND BIRTHPLACES.

—	Number Committed.	Religions.			Birthplaces.				
		Protestant.	Roman Catholic.	Jewish.	Australia.	England.	Ireland.	America.	Unknown.
Neglected ...	842	555	285	2	834	1	1	1	5
Reformatory ...	52	38	14	...	48	3	...	...	1
Totals ...	894	593	299	2	882	4	1	1	6

WORK OF SOCIETIES AND PERSONS UNDER PART VIII. OF THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN'S ACT FOR THE YEAR 1902.

Name of Society or Person.	Number under Supervision on 31.12.01.	Admissions during 1902.			Number under Supervision on 31.12.02.
		Court Committals.	Transfer of Guardianship.	Voluntary Admissions.	
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	659	1	36	84	722
Wesleyan Neglected Children's Aid Society	204	8	6	4	216
Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society ...	335	19	12	15	327
Church of England Neglected Children's Aid Society ...	72	2	5	20	59
Clifden Home, Wedderburn ...	82	...	...	7	88
Gordon Institute, Melbourne ...	135	10	15	30	180
Try Society, Surrey-road, Hawksburn ...	88	1	8	68	94
Burwood Boys' Home ...	40	1	20	...	50
Geelong Try Boys' Brigade ...	237	...	...	91	185
Latrobe-street Ragged School Mission ...	346	...	31	57	67
St. Joseph's Home, Surrey Hills ...	213	...	...	48	221
Rescue Home, Ballarat ...	7	...	3	...	7
Fitzroy Streets Mission ...	23	...	1	1	23
Mrs. Goldspink, 285 Rathdown-st., Carlton	13	4	17	20	54
Rev. G. H. Cole, Central Methodist Mission	...	5	3	...	8
Miss D. Menzies, Congregational Mission Union ...	...	...	...	...	...
Total ...	2,454	51	157	445	2,301

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

Industrial Schools.	Average strength	Items of Expenditure.											Total.
		Provi- sions.	Clothing and Bedding.	Fuel, Light, and Water.	Stores, Stock, &c.	Medical Attend- ance. &c.	Incidental.	Transport and Travelling Expenses.	Tele- phone Service.	Salaries.	Main- tenance.	Postage and Tele- grams.	
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Boys' and Girls' Depôts	82	486 8 11	88 13 7	295 9 6	226 14 11	21 13 10	308 19 8	..	..	1,512 4 7	..	..	2,940 5 0
Abbotsford ..	64	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	884 9 5	..	884 9 5
Training Home for Girls	26	..	..	..	..	13 13 10	..	..	..	..	374 7 1	..	388 0 11
Service Children ..	..	..	375 8 0	..	..	..	..	{578 15 5* } {396 0 8 }	..	..	..	..	1,350 4 1
Boarded-out Child- ren	3,727	..	1,203 18 3	..	..	2,680 7 4	..	729 1 1	..	..	50,957 4 5	..	55,570 11 1
Telephone Service ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	128 8 0	..	..	..	128 8 0
Total Industrial Schools	3,899	486 8 11	1,667 19 10	295 9 6	226 14 11	2,715 15 0	308 19 8	1,703 17 2	128 8 0	1,512 4 7	52,216 0 11	..	61,261 18 6
Reformatory Schools.													
Oakleigh	245	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	590 9 11	..	590 9 11
Brookside	235	..	..	..	..	21 9 10	..	..	..	..	612 5 4	..	635 15 2
St. Ann's	4	..	..	..	..	4 3 6	..	..	..	..	108 18 11	..	113 2 5
Riddell's Creek ..	69	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,804 0 5	..	1,804 0 5
Excelsior	19	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	501 5 10	..	501 5 10
Wandin Yallock ..	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	464 16 4	..	464 16 4
Kingsbury	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	139 16 10	..	139 16 10
Straight View Farm ..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	61 5 7	..	61 5 7
Mount Paradise ..	10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	259 14 2	..	259 14 2
Bayswater	39	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,014 6 11	..	1,014 6 11
Service Children ..	..	..	242 13 10	..	..	..	..	691 12 10	..	..	..	..	934 6 8
Telephone Service ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	70 13 4	..	..	..	70 13 4
Total Reformatory Schools	214	..	242 13 10	..	..	27 13 4	..	691 12 10	70 13 4	..	5,557 0 3	..	6,589 13 7
Head Office .. ..	..	..	..	21 15 6	68 2 1	..	135 1 4	..	..	3,881 11 8	..	51 0 10†	4,159 11 5
Total Industrial and Reformatory Schools	4,113	486 8 11	1,910 13 8	317 5 0	294 17 0	2,743 8 4	444 1 0	2,395 10 0	199 1 4	5,393 16 3	57,773 1 2	53 0 10	72,011 3 6
<i>Deduct—</i> Amount received for Maintenance of Children .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,791 18 3
Net cost .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	70,219 5 3

* Under Part VIII. of Act.
† For three months only.

REPORTS ON SCHOOLS.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ended 31st December, 1902.

During the year 26 attended school, of whom six were over the prescribed age, being very backward in education. Others (strongly grown girls) received an hour's tuition daily in reading and writing.

The examination by the Government inspector having been dispensed with during 1902, our industrial school wards participated in the examination held by the diocesan inspector for our preservative class.

Many ladies and gentlemen, who visited the Institution during the year, saw the children. The most illustrious visitors were Sir George Sydenham Clarke, Lady Clarke, and party who were met at the Convent by the Rev. Clergy of Collingwood and His Worship the Mayor, together with Parliamentary and Council Representatives of that city.

The State Governor expressed himself highly pleased with the cheerful, healthy appearance of the children, amongst whom were the State wards, as was reported in the daily papers at the time.

Another esteemed and gratefully-remembered visit was that of the late regretted Mr. Millar, who, on that occasion, was more than usually benign and spoke with touching fatherly interest to the children. Several of the grown girls, who had known the late Secretary for years, were deeply moved when the tidings of his death were announced in the school. The Visitors' Book shows the following record of Mr. Millar's last visit to Abbotsford on 29th January, 1902:—

“I have visited Abbotsford to-day, and having spent a considerable time in interviewing the wards of the State in care of the kindly nuns, and inspecting the provision, &c., made for them, have much pleasure in recording my full satisfaction. The children were all looking happy and contented. As usual I notice the Rev. Mother has under her care a very large number of a similar class to the State children, and she deserves our best thanks in so cordially continuing to divert to her own care children that would in many cases otherwise, in all probability, have come into the hands of the Department.”

The conduct of the girls has been very good. Those placed in service homes have done well, with the exception of a few whose deficient mental faculties render the poor girls incapable of being properly trained.

MARY V. KENNEDY, Provincial Superioress.

TRAINING HOME FOR GIRLS, EAST MELBOURNE.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1902.

The health of the inmates has been excellent—we had very little sickness. I regret to report one death from tubercular meningitis. It occurred in the Melbourne Hospital on 1st December. The girl was in the hospital for ten days and had been delicate for years—she was always in the doctor's hands. Dr. Jeffreys Wood, Dr. Percy Webster, and Dr. Clara Stone are still our honorary doctors and Mr. Fred. Baker is our honorary dentist, they have been most kind and attentive when necessary.

The conduct on the whole has been good; one or two service girls behaved badly and we were obliged to send them away. I think the example was beneficial to the others.

I cannot say enough for the honesty of the girls with money, and for their behaviour when out with messages—people constantly speak to me about it.

The service girls are staying out well, and are giving general satisfaction, I have filled 27 situations during the year.

The Committee are deeply grateful to Mrs. William Peterson and the daughters of the late Mr. W. Peterson for their beautiful Christmas presents, also to the many kind friends who have given donations in money or kind during the past year.

The Committee and staff of the Home feel deeply the loss they have sustained in the death of Mr. Millar, who took such a kindly interest in the girls, and was always ready to help and advise them.

LILIAN M. WATSON, Matron.

ALBION HOME, GLENROY.

I am pleased to be able to report progress for 1902.

There were 45 girls in the Home at the end of the year.

During the year we moved to larger and more commodious premises at Glenroy; the picturesque and healthful surroundings contributing greatly to the happiness and contentment of the girls.

There have been a few cases of scarlatina, but by keeping the five girls who had caught it isolated, the spread of the disease was prevented. One girl (suffering from appendicitis) was removed to the Melbourne Hospital for a few weeks. There have been no deaths in the Home during the year.

The children continue to make progress at school.

All receive training in housework, the elder girls also getting an insight into laundry work and gardening.

Musical and physical drills, club-swinging, and games of various kinds provide exercise and healthful amusement.

The girls in situations are doing well, we visit them from time to time, and they are all giving satisfaction, while the general character of those who have come under the influence of the Home shows a marked improvement.

CLARA DENNISON, Matron.

BAYSWATER INTERMEDIATE HOME.

The past year has been one of advance and improvement in methods of dealing with the smaller and intermediate boys. A new building has been erected at great cost and a full staff of officers found, and all the boys over school age have been placed there, where they are taught good and useful farm and garden work, thus leaving one Institution or Home entirely for the little boys who attend school.

The change has been very satisfactory, and we ought now to see good practical results for the expenses of building for classification.

The work of the new year has been mainly devoted to breaking the boys of old habits which are very tenacious. This requires time and discipline. None but those who engage in such work can fully understand how much care and toil it takes to get even one of these younger boys to thoroughly conquer the habits of vice acquired so early in youth, but we have every reason to be greatly encouraged, and feel certain the Government and the community will be well satisfied and repaid for sending them here for training. They shared in all the privileges and pleasures that were provided during the year, such as entertainments, cinematograph, and all seasonable games.

The health has been very good. Dr. Craig, the medical officer, faithfully doing his duty as required by the Department.

A number of boys were returned suitable for service and foster-homes, and we expect to greatly increase the number during the coming year.

JAMES H. BRAY, Superintendent.

BROOKSIDE REFORMATORY.

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

The general conduct of the girls in the Home and at service has been better than last year, and we have received good reports from mistresses. Although we have had disappointments and discouragements in our work, yet, on the whole, it has been a good year. We have a scarcity of applications for service girls, owing, no doubt, to the bad season.

I again take the opportunity of thanking the members of my Committee and the many kind friends who have visited us from time to time, for their kindly interest in my girls. The girls have heartily enjoyed and, I think, appreciated the efforts put forth for their recreation and amusement; their time is well employed by a variety of work, viz., household work of all kinds, plain sewing, and knitting, then they have their club swinging, drill action, magic lantern services, and many other amusements to brighten and cheer the home life.

Dr. McDougall has been regular in his visits.

I may here mention that the girls expressed grief on hearing of the death of the late Mr. T. M. Millar, they seemed to appreciate his kindness to them, and the interest he always took in their welfare.

I again thank the Misses Rowe, of Glenfine, for the annual picnic given to the girls by them on 2nd January, 1903, and for their visits and the kindly interest they take in the girls.

ROSE KING, Matron.

ST. ANN'S REFORMATORY SCHOOL.

During the last year I have been trying to reduce the number with a view to closing the school and selling the land. To this end three of the wards were transferred to Brookside in February.

Two girls' terms have expired, and they are doing well in the same situations. Three of the service girls have been in their situations all the year and I have good reports of them. Two others have been in and out again and are doing well. One girl I have sent out, but she is too lazy to keep a place.

There only remains the two girls whose terms have expired, and the doctor has certified that they are *morally unfit* to be trusted, they are also very poor workers.

There has been no misconduct at situations or in residence.

We have had no trouble with the girls and their health has been very good.

It has been a year of steady if slow improvement in which I have had Mrs. Flaxman's help.

MARY S. FARIS, Matron.

GIRLS' REFORMATORY, RIDDELL'S CREEK.

During the past year in our work at the above Reformatory there has been much to encourage us to continue putting forth fresh efforts to bless and cheer the unfortunate class of girls who are sent to us.

The work upon which they are engaged is very varied and many of the girls give great promise of becoming bright and useful members of society.

The knowledge acquired of how to do things that are useful, and being constantly engaged in such work is putting within them confidence that they can earn their own living honestly and respectably by earnest application, and the dark cloud which seems to hang over the future gradually disappears.

Quite a number of ladies from near and far have visited our Home and given expression to their great admiration of the girls' work. House-cleaning, bedmaking, cooking, dairying, plain sewing, fancy needle-work, and many varieties of wool-work made on our knitting machines, as well as by hand.

On the whole, the girls in situations have done well and are giving great satisfaction to their mistresses. Two of the girls we have engaged in the Home and are receiving wages from us.

Many of the residents in the district have kindly endeavoured to bring some help and cheer to the girls, who were recipients of medals, cakes, lollies, &c., during the Coronation festivities. Mr. Fisher, station-master, and Mr. W. Smith, of the Nursery, with others, have been exceedingly kind to us. The visits to the Nursery, which is always open to us, have been greatly enjoyed by the girls.

The spiritual welfare of the girls is ever foremost in our minds and Mrs. Commissioner McKie and other ladies frequently visit our Home with this end in view. Such visits are always looked forward to by all and have been very beneficial. The lime-light entertainment arranged by Commissioner McKie gave unbounded pleasure.

Our library, in which the girls are very interested, has grown larger during the year, many of the girls contributing their mite when in service to buy a new book for the Home. This is indeed a great boon to us as the books chosen are such as will be helpful as well as interesting to them.

With strong faith in our Almighty Heavenly Father we venture on the new year with undaunted courage, believing that our future efforts will be crowned with success.

CLARA LANE, Matron.

SUB-REFORMATORY, MURRUMBEENA.

There is much to be thankful for on reviewing the year just completed.

The health of the girls has been excellent, and their behaviour on the whole very good.

Numbers of the girls have been placed in service and of these the majority are giving every satisfaction. They are visited by officers of the Home from time to time, and also come home to spend their "day off."

Ordinary household duties and needlework employ their time, then, when work is finished, singing, drills, and games of tennis, &c., are heartily entered into and appreciated.

VIDA BLACK, Matron.

OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY.

It is with pleasure that I again report a very successful year's work in connexion with the Reformatory in all its branches.

The inmates, with few exceptions, enjoy excellent health, and by careful attention to daily duties strive to fit themselves for good comfortable situations.

Out of the eight girls at service during the year, only one was returned for misconduct, and two for ill-health. Owing to the great depression and drought, the applications for servants in the country districts are few, and we are loath to place the girls in city homes, as there they are surrounded by so many temptations.

Gratifying results have been received from girls on probation, as well as from those whose terms have recently expired. Many of the latter remain contentedly in good service homes, others have married respectably.

I have again to thank Dr. Grant and Mr. McGregor (dentist) for their kind and prompt treatment of those in need of their services, also the many generous friends who gladdened Christmastide with welcome donations of cordials, biscuits, sweets, &c.

MARY A. O'SHEA, Superioress.

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE, OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY.

The annual report is of the same satisfactory kind as in previous years. We are satisfied that the management of the Institution could hardly be improved upon. The health of the inmates, we are glad to know, has been throughout the year excellent, also their conduct and obedience are favorably spoken of by the good nuns.

The buildings and appurtenances appear to be in perfect order, and the girls struck us as being very cheerful and happy.

(Signed)

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

BOYS' REFORMATORY, BAYSWATER.

I have the honour to report that during the past year good and useful work has been done at the Reformatory. Mere figures would not in any sense give a correct idea of the value to the community that has been the result of the patient toil of those engaged in the work of combating vice and immorality. It is without doubt a great problem how to best deal with many of the lads who come to us with a good long career in many cases of wrong-doing, their whole mind imbued with false ideas of life and their aims sensual and low. Notwithstanding this, we have had every reason to be encouraged, and fully believe the whole community will benefit through the good work accomplished.

The great majority of the boys who have left us during the year were placed on probation, and have in most instances given every satisfaction; one or two have had to be returned, not yet strong enough to withstand temptation.

The health of the boys has been excellent, and no deaths have taken place. They have good healthy work, and plenty of recreation—all the games of the season entered into with spirit. Five nice Bible Classes are held every Sunday morning, and Divine Service at night. The Bible Classes have been of deep interest to the boys.

We have had a visit during the year from the Chief Secretary, Mr. Murray, and the Under-Secretary, Mr. Morrison. They gave the boys good advice which has not been forgotten. Commissioner McKie, the leader of the Salvation Army in Australasia, and other prominent officers, have taken great interest in the homes here, and have sent along the lime-light kinematograph and other attractions to help make the life of the boys happier and brighter, which has been appreciated.

I cannot close my report without expressing the deep sorrow and regret that came upon officials and boys at the news of the death of the late Secretary, Mr. T. M. Millar. He undoubtedly had the welfare of the children under his supervision at heart, and anything that would tend to elevate and bless them had his sanction and assistance. He has entered into his reward; his kindly words and actions are not forgotten.

We are looking forward to better work and results this year than any previous.

JAMES H. BRAY, Superintendent.

RECEIVING DEPOTS, ROYAL PARK.

I have the honour to submit for your information my report of the work of the Depot for the year 1902.

The health and conduct of the inmates have been satisfactory.

I have again to thank the Visiting Committee and other kind friends for their generosity in providing treats and entertaining the children during the year. They all participated in the rejoicings at the Coronation festivities, and the ladies of the Visiting Committee obtained and presented a medal to each child.

Religious instruction has been imparted as formerly, and the children's attendance at church duly observed.

JANE WILSON, Matron.

EXCELSIOR HOME FOR BOYS, BRIGHTON.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ending 31st December, 1902.

The general health of the boys has been good, but Dr. Praagst has been called many times through the year, and has been most kind in his attention, and Mr. Davey, of Brighton (dentist) has been prompt in attending to all who suffered with bad teeth, free.

The boys attending school have done well again, some of them gaining prizes. Mr. Le Page (head master of the Elsternwick State School) has exercised much care, knowing the class of boys he has to deal with from here.

Most of the boys working near home have done well, but some of the more depraved have given a lot of trouble this year—more than I ever had before, and I am sorry to say that I cannot claim the same success with such cases as in the past. Those placed out at service, or on probation, are, in most cases, doing well. One boy is now paying for a small allotment of land in Rosstown; another has charge of a carrier's cart in the city; and another was placed on a mail steamer as pantry-boy, and is now a second saloon steward.

The camp was a great success again.

The religious welfare of the boys has been in the hands of Father Carroll, the Rev. Mr. Wilkens, and Mr. Johnston, whose attentions have been much appreciated by some of them.

I must mention here my indebtedness to those in authority at the various gaols for the way they have assisted me in recommending suitable cases for transfer to Reformatories, and for the untiring energy of Captain Evans, who at all times helped me in every way to place offenders where they would benefit most.

W. GROOM, Superintendent.

WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to report that the work of the past year has been very satisfactory.

The health of the boys has been excellent, with two exceptions, viz. :—one of rheumatic fever, now quite well; the other being a case of injury to bone of the leg—patient now in Melbourne Hospital, and making rapid progress towards recovery.

I must tender here my sincere thanks and gratitude to Dr. Syme, of Lilydale, who has kindly attended to every case reported to him.

In every other detail, the work of the past year has been similar to previous reports, and quite up to their standard in every way.

The boys have had their annual holiday this year at Warburton, lasting seven days, which passed off very successfully, no casualties resulting. They have now granted me four weeks' holiday, which I will spend at Portsea, where I will be in touch with them from day to day.

On behalf of myself, as well as the boys and staff, I express regret and deplore the loss by death of our late Secretary, Mr. T. Millar, who was always ready to encourage and sympathize with every effort put forth on behalf of the children of the State. We also regretfully mention the loss of Mr. Lilburne, who, it must be admitted, was a true and faithful servant of the State.

M. McASKELL, Superintendent.

KINGSBURY REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to report upon the work for the year 1902.

The health of the boys at service and in the Home has been good, with the exception of one or two accidents, which Drs. Eccles and Hill readily attended to—to whom I now tender my sincere thanks.

The demand for service boys has been good up to the past three months, when, owing to the drought, places were hard to get, and it was also found necessary to temporarily reduce the wages for a few months in two or three cases or else allow the boys to return, which I do not think is a wise proceeding. I believe it to be much better to submit for three or four months to a small reduction, as there is practically no work in the northern districts, and will not be until we have a good rainfall.

Some of those at service have caused a deal of trouble, but on the whole they are doing well. Those on probation with friends or relatives are doing very well, and I am of the opinion that this system of dealing with many boys is a good one, and might be extended with profit to the wards of the Department, providing that sufficient care and inquiry are made as to the suitability of the homes and surroundings. At the close of the year there were 13 at service, 6 on probation, and 7 in the Home; a total of 26 under control.

During the year the terms of 7 boys expired, 15 were placed in or transferred to other homes when changes were necessary, 2 were placed with friends on probation, and 2 were transferred to Melbourne for misconduct.

I have to thank all friends who so kindly assisted us in any way during the past year.

The boys have been engaged at all kinds of farm and garden work, which (we see in the older boys who are now living in the district) is proving of great benefit by giving them a good all-round training.

During the Christmas holidays we had several of those at service in the district, and other boys whose terms expired years ago, home to spend a few days, when they all made the best use of their time with our own boys by forming picnic, fishing, and hunting parties, combined with running, cricket, &c., and their vacation came to an end all too soon.

We are trusting with the return of better seasons that everything may improve; more prosperous times for farmers mean better times for the boys, both socially and financially.

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

STRAIGHT VIEW FARM REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to submit for your information my report for the year ended 31st December, 1902.

We have three boys at present in the school, all doing well.

Their health has been excellent; not one of them has had a day's sickness.

Owing to the drought, situations have been difficult to obtain. The lads are driven to Mass on a Sunday in their turn, and we have been visited by Fathers O'Neil and O'Grady.

PETER McMAHON, Superintendent.

MOUNT PARADISE FARM REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to report that the last year's work in this Home has been very successful.

A few of the boys received have shown a great leaning to crime, and consequently have caused a good deal of worry, yet we are pleased to say that in several of them there is a great improvement.

The general health of the boys has been excellent, not a single case of sickness occurring during the year.

We have had some distinguished visitors during the year, who were all well pleased with the Home and surroundings.

We deeply deplore the loss sustained by the death of our late Secretary, Mr. Millar. Nothing could put him off the track or cause him to deviate from the conscientious principles by which he was always actuated, and the good reputation which he enjoyed was in a very considerable degree due to his wisdom and scrupulous integrity.

J. J. MILLANE, Superintendent.

GEELONG BOARDING-OUT DISTRICT.

The Geelong Boarding-out Committee again beg to submit their Annual Report, and it is with sincere regret they have to allude to the death of two friends who have worked so pleasantly with them for so many years past. The first death was that of Dr. Pincott, who had been the medical officer for so many years, and who had always evinced the greatest interest in the health and general welfare of the children, but he had attained a great age, and his health had been gradually failing, and the sad event was not altogether unexpected.

In the death of our much lamented Secretary, the late Mr. Millar, the case was very different; very few had even heard of his illness, and the announcement of his death came upon us as a great shock, as well as to the foster mothers and wards who are old enough to appreciate his kindness.

During the past year, 1902, our work has been carried on very pleasantly, the lady visitors taking the greatest interest in the Homes and children specially under their care.

My Committee thinks it a matter for surprise that the foster parents have not applied for an increase in the weekly payments on account of the high price of provisions, and sometimes we fear justice cannot be done to the children, although so far they appear to be as well fed and clothed as ever. There is one thing to be considered, in cases of sickness the Department acts very generously towards the foster parents, and always allows an increase of payment as long as the trouble lasts.

During the year eleven girls and fifteen boys have been sent to service ; some are unsatisfactory, others are pleasing their employers well.

One former ward of the State has gone to Western Australia, and has written to his foster parents stating he has a good home and a kind master. He is earning £2 5s. per week and his board, and places £2 per week in the bank regularly.

Eight children have been returned to Melbourne from different causes ; eight have been allowed to make their own arrangements with their foster mothers, and are getting on well. One has received her discharge.

It is very usual now to extend the terms of the girls for two years, and we think it a very wise arrangement, as at eighteen they often have some very foolish notions, whilst at twenty they have, or should have, more sense, and see things in a different light.

We have to record the death of one of our good old foster-mothers, one very delicate infant, and one poor girl from consumption. Eight children were admitted to the hospital during the year, where they were treated with every possible care and attention, for which we are very grateful. Nine have been discharged to relatives.

Once again I have to thank my Committee for their kind and valuable assistance, and we all wish to express our sincere thanks to you and all the officers of the Department for prompt and kind consideration.

FRANCES DAVISON, Correspondent.