

1904.
VICTORIA.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND
REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

R E P O R T

OF THE

SECRETARY AND INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1903.

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

By Authority:

ROBT. S. BRAIN, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

REPORT.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

Melbourne, 27th June, 1904.

SIR,

In compliance with the requirements of section 10 of the *Neglected Children's Act* 1890, and section 320 of Part II. of the *Crimes Act* 1890, I have the honour to submit the report on the work of this Department during the year ended 31st December, 1903, with a statement of expenditure, and the usual statistical tables.

It will be seen on reference to Table I. that the total number of children under supervision on the 1st January, 1903, was 5,745, and that on the 31st December a reduction to 5,361 had taken place.

As indicated in last year's report, magisterial benches have adopted a more rigid interpretation of section 18 of the *Neglected Children's Act*, which defines the circumstances under which children "shall be deemed neglected," and liable to committal to the care of the Department—with the result that only 397 children were dealt with and placed under control during the year. The decrease is very marked when comparison is made with the figures for the previous ten years, which are as follow:—437 in 1893, 490 in 1894, 485 in 1895, 551 in 1896, 770 in 1897, 1,020 in 1898, 928 in 1899, 874 in 1900, 1,152 in 1901, 842 in 1902.

Full details are given in Table I. of the distribution of the children.

Boarding-out.—Of the 397 new committals 131 were left with their mothers, with a view to payment being made for their maintenance. For the remainder of the children no difficulty was experienced in getting good foster-homes. Very satisfactory supervision has been maintained over all homes, failure to keep up to the departmental standard in every respect involving the removal of children to more suitable surroundings. Periodical reports are obtained from the teachers as regards progress, attendance, behaviour, and appearance of the boys and girls at school.

A number of young children who have acquired depraved habits are sent to residential schools, under the control of the Salvation Army at Bayswater and Glenroy, for Protestant boys and girls respectively. The Roman Catholic boys are educated at St. Augustine's School at Geelong, and the Roman Catholic girls at Abbotsford. Every endeavour is made to eradicate the bad habits formed in childhood, and the children are afforded the educational advantages that are obtainable at State schools.

The Ladies' Committees throughout the State have continued their valuable work of supervising the children placed in foster-homes, and afterwards keeping in touch with those sent to service.

Children at Service.—There has been a steady inquiry from employers for boys and girls suitable for service, the former being chiefly required for farms, and the latter as house servants. On the 31st December, 1903, 767 "neglected children" and sixty-four former inmates of Reformatories were not only maintaining themselves, but in nearly every instance possessed a Savings Bank account as well.

The Ladies' Committees keep a judicious watch over the service homes, and the departmental visiting officers make periodical inspections and reports.

Arrangements have been made for sending a number of intelligent and well-behaved lads to the Rutherglen Viticultural College on service conditions. They will get a good practical insight into the operations of the orchard and vineyard, and the ordinary round of farm work. Being resident at the College, their religious and moral training will be looked after, as well as their education. If the approved scheme is faithfully adhered to capable boys will have a splendid opportunity of acquiring an agricultural education under pleasant and elevating surroundings, and should readily obtain remunerative employment on the completion of their training.

Mortality.—The general health of the children in foster-homes, in institutions, and at service, has been very good, and among the whole of the children who were under the control of the Department during the year, about 6,225, only fifty-three deaths occurred, viz., twenty-six male and twenty-five female “neglected children” and two Reformatory School girls. This is a very satisfactory record, in view of the number of infants and young children committed, many of them in a pitiable condition of bodily health.

Receiving Depôt, Royal Park.—As this establishment has to serve to some extent as a Probationary School as well as a Receiving Depôt, many improvements are necessary to bring it up to the proper standard. Money has been placed in the Loan Act, passed last December, for the erection of brick dormitory accommodation for boys—an urgent requirement. Some expenditure should also be allowed for the girls’ Reformatory, which is structurally defective, and very badly placed, being at the corner and within a few yards of two public streets.

The farm and garden have given good results, and butter has been made from surplus milk.

Reformatory Schools.—During the year “Brookside” Reformatory for Protestant girls was closed, under the provisions of the Act, in consequence of the accommodation and management being unsatisfactory. The inmates were transferred to “Mintaro,” a large estate near Lancefield Junction recently purchased by the Methodist Church, where satisfactory arrangements have been made, at considerable expense, for the housing and training of the girls.

The Superintendents and Matrons of the other Reformatories have had considerable experience in dealing with young offenders, and it is satisfactory to be able to report that they all appear to be imbued with a love for their work, and a full sense of responsibility. The arrangements, however, which had been in existence since the inauguration of the system of private reformatories were capable of improvement; e.g., in some instances, the staff was quite inadequate for proper supervision and training—individual treatment was out of the question; dormitory accommodation precluded any idea of classification, and had other objectionable features. In some cases my suggestions have been given effect to already, and in the others, plans are being prepared for new buildings. It would probably be conducive to good management to have a classification for Reformatories, say, three grades, with a recognised standard for excellence, and an annual conference of Superintendents and Matrons.

Feeble-minded Children.—During the year a scheme for the separate care and training of defective children who might come under the control of the Department was approved by the Minister, and Commissioner McKie, of the Salvation Army, accepted the responsibility of giving effect to the proposals. However, no suitable buildings are at present available for residential schools, and the matter has, perforce, to remain in abeyance, it is hoped only for a short time.

Collections for Maintenance.—The sum of £1,226 11s. 3d. was received from relatives of children towards their support, showing a decrease of £565 7s. as compared with last year. The great falling off in new committals would probably account for the reduced collection.

Expenditure.—The total cost of the Department, after taking credit for collections that were paid into the Treasury, was £66,111 0s. 4d. As the expenditure for the previous year was £70,219 5s. 3d., the decrease for the year amounts to the substantial sum of £4,108 4s. 11d.

Societies Dealing with Neglected Children under Part 8 of Act 1121.—The accompanying table will show the number of children under the care of these societies.

New Legislation, Children’s Court.—I would strongly advise the establishment of “Children’s Courts,” in which juvenile offenders would be dealt with apart from adults.

Age of Committal, &c.—I have already recommended some extension of the age of committal, and detention under care of the Department, of certain classes of boys and girls.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. DAVIS,

Secretary.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.

STATEMENT OF ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES FOR THE YEAR 1903.

	Neglected.			Reformatory.			Grand Total.
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	
ADMISSIONS.							
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1902 ...	2,855	2,547	5,402	171	172	343	5,745
New committals ...	221	176	397	44	2	46	443
Transfers from Gaol ...	...	...	...	36	1	37	37
" " Neglected Children's Department ...	...	...	...	13	19	32	32
" " Reformatory Department ...	24	...	24	...	...	...	24
Returned absconders ...	6	...	6	10	2	12	18
Total ...	3,106	2,723	5,829	274	196	470	6,299
DISCHARGES.							
By Order of the Governor in Council ...	223	221	444	7	2	9	453
" Death ...	26	25	51	...	2	2	53
" Effluxion of time ...	115	107	222	47	35	82	304
" Transfer to Neglected Children's Department ...	...	...	...	24	...	24	24
" Transfer to Reformatory ...	13	19	32	...	...	...	32
" " Lunatic Asylum ...	2	2	4	...	...	...	4
" " Blind " ...	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
Absconders during 1903 not returned ...	29	1	30	31	6	37	67
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1903 ...	2,697	2,348	5,045	165	151	316	5,361
Total ...	3,106	2,723	5,829	274	196	470	6,299
LOCATION.							
* { Maintained in foster-homes ...	1,783	1,580	3,363	...	...	...	3,363
" " institutions ...	40	94	134	94	98	192	326
In service homes ...	448	319	767	29	35	64	831
" Probation homes with relatives, &c., without cost to the State ...	423	348	771	38	16	54	825
" Hospital ...	2	7	9	1	2	3	12
" Gaol ...	1	...	1	3	...	3	4
Total ...	2,697	2,348	5,045	165	151	316	5,361

* In addition to these, 43 (8 males, 35 females), who are free from legal control are still being maintained by the State, as they are incapacitated.

AGES, RELIGIONS, AND BIRTHPLACES OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1903.

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 ...	70	27	21	26	29	17	26	18	28	30	28	23	16	14	15	3	6	397
Reformatory ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5	18	11	10	38	83
Total ...	70	27	21	26	29	17	26	18	28	30	28	24	21	32	26	13	44	480

RELIGIONS AND BIRTHPLACES.

	Number Committed.	Religions.		Birthplaces.		
		Protestant.	Roman Catholic.	Australasia.	England.	Unknown.
Neglected ...	397	271	126	391	1	5
Reformatory ...	83	65	18	83	...	...
Totals ...	480	336	144	474	1	5

PARENTAGE OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE
DEPARTMENT IN 1903.

Particulars furnished with Order of Committal.	Neglected.	Reformatory.	Total
Parents dead	16	4	20
" unknown	6	1	7
" deserted	11	...	11
" drunkards	5	3	8
" in gaol	5	...	5
" poor, of good character	25	30	55
Father dead; Mother poor, of good character	98	10	108
" " in lunatic asylum	2	...	2
" " in hospital	1	...	1
" " deserted	4	3	7
" " in gaol	2	...	2
" " a drunkard	2	1	3
" " of doubtful character	1	...	1
Father deserted; Mother poor, of good character	58	3	61
" " dead	17	5	22
" " in hospital	8	...	8
" " in gaol	5	...	5
" " a drunkard	2	2	4
" " imbecile	4	...	4
Father poor; Mother in gaol	1	...	1
" " dead	17	10	27
" " in lunatic asylum	2	...	2
" " deserted	1	1	2
" " a drunkard ... ..	...	2	2
" " of bad character	1	...	1
Father in gaol; Mother poor, of good character	14	2	16
" " dead	8	...	8
" " a drunkard	3	...	3
Father unknown; Mother poor, of good character	5	...	5
" " in lunatic asylum	4	...	4
" " dead	9	1	10
" " in hospital	1	...	1
" " imbecile	2	...	2
" " in gaol	2	...	2
" " deserted	8	...	8
" " a drunkard	2	...	2
" " immoral	3	...	3
Father a drunkard; Mother poor, of good character	2	4	6
" " dead	2	...	2
" " deserted	5	...	5
" " in gaol	5	1	6
Father in hospital; Mother poor, of good character	4	...	4
Father a cripple; Mother poor, of good character	2	...	2
Father in lunatic asylum; Mother poor, of good character	14	...	14
Father an invalid; Mother poor, of good character	8	...	8
	397	83	480

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

Neglected Children.	Average strength	Items of Expenditure.											
		Provi- sions.	Clothing and Bedding.	Fuel, Light, and Water.	Stores, Stock, &c.	Medical Attend- ance, &c.	Incidi- dents, &c.	Transport and Travelling Expenses.	Te'e- phone Service.	Salaries.	Main- tenance.	Postage and Tele- grams.	Total.
		£ s. d.	£ 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' Receiving Depôts	79	518 8 1	36 8 7	321 7 0	192 8 0	41 6 9	279 18 5	..	..	1,420 17 11	..	..	2,810 14 9
Abbotsford Industrial Schools ..	65	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	930 2 11	..	930 2 11
Training Home for Girls ..	25	..	..	..	..	12 11 2	..	..	..	..	350 1 10	..	372 13 0
Service Children ..	..	..	407 12 10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,257 9 5
Boarded-out Children ..	3,547	..	633 13 7	..	..	2,534 14 1	..	738 2 1	..	..	4,498 1 10	..	51,404 11 7
Telephone Service ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	63 9 5	..	..	..	63 9 5
Total ..	3,716	518 8 1	1,077 15 0	321 7 0	192 8 0	2,588 12 0	279 18 5	1,587 18 8	63 9 5	1,420 17 11	48,788 6 7	..	56,839 1 1
Reformatory Children.													
Oakleigh Reforma- tory School ..	23.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	565 10 9	..	565 10 9
Brookside ..	20.1	..	..	..	..	14 9 11	..	..	..	..	387 5 7	..	401 15 6
St. Ann's ..	3	..	..	..	..	3 2 2	..	..	..	..	80 19 0	..	84 1 2
Riddell's Creek ..	67	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,748 14 6	..	1,748 14 6
Mintaro ..	14.7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	100 12 3	..	100 12 3
Excelsior Home ..	17	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	435 8 0	..	435 8 0
Vandin Yallock ..	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	467 7 1	..	467 7 1
Kingsbury ..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	140 4 4	..	140 4 4
Straight View Farn ..	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	153 15 6	..	153 15 6
Mount Paradise ..	9.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	257 16 0	..	257 16 0
Bayswater ..	44	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,144 9 9	..	1,144 9 9
Service Children ..	..	..	257 17 7	..	..	..	..	509 15 0	..	..	..	..	767 12 7
Telephone Service ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	119 2 0	..	..	..	119 2 0
Total ..	217	..	257 17 7	..	..	17 12 1	..	509 15 0	119 2 0	..	5,476 2 9	..	6,380 9 5
Head Office ..	..	..	..	37 18 6	192 18 5	..	143 16 7	..	..	3,474 10 4	..	322 11 3	4,171 15 1
Total Neglected and Reformatory ..	3,943	518 8 1	1,335 12 7	359 5 0	385 6 5	2,605 4 1	423 15 0	2,097 13 8	182 11 5	4,895 8 3	54,264 9 4	322 11 3	67,391 5 7
<i>Deduct—</i>													
Amount received for Maintenance of Children ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,280 5 3
All other receipt ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	53 14 0
Net cost ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	66,111 0 4

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

**WORK OF SOCIETIES AND PERSONS REGISTERED UNDER PART VIII. OF
THE NEGLECTED CHILDREN'S ACT.**

Name of Society or Person.	Number under Supervision on 31.12.02.	Admissions during 1903.			Number under Supervision on 31.12.03.
		Court Commitals.	Transfer of Guardian- ship.	Voluntary Admissions.	
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	722	1	12	105	788
Wesleyan Neglected Children's Aid Society	216	6	5	4	226
Presbyterian Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society ..	327	16	20	12	342
Church of England Neglected Children's Aid Society ..	59	3	6	22	37
Clifden House, Wedderburn ..	88	..	..	5	92
Gordon Institute, Melbourne ..	180	15	20	10	150
Try Society, Surrey-road, Hawksburn ..	94	..	2	57	62
Burwood Boys' Home ..	50	2	19	..	58
Geelong Try Boys' Brigade ..	185	..	..	47	137
Latrobe-street Ragged School Mission ..	67	..	..	70	86
St. Joseph's Home, Surrey Hills ..	221	..	..	77	116
Rescue Home, Ballarat (Mrs. Ida Berry)	7	4	..	..	11
Fitzroy Streets Mission ..	23	..	1	1	25
Mrs. Goldspink, 285 Rathdown-st., Carlton	54	18	25	30	113
Rev. G. H. Cole, Central Methodist Mission	8	..	9	..	17
Total ..	2,301	65	119	440	2,260

REPORTS ON SCHOOLS.

RECEIVING DEPÔTS, ROYAL PARK, FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit my report on the operations of the depôts for the year 1903:—

The health of the children has been fairly good. In the early part of the year a few of the girls had a mild attack of German measles, but it was soon stamped out. We had five deaths of infants who were almost dying when received.

The discipline in both depôts has been well maintained, and there is a great improvement in the garden and farm work at the Boys' Depôt.

The Committee gave their annual treat to the children in October, which was much appreciated. Mr. Lord has kindly brought friends who gave magic lantern and graphophone entertainments.

I would tender my thanks to the teachers of the Ascot Vale Presbyterian Sunday School, and the relatives of the late Mr. Peterson for their gifts of toys on Christmas Eve.

JANE WILSON, Matron.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD, FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1903.

The number of girls remaining in the school on the 31st December, 1903, was:—

ADMISSIONS.				REMOVALS.			
Remaining in school, 1/1/03	...	66		Sent to service (including girls eligible on re-admission)	...	...	60
Admitted (including re-admissions)	...	50		Transfers	...	...	5
Transfers	...	9		Discharged	...	...	11
From boarding-out	...	1		Discharged on probation	...	...	4
				Remaining in school...	...	...	46
Total	...	126		Total	...	...	126

The only event of importance to note is the honour conferred upon the children by the visits paid to the school by Sir George Sydenham and Lady Clarke and party, and by several other distinguished persons, all of whom evinced much pleasure and satisfaction at what they saw regarding the children.

During the year the general health was good.

The children enjoyed several holidays, either fêtes at home, or excursions abroad. One of the latter was through the generosity of a kind friend, on whose invitation the children attended a matinee performance of the famous "Marzella Birds." Admission to the Zoological Gardens was another treat granted by the Hon. J. Murray, M.L.A.

The annual school examination was held on 26th October. Mr. Eddy reported as follows:— "The buildings, furniture, and apparatus are in creditable order. The organization is classed 'very good.' The classification is allowed. The instruction is imparted conscientiously, industriously, and efficiently. I am very well pleased with the general character of the work, and also with the earnest spirit pervading the sister teachers in charge. In view of the fact that the pupils have been only recently promoted, I think the school has passed a very good examination. The progress is substantial. Singing and poetry are of a highly satisfactory nature. The discipline and tone are excellent. The school is faithfully and capably managed."

It may be here mentioned that the grown girls not attending school receive lessons in their own recreation hall every evening. On Sundays any of the girls who are at service, and wish to spend a few hours at the Convent, are allowed to do so. Tea is provided for them in a special apartment.

MARY V. KENNEDY, Provincial Superioress.

TRAINING HOME FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS, EAST MELBOURNE.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1903.

The general health of the inmates was good; we have had very little sickness. The conduct has been fairly good, but we were obliged to send some girls away.

The service girls are staying out well; they visit the Home occasionally, and always look happy and well; most of them are giving satisfaction. I had very few returned during the year.

Dr. A. Jeffreys Wood, Dr. Percy Webster, and Dr. Clara Stone are our Hon. Doctors, and Mr. Fred. Baker is the Hon. Dentist. They have all been most kind and attentive when necessary.

The Committee feel deeply grateful to the many kind friends who have sent donations and presents during the year.

LILIAN M. WATSON, Matron.

MINTARO REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS, MONNEGATTA.

I have the honour to submit to you a report of our work since September, 1903; but only having had charge of the girls such a short time, there is very little to report.

The three months we have had them have been spent in trying to break the girls of the many bad habits they have formed, and, we feel, with some success, as we have many evidences of decided improvement.

Our work at first was very difficult, but we entered the new year greatly encouraged.

There were thirteen girls in the Home at the end of the year 1903. Three girls have returned from their situations.

I have to report one case of influenza and two of tonsillitis since September; but by keeping the girls isolated, we prevented a further spread. Two girls are suffering from anæmia, and are under a course of treatment. One girl is under treatment for granulation of the eyelids.

Many thanks are due to the Rev. and Mrs. Bickford for the Christmas-tree and the pleasant evening given on Christmas Eve.

L. TRUDGEON, Matron.

ST. ANN'S REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS, HEYWOOD.

There have never been more than four girls in residence at once during the year. The health has been very good.

I cannot report much improvement in the daily work, as I have had no girls to deal with except those whose uselessness has been proved for years. The conduct has been fair.

The five girls at service whose terms expired in 1903 were all giving satisfaction, but left their places at once on becoming free from control.

I am frequently being asked to send girls to good farm places in the district.

The late Mr. Millar was most anxious when he was last at St. Ann's that I should keep it open till the girls then on the books were free. Otherwise I should have asked to have the girls transferred last year. They are all disposed of now except two; one's term expires next month; and the other later in the year.

MARY S. FARIS, Matron.

RIDDELL'S CREEK REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1903.

In reviewing the work of the year, there is much cause for thankfulness.

With a few exceptions, so far as the characters of the girls are concerned, their improvement has been very noticeable, the majority of them being desirous of starting life again on altogether different lines. Through neglect and the need of proper parental control, their life's battles were begun under great disadvantages; but it is very gratifying to hear the many expressions of appreciation of being able to learn how to get through housework, laundry-work, and needlework in a proper and thorough manner.

On the whole, the conduct of the girls has been good. With several girls who have been transferred to us we have experienced a good deal of anxiety. Undesirable associations and evil habits formed have to be overcome, and work which calls forth physical exercise and brain power helps considerably in the accomplishment of the same.

Our faith in the power of Almighty God to change vile and sinful hearts urges us to labour on amongst them, being confident that much good will be the outcome of faith and works.

The girls in situations are doing well, and giving satisfaction to their mistresses.

With deep regret we have to record the loss by death of one of our girls; but we believe, through faith in her Saviour and the pardoning love of God, she was prepared for the summons, and we cannot but rejoice in the fact that she is "safely garnered."

Many ladies interested in the work have visited the Home, and expressed themselves as delighted and surprised with all they saw. The visit made by the Biorama Co., with its limelight and cinematograph displays, was thoroughly enjoyed by the girls.

During the year, Mrs. Commissioner McKie, with other workers, has made several visits to the Home, and the meetings conducted have always been a means of help and inspiration.

Christmas-tide was indeed a feast of good things—the visit to the city, when each girl received a beautiful album from Mrs. McKie; the present of a beautiful Christmas-tree from Mr. Smith, of the nursery, which we loaded with useful and suitable presents for each girl—the verdict of many being: "We have never spent such a lovely Christmas in all our lives."

C. LANE, Matron.

SUB-REFORMATORY AT MURRUMBEENA FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit a report for the year ended December, 1903.

With two exceptions, the general health of the girls has been good. The first of these two developed consumption after a severe attack of pneumonia, and is at present an inmate of the Sanatorium at Amherst (later, of the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg). The second, after treatment in the Melbourne Hospital, has returned to the School almost quite well.

The girls, as they grow older, take a keen interest in work of all kinds, and improve accordingly.

The girls who are in situations are doing well, and most gratifying reports are to hand from their mistresses; while the applications for our girls are much too numerous for us to supply.

We are deeply indebted to Dr. Hugh Murray, of Caulfield, for kind and prompt attention when such is required; also to Mr. Howarth, of Collins-street, who is our honorary dentist.

Many kind friends have come forward to assist us to instruct and interest the girls, by arranging classes and giving prizes to the most successful, and also by arranging limelight entertainments and picnics.

The kind consideration shown us by the Secretary and Officers of the Department is at all times much appreciated.

Mrs. Commissioner McKie is a frequent and welcome visitor to the Home, and takes a close and personal interest in the girls. The Christmas treats provided by Mrs. McKie, and the useful gifts, were appreciated by the girls very much indeed.

It is with joy that we are able to perceive in numbers of the girls the dawn of a new life, when, slowly but surely, the old evil habits and false ideas of life and its responsibilities are rooted out, and replaced by principles of righteousness and truth.

Altogether, the work of the past year has been such as to make us enter 1904 with courage and confidence that, by the aid of the Divine Spirit, we shall accomplish more in the future.

ANNIE COWDEN, Matron.

OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC GIRLS.

For the year ending 31st December, 1903, I am pleased to be able to report very satisfactorily with regard to the general conduct and health of the girls of this Reformatory. The tone of the School has improved much, owing, no doubt, to the refining influence of religious and healthy surroundings, also the absence of new committals fresh from the scenes of vice. Three Industrial School wards were transferred to the Reformatory during 1903 for misconduct at service.

Owing to the small number of applications, only four girls were placed in country service homes, and three in town. In most cases, employers seemed pleased with their knowledge of the various branches of domestic work in kitchen and laundry. Several were placed with their parents on probation, and, with one exception, did well, though generally we find sending them to their old surroundings a grave mistake. Many whose terms have expired return voluntarily to the School, either to recruit themselves after a fatiguing situation, or to escape threatened dangers which they felt powerless of themselves to resist.

We take this opportunity of publicly thanking our many generous friends and the esteemed members of the Visiting Committee who provided for a very pleasant picnic at their annual visit; also our good Dr. Grant, whose kindness to each poor sufferer during the past eight years has been unbounded. Now that he has removed to a wider sphere, we wish him every success. His place has been ably filled by Dr. Dunkley, who takes special interest in all State wards.

MARY A. O'SHEA, Superioress.

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE.

Much pleased and gratified at finding the inmates of this institution looking so healthy and contented, also receiving such a good report of their conduct and progress at school. Of the good management we have abundant evidence. Every arrangement is excellent.

(Signed) N. FITZGERALD.
JOHN GAVAN DUFFY.
EDWARD O'DONNELL.
JAMES HAGAN.
MICHAEL MORNANA.
H. O'CALLAGHAN.

BAYSWATER REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT BOYS.

It affords me great pleasure to lay before you a few facts *re* the working of Bayswater Reformatory during the past year. One great cause of thankfulness is the fact that we have had great immunity from sickness. The health of the youths has been excellent, and no deaths or serious illnesses have occurred.

The usual work of the Institution has proceeded on satisfactory lines, the boys being taught good and useful all-round farm and dairy work, with its many and varied duties, thereby placing in their hands their future success in life. If perseverance and integrity characterise their future life and actions success is sure.

This year, like every other, has had its difficulties and discouragements: young, budding criminals are a difficult class, and need constant and unwearied attention and help, to overcome their imbibed tendencies through environment or hereditary taint. None but those who labour among such problems can fully understand the toughness of the effort.

But we have had every reason for encouragement, and in a great many cases the good result of the influence and training of the Institution has been plainly apparent in their altered lives and characters. It gives us great joy to get such good news from many of our ex-boys, which plainly shows they are doing well in honest labour, and I think the usual 75 per cent. of successful effort has been maintained. One difficulty sometimes presents itself very strongly, viz.:—An accumulation of very depraved boys, who need supervision year after year, growing until they form too great a percentage of the number of inmates. Every effort will be made to meet even that; but it is a question that may need special legislation. The boys have had their usual recreation of cricket, football, and various other amusements, all under the supervision of officers.

A very happy Christmas was spent with good, seasonable cheer. They have had the latest up-to-date biograph, and other attractions, while their spiritual needs have not been forgotten. Bible classes are regularly held and appreciated, also Divine service on Sundays. The leaders of the Salvation Army in Australasia, Commissioner and Mrs. McKie, have interested themselves in their welfare, also Brigadier Saunders and Social Staff have ever been ready to render help to encourage and strengthen those who have good desires. Mrs. Bray and myself have spent ten very happy and useful years among State wards, but now vacate our post for other important duties. Staff Captain and Mrs. Suttor, two experienced officers, take charge. Still, I am pleased that I shall have many opportunities of visiting the place, and giving the new Superintendent any help in my power. I have to thank all your officials, as well as yourself personally, for the unvaried kindness and respect shown me on all occasions.

JAMES H. BRAY, Superintendent.

EXCELSIOR REFORMATORY FOR BOYS, BRIGHTON.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1903.

The health of all my boys has been very satisfactory.

The conduct has been good, and the boys attending school have done well; one boy got his certificate. I am truly thankful to Mr. Le Page, of the Elsternwick State School, for the care and trouble he takes with my boys.

I am pleased to say the boys at service and on probation are doing well. It is very encouraging to see the marked change in many of the boys during the year. I have received a good number of letters from parents and employers, which proves the change a lasting one; and, seeing the number of gaol transfers we have had, I must say that I am pleased with the results of the year.

The camp was a great success this year; all the boys behaved well, and enjoyed the two weeks' holiday. Father Carroll, the Rev. Wilkins, and Mr. Johnson have given much attention to the religious welfare of the boys.

Dr. Praagst has not been called on so much this year, but he very kindly gave the boys a great treat at his house. He also gave a number of good prizes for singing, reciting, and music.

I am very thankful to the above-named gentleman, and to those in authority at the various gaols. I feel I should mention here the difficulty I have experienced through some of the boys, who were transferred from gaol to my care, under section 333, having served the full sentence, all but a day or two. One cannot expect to reform a boy who is punished a second time for the same offence.

I have been careful, when recommending the transfer of a lad to a reformatory, to keep in view *only* the reform of such boy, and I am sure it would be wise if such cases were removed without delay.

W. GROOM, Superintendent.

WANDIN YALLOCK REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT BOYS.

I have the honour to report that the work of the past year has been very similar to previous years.

The health of the boys has been very good, with the exception of one who was mentioned in last year's report, suffering from a decayed bone in one of his legs. He is again in the hospital.

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

I may state that we had a few visits from some of our time-expired young men, some of whom are in good positions, both in town and country, others still plodding away in service; and, as time goes on, we are receiving more evidence of the work that has been done in the past. For instance, some of the boys I placed in service some years ago are applying to me for boys such as they were themselves, and I may state that some of these boys referred to were by no means promising lads when we first took them in hand.

I may mention that during the year we have been visited by some of the employers in the country who have in the past employed a number of boys from this reformatory, who have grown into manhood with them. One employer tells me he is still in touch with five young men out of seven that I sent to him. The other two that failed with him, and were returned here, are doing equally as well as the other five to-day.

Our results with boys on probation are not so good. The parents who neglect or allow their children to go astray in the first place seldom succeed with them on probation. My experience of probation, with few exceptions, is just letting them loose for a while, then bringing them back much worse than they were before, or letting them go to gaol.

M. McASKELL, Superintendent.

KINGSBURY REFORMATORY AT NEWSTEAD FOR PROTESTANT BOYS.

In reporting upon the work during the past year I have nothing of importance to say.

The health of the boys has been excellent.

There was a good demand for service boys towards the spring, owing to the splendid season.

All those at service and on probation with friends are doing well. Several boys left us during the year, their terms having expired.

On 31st December there were 17 boys under control, viz.:—10 at service, 5 on probation, and 2 in the home. Two absconders from service and one from the home are still at large.

I desire to thank all kind friends who in any way helped me during the year.

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

STRAIGHT VIEW REFORMATORY AT HARCOURT FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC BOYS.

I have the honour to submit for your information my report for the year ending 31st December, 1903.

The health of the boys at service and in the home has been good, not one of them has had a day's sickness.

We have four boys in the home at present.

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

The boys are employed on all kinds of farm work, milking, morning and evening (we are now milking seventy cows), fruit picking, hay-making, shearing, &c.

I am pleased to state there are several of the boys whose terms have expired now living in the district, all earning good wages, and doing well.

The boys are driven to Castlemaine to Mass in their turn.

PETER McMAHON, Superintendent.

MOUNT PARADISE REFORMATORY AT PAKENHAM FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC BOYS.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ending 31st December, 1903.

The health of the boys has been good, not a single case of sickness occurring.

Some of the boys have given a lot of trouble this year in absconding.

Those placed at service and on probation are behaving well.

During Christmas we had a visit from four of our old boys, whose terms had expired. They appreciated their holiday with the other boys, and returned to their employment.

I wish to thank Mr. Mayger, dentist, of Pakenham, for his attention to the boys' teeth.

J. J. MILLANE, Superintendent.

ALBION HOME, GLENROY, FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS (Neglected).

The past year has been one of advance. The fresh air of the country has had a beneficial effect upon the girls—the comparatively small amount of sickness being most noticeable.

The large playroom, used mainly during cold and rainy weather, has been an important factor in keeping coughs and colds in check, and has also been sufficiently commodious to allow of games, &c., on the part of those of the children too young to spend their recreation hour in reading, &c.

In the beginning of the year one girl died from tuberculosis.

The school continues to make progress. At the close of the year forty girls were receiving instruction. The majority of these are above the prescribed age, but very backward in their education.

We find that the annual presentation of prizes in connection with the school work, and also for good conduct, proves an incentive to study and good behaviour.

Several of the girls have passed through the fifth standard, and have either been transferred to the sewing room—where both plain and fancy needlework are taught—or have gone to situations.

The girls in situations, without exception, are doing well, and our hearts have been cheered by letters and visits from girls—once wards of the State and inmates of the Home—who prove that the influence of the Home's training upon them has not passed away.

We cannot speak too highly of the interest taken by Mrs. Commr. McKie in each individual case. Her visits are a constant source of pleasure to the girls as well as contributing greatly to their spiritual welfare.

CLARA DENNISON, Matron.

BAYSWATER HOMES FOR PROTESTANT BOYS (Neglected).

I again feel honoured to be able to report that the good work of helping and blessing the children at the Small Boys' and Intermediate Homes has gone steadily forward with success.

The general health has been excellent, and the conduct has been very fair. In many cases the boys are very vicious for such little fellows, but then a lot can also be said in their favour, and remembering this, we have centred our efforts to combat the vicious tendencies, and cultivate the good and pure traits of their characters.

The officers over these children have not got weary in well doing, but have carried on their devoted labours unceasingly with good and encouraging success. The children have had plenty of exercise, recreation, and amusement provided for them during the year, and a deep interest has been taken in all that tends to the elevation of body and soul.

JAMES H. BRAY, Superintendent.

GEELONG BOARDING-OUT COMMITTEE.

At the close of another year I again have the pleasure of submitting a brief report of the work of my Committee during that period.

A love of the work seems to grow upon them and leads them to take a great interest in the welfare of the children under their care, and I am pleased to say they are, on the whole, doing well. The quarterly and half yearly reports sent in have been satisfactory.

The school attendance has, in several cases, been interfered with, on account of chicken pox having been very prevalent amongst the children.

We have a large number of really good homes available, and we should be very glad to see the foster mothers supplied, especially those who have proved themselves highly satisfactory foster mothers, both Protestants and Roman Catholics.

A few cases have been treated at the Hospital, the children having been treated with the greatest kindness, and the medical officers are prompt in their attention to the different cases brought under their notice.

Only one death has occurred, and that was a particularly sad one, that of a dear little girl, six years of age, who died from burns accidentally received at her foster home. She was taken to the Hospital, but died shortly after admission.

Twelve girls and eleven boys have been sent to service during the year. Three foster mothers have been allowed to make their own arrangements with their respective foster children.

An unusually large number have been returned to Melbourne from different causes, 19 altogether some for medical attention, some for bad conduct, and others because suitable situations could not be found for them in this district. Six have been discharged to their friends. One foster mother removed to Brunswick, taking her boarded-out child with her. Eleven have been discharged, and were all greatly delighted at receiving their savings. We earnestly hope they will make a good use of them.

Again my Committee desires to thank you, and all the officers of the Department, for kind and prompt attention to their various needs, and once more, I have the great pleasure of thanking my Committee for their long continued kindness, and for their willingness at all times, to do all in their power to assist me.

FRANCES DAVISON, Correspondent.