

1906.

VICTORIA.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND
REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

R E P O R T

OF THE

ACTING-SECRETARY AND INSPECTOR.

FOR THE YEAR

1905.

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

By Authority:

J. KEMP, ACTING GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

REPORT.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

Melbourne, 25th June, 1906.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit for your consideration the Annual Report of this Department, together with the usual Returns, Statement of Expenditure, &c., for the year ended 31st December, 1905, in accordance with the requirements of section 10 of the *Neglected Children's Act* 1890, and section 320 of Part 2 of the *Crimes Act* 1890.

I regret to have to state that Mr. William Davis, Secretary and Inspector to the Department, was compelled to retire at the end of December, owing to ill-health, having prior to this date been on sick leave for four months. As I was not appointed to perform the duties of Acting Secretary and Inspector until the 1st September, 1905, I am not in a position to do more than give details of the Expenditure and Receipts, &c., of the Department with but little comment.

The number and distribution of the wards for the year, as compared with those of 1904, are set forth in Table I. on page 6.

The number of wards who were a cost to the State at the end of the year, as compared with 1904, is shown hereunder.

NEGLECTED.

	1904.	1905.
Maintained in foster homes	3,154	3,044
Maintained in institutions	132	135

REFORMATORY.

	1904.	1905.
Maintained in institutions	189	151

Of the 3,044 in foster homes, 819 children were left with their own mothers. The provision of the Education Act recently passed, which requires children to attend school until fourteen years of age instead of thirteen as formerly, is one which will largely increase the annual vote for boarded-out wards. Formerly, unless in exceptional cases, they could go to service at thirteen, thus relieving the Department of their maintenance from that age.

The boarding-out system, which has been in existence in this State for thirty-three years, continues to justify its adoption. Its object is to secure for each child, as nearly as possible, the conditions of a true home. Without doubt the children are very much happier, and have many more advantages than if they were brought up in institutions.

The valuable help given by the different ladies' committees is deeply appreciated by this Department.

Expenditure.—It will be noted with satisfaction that, in consequence of the reduction in the number of wards under care, there is a decrease in the expenditure of the Department for the year as compared with 1904, the figures being £60,264 8s. 8d. and £61,687 9s. respectively.

Children placed with Relatives and others on Probation.—There are now 761 neglected children and 29 reformatory wards on probation with relatives or other suitable persons without cost to the Department.

Transfers from Gaol.—There were eleven transfers (ten males and one female) from gaols to reformatories during the year. Mr. Groom, of the Excelsior Home, Brighton, and Major Suttor, Superintendent Bayswater Reformatory, who undertake the duty of visiting the boys in gaol and reporting upon their suitability for transfer, are deserving of praise for the valuable service they have rendered in promoting the welfare of these lads.

Mortality.—There were 45 deaths during the year, 44 being neglected children and one reformatory ward. Twenty-six of the deceased children were under twelve months old, many of them being in a very delicate state of health, some even in a dying condition, when received by the Department.

Epileptics.—I am gratified to know that a large amount of money has been contributed by the general public during the year to "The Lady Talbot Fund," instituted for the purpose of establishing an epileptic colony, and trust that arrangements will shortly be completed to commence the necessary buildings. Some of our wards require such a home, and it is greatly to the detriment of the other children that these sufferers have to be cared for where other wards of the State in institutions are being brought up, as in some cases the frequent recurrence of fits is most distressing and alarming to those around them, and apt to have a very bad effect on nervous or excitable children.

Children at Service.—The number of children at service on 31st December, 1905, totalled 854 Neglected, and 54 Reformatory wards.

During the year the sum of £2,893 8s. was received from employers as a proportion of earnings of the children, to be placed in the Savings Bank. The balance in the Savings Bank to the credit of the wages account on 31st December, 1905, was £8,146 1s. 4d.

During the past year there has been the usual keen demand on the part of employers for "Service" children. Girls are in special request for domestic service in suburban homes, and comfortable situations at fair wages, sometimes even as high as 7s. to 10s. per week, are available. It must be remembered that service girls are between 14 and 20 years of age.

Farm homes in country districts are the destination of most of the lads, and every reasonable precaution is taken to insure that only suitable employers are chosen. That the great majority of these homes are good, and the boys receive on the whole considerate treatment and useful training, the reports of the Departmental Visiting Officers and Local Committees clearly prove. A proportion of wages is saved for the future advantage of the children, and it is quite a common thing for a boy or girl to receive as much as £20 at the expiration of the term of control. One lad indeed, on reaching his 18th year in September last, had the sum of £42 8s. 5d. to his credit in the Savings Bank. The whole of this money had been saved for him by his employer through this office.

While regretting the limited demand for our boys from shopkeepers and business men in the country towns and cities, and deploring the want of an Industrial Training School wherein a certain class of boys might get some training in the handicrafts, I feel that service in farm and pastoral homes is conducive to the good health and moral welfare of the lads. A healthy boy at 18, strong and industrious, of good moral character, with several avenues of country employment open to him, has no mean equipment to enable him to bear his part bravely and successfully in the battle of life.

Albion Home, Glenroy.—Salvation Army Training Home for Girls.—The house is pleasantly situated in extensive grounds and the building is admirably arranged for the purpose for which it is used. The girls who are placed here for training are those who, from various causes, are unsuitable for foster or service homes. Several girls trained in this home have been placed in situations during the year, and, with one exception, are giving satisfaction.

Industrial School, Abbotsford, for Roman Catholic Girls.—Girls that are placed in this Institution are those that require *special* supervision and training. Cookery, millinery, and dressmaking classes have been commenced, and will, I am sure, prove advantageous to the girls.

The Rev. Mother has readily taken cases that are not deemed suitable for treatment in foster homes.

The conduct of the girls generally has been satisfactory.

Rutherglen Viticultural College.—I regard this college as an admirable establishment for the training and development of wards of the State. The boys selected for this Institution are those whose State School education at the age of 14 is well advanced. The pupils must be of good character, and give promise of intelligence.

The College advantages and discipline are excellent.

The boys are being trained to plant out the phylloxera-resistant grafts, and instructed in all other duties appertaining to a vineyard. A leading vigneron has promised to engage three or four of these boys who, on completion of their course of training, can be recommended by the Principal of the College as capable hands. He is willing to give 4s. per day to start.

A milking shed has been erected, wherein 20 cows can be bailed up, at once. Calves, fowls, and turkeys are stocked, and the boys gain much experience in general farm work.

Societies dealing with Neglected Children under Part VIII. of Act 1121.—I would specially draw attention to the large number of children who have been maintained by the various societies under this Part of the Act, many of whom would otherwise, in all probability, have been a cost to the State. Many inspections have been advantageously made by the additional visiting officers recently appointed to assist in visiting the various homes under Part VIII.

I am exceedingly well pleased with the humane manner in which these institutions are conducted. Any shortcomings brought under notice have been speedily rectified. Much loving care appears to be bestowed on the children.

With regard to the service homes arranged for by these societies, those which have been inspected by Government visiting officers are quite up to the average of those secured for wards under the direct control of this Department.

Wandin Yallock Reformatory School.—This school, of which Mr. McAskill was Superintendent, was closed early in July, and the boys were transferred to the Heathfield Home Reformatory at Apollo Bay, established by the Church of England authorities, under the superintendence of the Rev. A. Maxwell. The land secured for the purpose was originally owned by Colonel Heath, and appears to be well adapted for training boys in dairying and agricultural work.

During the first few months the boys were temporarily cared for in the old coffee palace; but they have recently been removed to new buildings, which have been erected at great cost, and with due regard to the convenience and comfort of the lads.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JNO. L. DAVIES,

Acting Secretary and Inspector.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary,
Melbourne.

TABLE I.—STATEMENT OF ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES FOR 1905.

	Neglected.			Reformatory.			Grand Total.
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	
ADMISSIONS.							
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1904 ...	2,623	2,266	4,889	144	143	287	5,176
New committals ...	244	249	493	28	7	35	528
Transfers from Gaol ...	...	...	...	10	1	11	11
" " Neglected Children's Department ...	...	...	...	4	17	21	21
" " Reformatory Department ...	10	1	11	...	...	...	11
Returned absconders ...	6	2	8	9	1	10	18
Total ...	2,883	2,518	5,401	195	169	364	5,765
DISCHARGES.							
By Order of the Governor in Council ...	111	129	240	7	1	8	248
" Death ...	27	17	44	...	1	1	45
" Effluxion of time ...	131	104	235	41	38	79	314
" Transfer to Neglected Children's Department ...	...	...	...	10	1	11	11
" " Reformatory Department ...	4	17	21	...	...	...	21
" " Lunatic Asylum ...	...	5	5	1	...	1	6
Absconders during 1905 not returned ...	40	3	43	29	...	29	72
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1905 ...	2,570	2,243	4,813	107	128	235	5,048
Total ...	2,883	2,518	5,401	195	169	364	5,765
LOCATION.							
{ Maintained in foster-homes ...	1,607	1,437	3,044	...	...	...	3,044
{ " institutions ...	32	103	135	61	90	151	286
In service homes ...	494	360	854	21	33	54	908
" Probation homes with relatives and others, without cost to the State ...	429	332	761	24	5	29	790
" Hospitals ...	4	9	13	1	...	1	14
" Gaol ...	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
On a visit to friends ...	3	2	5	...	...	...	5
Total ...	2,570	2,243	4,813	107	128	235	5,048

* In addition to these, 41 (8 males, 33 females), who are free from legal control are still being maintained by the State, as they are incapacitated.

TABLE II.—DEATHS DURING 1905.

AGES OF DECEASED.

	Under 1 year.	1 to 2	2 to 3	4 to 5	5 to 6	6 to 7	8 to 9	9 to 10	10 to 11	11 to 12	12 to 13	13 to 14	14 to 15	15 to 16	17 to 18	Total.
Neglected ..	26	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	..	3	44
Reformatory ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Total ..	26	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	45

LENGTH OF TIME UNDER CARE OF DEPARTMENT AT TIME OF DEATH.

	1 day.	7 days.	8 days.	12 days.	2 weeks.	3 weeks.	4 weeks.	5 weeks.	6 weeks.	7 weeks.	2 months.	3 months.	4 months.	5 months.	6 months.	12 months.	18 months.	21 months.	2 years.	4 years.	5 years.	7 years.	9 years.	10 years.	11 years.	14 years.	Total.
Neglected ..	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	4	1	5	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	44
Reformatory ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Total ..	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	4	1	5	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	45

CAUSES AND LOCATION.

Cause of Death.	Location.														Total.
	Foster homes.	Do. with mother.	Probation homes with relatives.	Receiving Depot.	Foundling Hospital, Broadmeadows.	Haven Maternity Home, N. Fitzroy.	Albion Home, Glenroy.	Hospitals.							
								Melbourne.	Alfred.	Geelong.	Clunes.	Children's.	Williamstown.	Ballarat.	
Gastritis		1													1
Athropsia	2														2
Atrophy and exhaustion				2											2
Diarrhoea				2											2
Septic meningitis										1					1
Meningitis				1											1
Tubercular meningitis												1			1
Congenital debility	1														1
Diphtheria		1	2												3
Marasmus	3														3
Tuberculosis				2			1	1	1						5
Syphilis	1														1
Congenital syphilis	1				1										2
Intussusception of bowels			1												1
Gastro enteritis						1									1
Enteritis						2									2
Enterocolitis				1											1
Peritonitis										1					1
Suffocation	1														1
Fistula												1			1
Rupture of auricle of heart	1														1
Appendicitis													1		1
Hydrocephalus	1			1											2
Pneumonia				1											1
Paralysis		1													1
Whooping-cough				1											1
Tumor on brain												1			1
Influenza					1										1
Heat exhaustion					1										1
Injury to spine											1				1
Total	11	3	3	11	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	45

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

Name of Society or Person.	Children under Supervision on 31.12.04.	Admissions during 1905.			Children under Supervision on 31.12.05.
		Court Committals.	Transfer of Guardianship.	Voluntary Admissions.	
Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society	348	10	19	7	343
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	823	1	15	102	855
Church of England Children's Aid Society	77	4	3	16	77
Methodist Homes for Children	264	23	24	13	311
Clifden Home, Wedderburn	100	2	...	1	103
Gordon Institute, Melbourne	160	20	27	5	158
Mr. W. M. Forster (Try Society), Hawksburn	68	3	...	34	41
Burwood Boys' Home	41	1	19	...	43
Geelong Try Boys' Brigade	186	...	...	32	95
Latrobe-street Ragged School Mission	106	...	...	56	106
Mrs. Ida Berry (Rescue Home, Ballarat)	10	8	1	...	18
Methodist Boys' Training Farm, Burwood East	30	1	12	10	50
Mrs. Goldspink, 285 Rathdown-street, Carlton	165	12	...	39	201
Total	2,378	85	120	315	2,401

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

Neglected Children.	Average strength	Items of Expenditure.												
		Provisions.	Clothing and Bedding.	Fuel, Light, and Water.	Stores, Stock, &c.	Medical Attendance, &c.	Incidentals, &c.	Transport and Travelling Expenses.	Telephone service	Salaries.	Postage and Telegrams.	Maintenance.	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.	£ s. d.
Boys' and Girls' Receiving Depôts	93	462 18 5	107 1 8	296 16 9	133 17 9	40 19 5	194 4 6	..	..	1,414 11 3	..	..	2,650 9 9
Abbotsford Industrial School	49	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	759 15 11	759 15 11
Training Home for Girls	31	..	..	..	..	15 12 5	..	..	..	..	..	426 5 4	441 17 9
Service Children	..	..	471 0 1	..	..	..	..	1,127 4 1*	..	..	..	..	1,598 4 2
Boarded-out Children	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Telephone Service	3,078	..	815 11 10	..	..	2,228 7 6	..	891 4 5	..	83 11 8	..	..	42,734 7 10
Total ..	3,251	462 18 5	1,393 13 7	296 16 9	133 17 9	2,284 19 4	194 4 6	2,018 8 6	83 11 8	1,414 11 3	..	..	47,920 7 1
Reformatory Children.														
Oakleigh (Girls)	20	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	504 10 8	504 10 8
St. Ann's ()	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	26 2 6	26 2 6
Riddell's Creek (Girls)	63	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,634 5 2	1,634 5 2
Mintaro (Girls)	17	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	432 6 9	432 6 9
Excelsior Home, Brighton (Boys)	13	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	332 14 5	332 14 5
Wandin Yallock (Boys)	15†	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	192 13 2	192 13 2
Heathfield Home, Apollo Bay (Boys)	9†	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	115 3 4	115 3 4
Kingsbury (Boys)	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	104 11 5	104 11 5
Straight View Farm (Boys)	1.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	35 15 9	35 15 9
Mount Paradise (Boys)	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	152 16 9	152 16 9
Bayswater (Boys)	36.5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	952 5 6	952 5 6
Service Children	..	..	227 17 9	..	..	..	..	326 6 6	..	..	..	..	554 4 3
Telephone Service	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	126 7 0	..	..	..	126 7 0
Total ..	174	..	227 17 9	..	..	..	..	326 6 6	126 7 0	..	..	..	4,483 5 5
Head Office	..	..	..	26 6 7	43 18 2	..	118 10 3	..	..	3,953 6 2	2,247 4 8	..	4,382 5 10
Grand Total ..	..	462 18 5	1,621 11 4	323 3 4	177 15 11	2,284 19 4	312 14 4	2,344 15 0	209 18 8	5,367 17 3	5,240 4 8	48,403 12 6	61,749 11 4
Deduct— Amount received for Maintenance of Children, £1,391 9 10 All other receipts, £93 12 10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,485 2 8
Net cost ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	60,264 8 8

* £720 14s. 1d. of this expenditure was incurred under Part VIII. of the Neglected Children's Act.
† For six months only.

TABLE VI.—AGES, RELIGIONS, AND BIRTHPLACES OF CHILDREN COMMITTED TO THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN 1905.

	AGES.																	Total.
	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.	
Neglected ...	118	27	42	26	37	29	34	26	30	23	24	14	20	10	16	8	9	493
Reformatory	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	4	5	10	9	16	46
Total ..	118	27	42	26	37	29	34	26	30	23	25	15	24	15	26	17	25	539

RELIGIONS AND BIRTHPLACES.

	Number Committed.	Religions.		Birthplaces.		
		Protestant.	Roman Catholic.	Australia, including New Zealand.	England.	Unknown.
Neglected ...	493	308	185	491	..	2
Reformatory ...	46	26	20	45	1	..
Total ..	539	334	205	536	1	2

REPORTS OF SCHOOLS.

RECEIVING DEPÔTS, ROYAL PARK.

There was an outbreak of measles during the year of an intermittent character, causing the attack to spread over four to five months. One infant died.

There were five deaths due to congenital diseases, the infants being affected from birth. One girl died of phthisis, and everything was done for her comfort. To safeguard the other inmates the girl had a tent to herself, and was given a liberal diet and many little luxuries. After her death the bedding was destroyed and the tent removed.

The Visiting Committee has given several entertainments during the year to the children, all of which were thoroughly enjoyed.

The Teachers of the Ascot Vale Presbyterian Sunday School also gave an entertainment which was much appreciated.

The Rev. D. Ross Hewton, of St. George's, Royal Park, and the Rev. David Gleeson, with the Sisters of Mercy, have been very attentive to the religious instruction of the children of their respective denominations.

E. S. GODDARD, Matron.

17th May, 1906.

REPORT OF VISITING COMMITTEE, ROYAL PARK RECEIVING DEPÔTS.

We have the honor to report that the Committee have met monthly and inspected the Institution, also the farm and dairy.

The improvement under the able management of the Acting Matron, Miss M. Johnson, has been very marked.

The Committee is of opinion that the farm and dairy could be made more productive by improving the quality of the cows and adopting a more up-to-date system.

We find that the over-crowding of inmates is at times excessive, and exceeds the accommodation. For the health of the children this should be avoided as much as possible.

The necessity of providing isolated accommodation for infectious cases in connexion with the nursery is urgent. The Committee desire to again call attention to their previous recommendation:—

(a) A drying room for the laundry.

(b) The appointment of a teacher to give instruction to the inmates of school age.

During the year the Committee have provided several entertainments, which have been much appreciated by the inmates and brought sunshine to their lives. The Committee tender their thanks to all who have kindly assisted them, and to the attendants for their sympathy and co-operation.

The Committee take a deep interest in the welfare of the inmates, who, from various causes, are denied the advantages of home life.

They are glad to co-operate in the effort of the State to give to these young people possibilities that will make them worthy members of the State.

(Sgd.) J. C. LANGLEY, Chairman.
R. P. LORD, Correspondent.

ALBION HOME, GLENROY, FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS.

During the year 1905, which has just closed, I have the honour to submit my report.

The progress made throughout the year by the girls with their schooling, house work, and general improvement has been very cheering.

Quite a number of girls have been placed in service during the year, and with the exception of one, all are doing well and giving every satisfaction. The Mistresses write from time to time, saying how pleased they are with their work and their conduct.

One death occurred at the commencement of the year, a little girl suffering with tuberculosis. With that exception the general health of the girls has been good.

Healthful games, such as tennis, cricket, quoits, and several others, also club swinging and physical drills, occupy the girls' spare time.

Several friends have visited the home during the year and brought much cheer and blessing to the girls.

We have to thank Commissioner and Mrs. McKie for the interest they have ever taken in the welfare of the girls, also in helping to make Christmas time one of the happiest the girls have ever spent.

And so we go forward, trusting in God, who helps us fight our battles, and do our very best for those committed to our care.

CLARA DENNISON, Matron.

BAYSWATER HOME FOR PROTESTANT BOYS.

I have the honour to submit my report for the two homes for boarded-out boys at Bayswater for the year ending 31st December, 1905.

An improvement has been made in the furniture and fittings of the school-room by the addition of first-class desks and a full supply of maps and other requisites. Inspector Gamble, of the Education Department, conducted the annual inspection of the school. A satisfactory number of boys obtained passes in the different subjects in their respective classes. The inspector spoke very highly of the order, attention, and discipline maintained throughout.

He made recommendations for certain structural alterations to the school. These recommendations have been carried into effect.

The passing of the 1905 new Education Act, which raises the compulsory attendance at school age from thirteen to fourteen, will work out very much to the advantage of the class of boys who are sent to Bayswater.

Their early education has, in practically every case, been grossly neglected; this new act will insure their getting a fair education.

Thirty-one boys have been sent out to situations or on probation. Out of this number all are doing well, with four exceptions.

W. A. SUTTOR, Superintendent.

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, ABBOTSFORD, FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC GIRLS.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ended 31st December, 1905. The number of girls remaining in school on 31st December, 1904, was 44.

ADMISSIONS.			REMOVALS.		
Remaining in school 1.1.05	...	44	Sent to service (including girls eligible on re-admission)	...	51
Admitted (including re-admissions)	...	35	Discharged on probation	...	1
Transferred from Depot	...	12	Transferred to Reformatory	...	1
			Transferred to Key Asylum	...	2
			Remaining on 31.12.05	...	36
					91
Total	...	91	Total	...	91

During the year little of note has occurred to break the ordinary routine of school life.

The general health of the girls has been good, and conduct satisfactory on the whole.

I beg to offer most sincere thanks to all kind friends who have interested themselves on behalf of the little ones.

ANNIE DOWLING, Provincial Superioress.

TRAINING HOME FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS, EAST MELBOURNE.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1905.

The general health of the inmates has been remarkably good; we only had one case of measles, and no other sickness.

The conduct has been fairly good, but we were obliged to send some girls away for bad conduct.

The service girls are staying out well, and are in most cases giving satisfaction. I have had visits from many of the old girls, who seem to be doing well.

Dr. A. Jeffrey Wood, Dr. W. R. Boyd, Dr. Percy Webster, and Dr. Clara Stone are still our honorary doctors, and Mr. Baker is the honorary dentist. They are always most kind and attentive.

The Committee are grateful to the many friends who have helped us during the past year.

LILIAN M. WATSON, Matron.

MINTARO REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS, MONNEGATTA.

I have the honour to report that the year just closed has been one of steady progress and satisfactory work.

Mrs. Bickford continued until April of the year when my work in connexion with the Home commenced. Soon after my taking charge, important changes were made in the working staff, which have resulted in a marked improvement in the character and discipline of the Home.

Many improvements have been made in and around the Home that have facilitated the work, at the same time teaching the girls to be more orderly and systematic.

The health of the girls has been splendid. We have had no serious illness requiring the attendance of a doctor, and no epidemic of any kind has come to us.

The conduct of the girls and the discipline of the Home has greatly improved, and during the last few months no serious punishments have been necessary. A mark system has been introduced which we are finding works very well. The girls are credited with 100 marks each quarter having a certain cash value; from these deductions are made for acts of misconduct, graded according to their seriousness.

At the close of the quarter each girl's account is made up, and she can have purchased for her any article she desires with the amount standing to her credit. So far our experience proves that this system enables us to maintain a better discipline, and at the same time reduces the number of punishments. It also makes for obedience, respect, and order in the life and work of the girls.

During the year a class for elementary education has been conducted by one of the staff, for those girls whose early training has been seriously neglected. Plain and fancy sewing has been taught regularly, and the girls are being thoroughly trained in all branches of household work and dairying.

Christmas was a happy time for our girls. Through the kindness of friends we were enabled to remember them all, and make the season a joyful one. On Boxing Day they had a picnic in the grounds, and enjoyed various games very much.

The number of girls who have been under our charge this year has been 30; of these, three have completed their terms and are free. Five girls have been sent out to service, some have been returned for ill-health and other reasons, but most of them are doing very well, and we have been gladdened by the good reports we have had of them.

Six girls have been transferred to other institutions.

The moral and religious training of the girls has not been neglected, and we believe they are helped and influenced thereby.

EMILY ADAMSON, Matron.

RIDDELL'S CREEK REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1905.

During the year we have endeavoured to help and improve every girl entrusted to us by the State.

Our numbers have been low compared with previous years, and we have now many vacant beds. Six girls who were transferred from Mintaro Reformatory as unmanageable are amending their ways, and making steady progress towards a better life.

The girls on the whole appreciate the efforts put forth towards their betterment, and are profiting daily by the changed associations and surroundings. With a few exceptions their conduct has been fairly good.

There are great opportunities placed before each girl; some are being grasped, and will act as a lifebuoy to those who have gone beyond their depth, who, instead of being found amongst the lost and outcast, becoming a menace to society, will yet rise to be good and useful women, grateful that the State saw their danger, ere they were aware of it themselves, and stretched out a helping hand.

Each girl has special facilities of acquiring a good knowledge of house work, laundry work, cooking or dairying, as well as becoming experts with the needle in making dresses and numerous articles of wearing apparel, and a great many varieties of fancy work. In this they take great delight, the same proving to be a very useful factor in helping them to become the women they ought to be.

At various times during the year kind friends who are interested in the girls have arranged pleasant and happy times for them.

Very grateful were we to Mr. Walter Smith, of the Nursery, when he enlisted the sympathy of Mr. Murphy, who so generously brought his graphophone to the home, and gave an afternoon's real enjoyment to the girls, who listened with rapture to the numerous splendid records.

Commissioner and Mrs. McKie, Colonel Hoskin, Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Glover, and several others have visited the home on different occasions, and brought joy and blessing to all concerned.

Visitors also from England, New Zealand, and other States, who were interested and engaged in similar work, have also favoured us with a call, and were evidently delighted with the changes afforded to those who, making a false step in the start of life's battle, are now helped to regain a sure footing.

The usual Christmas treat was given, and great joy did Father Christmas bring to each girl. The limelight and cinematograph views added greatly to the pleasure. The enthusiasm and excitement were intense.

CLARA LANE, Matron.

SUB-REFORMATORY AT MURRUMBEENA FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1905.

The health of the girls has been excellent, and, with very few exceptions, those who have been placed at service have given satisfaction.

The usual Christmas treats have been given by Commissioner and Mrs. McKie, and were thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by the girls, and the same kind consideration was shown by the officers of the Neglected Children's Department, as in other years.

We are indebted to Dr. H. Murray, of Caulfield, and Mr. De Lacy, dentist, for their kind and prompt attention whenever called upon.

A marked improvement is noticeable in a number of the girls, and we enter year 1906 with gratitude to God for the blessings of the past, and faith for the future.

ANNIE COWDEN, Matron.

OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC GIRLS.

I have the honour to forward the annual report for the year 1905.

The number of girls in the school on 31st December, 1905, was fourteen; seven were new committals.

The tone of the school is good, and the health of the inmates, under the efficient and kindly care of Dr. Dunkley, has been, on the whole, excellent, there being no case of contagious disease whatever.

During the year one girl was discharged, one allowed home on probation, and ten were placed at service. Of the latter, two were returned as unsatisfactory. The regular correspondence kept up with those at service tends to make them feel they are still under control, and can therefore look on the school as a home, and the numerous visits received from girls whose terms have expired continue to afford satisfactory evidence of the beneficial effects of the system.

In conclusion, I beg to thank the many kind friends of the institution who by their generosity have contributed to the happiness of the girls; also the staff of the Department for their prompt attention and courtesy in all business matters.

MARY A. O'SHEA, Superioress.

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE.

Our annual visit to the Oakleigh Reformatory for girls was made to-day. We have been very favorably impressed with the healthful surroundings in which the girls live, and all other arrangements calculated to promote their comfort and health.

We are glad to repeat our former favorable comments on the health and good conduct of the inmates.

We may add that we are thoroughly satisfied that this institution is doing excellent work in training the girls to become good and useful members of society.

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

BAYSWATER REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT BOYS.

I have the honour to lay before you my report for the year just closed.

The year 1905 has been specially remarkable for the small number of boys committed under the Juvenile Offenders Act. There has been a gradual annual decline in the number of committals.

The numbers for 1904 were lower than for 1903, and now 1905 has reached low-water mark.

This institution had the honour of an official visit from the Honorable the Chief Secretary, and also had two visits from the Secretary of the Reformatory Schools Department, and one from the Acting-Secretary, Mr. J. L. Davies. This last inspection was a surprise visit, and I was pleased to be able to say to my second officer, when I heard the Inspector had arrived—"Well, if we had had six months' notice the place could not have been in better order."

Boys to the number of 28 have been discharged from the school during the year, and so far only two are known to have drifted back into their old manner of life.

W. A. SUTTOR, Superintendent.

EXCELSIOR HOME FOR BOYS, BRIGHTON.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1905.

Eleven boys were disposed of in the following manner:—(1) Learning the building trade with a Government contractor, (2) on a good farm at Swan Hill, (3) now in business with his brother. (The above mentioned are boys whose terms had expired, but were remaining on at no expense to the State at the Home until I found suitable positions for them), (4) learning the blacksmithing with an uncle in New South Wales, (5) steward on a mail boat, (6) learning the baking trade at Brighton, (7) apprenticed to learn painting and paperhanging, (8) on probation to father, but returned as no work could be found by him, (9) and (10) are now wards of another reformatory.

The health of the boys has been so good that Dr. Praagst's kind services have not been so much in demand as usual.

During the winter months the boys have been under Professor Weber, the result being a marked improvement in their physical condition.

Deep breathing exercises are carried out daily under my supervision with great benefit. Out of eighteen boys in the home at the end of the year, only two were unable to swim, sea bathing being one of their principal pastimes.

The conduct of the boys has been good, with the exception of two, who are of weak intellect.

The report from the State school is satisfactory. Sunday school teacher's report is also favorable.

Very many of the old boys visited the home during the year, whom it was a great pleasure to see, and to learn that they had very kindly feelings for myself and wife, and were obviously leading useful and respectable lives. The gratifying fact is, that most of these were transfers from gaol, proving the First Offenders Act has been a great success with those who have been handed over to my care.

The Christmas Camp passed off well, eighteen boys being under canvas for one month. The outing is greatly enjoyed by them.

I regret the very few visits the Home has received from the Official Inspector. If these visits were more frequent it would, I believe, be an encouragement to the boys, and more satisfactory to myself.

I desire to express my indebtedness during another year to the officers of the Department and the gaol authorities for their valuable co-operation; also to Dr. Praagst, Mr. Davy, dentist, and the other friends who have shown kindness during the year.

W. GROOM, Superintendent.

HEATHFIELD HOME REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT BOYS, APOLLO BAY.

I have the honour to submit my report for the past half-year ended 31st December, 1905.

This new Boys' Home and Training Farm was started under the auspices of the Church of England on 4th July, 1905.

The initial difficulties of such an undertaking are being all overcome.

Splendid land has been acquired on the banks of the River Barham, upon which the boys are learning dairying and agriculture on up-to-date methods under expert instructors.

Large, substantial, and comfortable buildings have been erected on a rise overlooking the farm flats, the river, and the sea.

There is a boat on the river belonging to the home, and the boys are being taught to row. They also frequently go for a bathe in the river or the sea.

Boy life is very healthy and happy at "Heathfield," and we trust that this new home will justify itself in helping many poor boys to become useful and good citizens.

A. MAXWELL, Superintendent.

KINGSBURY REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT BOYS, NEWSTEAD.

I have the honour to report that the work for the year ending 31st December, 1905, has been similar to that of previous years.

The health of all the boys has been good, and their work and conduct has, on the whole, been satisfactory, with two or three exceptions, which one must expect when dealing with boys of this class. Their love of town life is very strong within them, and some never seem to realize that country life is much more healthy and better for them in every way than in returning to their old haunts and companions.

Several of our old boys visited us during the year, and spent a few days with us.

There were more lads wanted for service than I could supply.

Three boys were admitted during the year; six, whose terms had expired, were discharged. Two are on probation with their friends, and two remain in the home.

I have again to sincerely thank Dr. Eccles for his services whenever required, and all other friends, including the officers of the Department, for their help and sympathy during the year.

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

STRAIGHT VIEW REFORMATORY FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC BOYS, HARCOURT.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year 1905.

The health and conduct of the boys have been good in the home and at service.

PETER McMAHON, Superintendent.

MOUNT PARADISE REFORMATORY FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC BOYS, PAKENHAM.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1905.

With one exception, the boys placed at service are giving every satisfaction to their employers, who speak well of them, their ability as farm hands being appreciated.

The health of the boys has been very satisfactory, no sickness or colds occurring.

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

J. J. MILLANE, Superintendent.