

1909.

VICTORIA.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND
REFORMATORY SCHOOLS.

R E P O R T

OF THE

SECRETARY AND INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1908.

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

By Authority:

J. KEMP, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

APPROXIMATE COST OF REPORT.

											£	s.	d.	
Preparation--Not given.	17	0	0
Printing (650 copies)	17	0	0

REPORT.

DEPARTMENT FOR NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND REFORMATORY SCHOOLS,

Melbourne, 22nd June, 1909.

SIR,

In compliance with provisions Section 10, *Neglected Children's Act* 1890, Section 320 of Part II. of the *Crimes Act* 1890, and the *Infant Life Protection Acts* 1198 and 2102, I have the honour to submit the Annual Report on the work of the Department during the year ending 31st December, 1908, with the necessary statements of expenditure and the statistics.

The work of the Department has been largely augmented by the addition of the administration of the *Infant Life Protection Act*. This additional work has, in a great measure, been ably performed by Mr. Regan, one of the officers of this Department.

Statistical Tables.—As shown by Table I, the number of children under supervision on 31st December, 1907, was 5,212, this included 204 reformatory cases. On the 31st December, 1908, the number amounted to 5,703, showing an increase of 491.

During the present year the committals of Neglected Children were as follows :—

1908.

COMMITTALS.

Neglected.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Court Committals ...	529	483	1,012
Section 9, Act 2102 ...	75	81	156
„ 15, „ ...	6	4	10
Total ...	610	568	1,178

Reformatory.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Court Committals ...	47	5	52
Transfers from Gaol ...	10	...	10
Total ...	57	5	62

AGES OF COMMITTAL.

—	Under 1 year.	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 6	6 to 7	7 to 8	8 to 9	9 to 10	10 to 11	11 to 12	12 to 13	13 to 14	14 to 15	15 to 16	16 and over.	Total.
Neglected ...	272	125	103	84	91	61	89	73	59	47	46	46	34	17	11	12	8	1,178
Reformatory ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5	4	14	15	23	62
Totals ...	272	125	103	84	91	61	89	73	59	47	46	47	39	21	25	27	31	1,240

CAUSES OF COMMITTAL.

<i>Neglected.</i>					
No means	...	...	...	...	968
Larceny	...	...	...	...	19
Attempted larceny	...	...	...	...	1
Imposition	...	...	...	...	1
Found begging	...	...	...	...	1
Uncontrollable	...	...	...	...	1
Offensive behaviour	...	...	...	...	1
Housebreaking	...	...	...	...	1
Dwelt with a thief	...	...	...	...	3
Dwelt with a prostitute	...	...	...	...	1
Dwelt with a drunkard	...	...	...	...	14
Transfer from Methodist Home	...	...	...	...	1
Sec. 9, Infant Life Protection Act No. 2102	...	...	...	...	156
„ 15, „ „ „ „ „	...	...	...	...	10
Total	...	...	...	...	1,178

<i>Reformatory.</i>					
Larceny	...	...	...	...	31
Housebreaking	...	...	...	...	2
Unlawful assault...	...	...	...	...	1
Setting fire to a barn	...	...	...	...	1
No means	...	...	...	...	6
Offensive behaviour	...	...	...	...	4
Indecent assault on a girl	...	...	...	...	1
False pretences	...	...	...	...	1
Illegally treating a horse	...	...	...	...	1
Associating with a thief	...	...	...	...	1
Carnally knowing a girl under 16	...	...	...	...	1
Obscene language	...	...	...	...	1
Wilful damage	...	...	...	...	1
Total	...	...	...	...	52

<i>Transfers from Gaol.</i>					
Larceny...	...	...	...	...	4
No means	...	...	...	...	1
Receiving stolen property	...	...	...	...	1
Attempting to carnally know a girl	...	...	...	...	1
Bestiality	...	...	...	...	1
False pretences	...	...	...	...	1
Housebreaking	...	...	...	...	1
Total	...	...	...	...	10

As shown, the court committals during the year numbered 1,012, the highest since 1901 (see comparisons below), of these, 620 were left with their mothers, and of the cases so dealt with, 374 children belonged to widows, and 123 to deserted wives. This is mainly responsible for the large increase this year, accounting for more than half of the committals. It is difficult to account for this great number of mothers seeking aid from the State, but the increase in the cost of living and of house rent may, to a certain extent, be a factor. In every case, inquiries were made, and as far as could be gathered, each case proved to be deserving. That a similar increase has been experienced in New South Wales is shown by Report for 1908.

The number of children committed each year since 1896 :—

1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
550	700	1,020	928	874	1,152	812	397	382	493	702	707

Mortality.—Sixty-three deaths occurred during the year, viz. :—1·1 per cent. of the children under the care of the Department. Of these, 42 were under twelve months. This increase is, in a great measure, accounted for by the inability of these infants, most of whom are in a very unsatisfactory state of health when received, to withstand the unusual heat that was experienced during the summer.

Between the ages of one and twenty years, there were 21 deaths out of 5,703, which shows a very low percentage. The health of children has been very satisfactory for the year.

Expenditure.—The expenditure is largely in excess of that for the previous year, a result of the increased number of children received. The net expenditure for 1907 was £61,660 12s. 3d., the figures for 1908 being £68,742 8s. 9d., an increase of £7,081 16s. 6d. The average number of wards who were a cost rose during the year from 3,590 to 4,042.

The expenditure on the maintenance of reformatory children has advanced from £4,141 7s. 8d. for 1907 to £4,639 4s. 10d. for 1908, the number of wards in institutions having risen from 146 to 161.

Collection of Maintenance.—The amount received from relatives for the maintenance of children during the year was £2,413 13s. 2d., being the largest for many years, and an increase of £482 11s. 9d. Of this amount £1,747 13s. 5d. was collected by clerks of courts under orders, and £665 19s. 9d. was received at this office in the shape of voluntary payments. In this latter case, the amount is largely composed of contributions by mothers whose children have become wards of the Department for Neglected Children through the payments for their maintenance under the Infant Life Protection Act having fallen four weeks in arrears. No action is taken against these people with a view to having orders made by the courts, but inquiries are made privately into their circumstances, and in cases where it is considered that the parent is in a position to pay, an undertaking for the payment of a small weekly sum is obtained. So far the engagements entered into have been promptly met.

A very large number of the children committed each year have been deserted by their fathers. In a number of cases these could, no doubt, be traced to one or other of the States of the Commonwealth. At present no satisfactory action can be taken even when so traced. If an Act were in force to enable the Department in one State to take proceedings on behalf of the Department in another State to collect maintenance due, in my opinion, a large sum would be collected. Such a measure would also act as a deterrent, as the fathers would not then desert for the purpose of evading their responsibilities.

Service.—The number of children placed in service homes this year is as follows :—Boys, 132 ; girls, 85.

Throughout the past year, as in previous years, the demand for the services of wards of the State, both boys and girls, has been steady and constant, indeed, the number of applicants has by far exceeded the number of available children. Especially does this apply to girls between the ages of 15 and 20 years, suitable for domestic service. For the most part girls are placed in suburban homes at wages varying from 4s. to 10s. Application will be made on next year's estimates for another inspector, this will enable Miss Berry, one of our lady inspectors, who takes a great interest in these girls, to devote more of her time to the supervision of service homes, and of the girls.

The demand for the boys is chiefly from the country, from farmers, graziers, orchardists, and dairy farmers. A boy of fourteen years commands a starting wage of four shillings, and the wages agreement is reviewed sometimes in three months, more often in six months. Every effort is made to secure good homes and good wages, and, on the whole, the result is fairly satisfactory. In my opinion, it would be more satisfactory if there were available a Government farm on which these boys could be thoroughly trained under expert supervision, such as could be supplied by the Agricultural Department. This would enable the boys to obtain a thorough training, thereby enabling them at the end of a certain term to readily command remunerative positions.

Again, there are many boys who have now to be sent to farm service who prefer, and seem more adapted to, trade pursuits. The difficulty experienced by the Department would be the expense incurred if a number of these boys were apprenticed to trades under the present conditions. However, upon the completion of the new buildings at the Dépôt, I purpose suggesting to you that a portion of the present buildings be utilized as a home for such a number of suitable boys as trade openings could be obtained for. This method of providing for the boys would entail very little expense.

Quite a number of boys and girls who remain on "probation" conditions in their foster homes are provided by their foster parents with trade, business, or factory positions. Of 71 boys and 46 girls on probation, at least 50 of the boys and 30 of the girls are so provided for.

The disposal of the boys for the year is as follows:—Farmers, 98 ; general work, 11 ; grocers, 3 ; stud farm, 1 ; factory, 2 ; Rutherglen College, 10 ; fruiterers, 2 ; carpenter, 1 ; motor garage, 1 ; tailoring, 1 ; battery, 2.

The amount banked by the Department to the credit of service children for the year amounted to £2,931 16s. 10d. The balance at credit at the end of the year amounted to £9,082 5s. 10d.

The total number of children who were a cost to the State on 31st December, 1907 and 1908 respectively was as follows:—

NEGLECTED.	1907.	1908.	REFORMATORY.	1907.	1908.
Boarded out ...	3,358	3,711			
In institutions ...	251	291	In institutions ...	146	161
Total... ..	3,609	4,002	Total... ..	146	161

Of these 3,711 children, 1,381 were placed in foster homes, and 1,430 left with their mothers. The mothers numbered 688.

Boarded Out with Foster Parents.—The assistance afforded by the ladies' committees in finding suitable homes for boarded-out children, and in supervising these homes, is much appreciated by the Department, and I take this opportunity of tendering my thanks to these ladies for the conscientious way in which they carry out their self-imposed duties. The general health of the children throughout has been very satisfactory. This system of boarding out children with foster parents has much to recommend it. The average number for the year, including those left with their own mothers, was 3,453. Of these, only 45 had, on account of proving unmanageable, to be removed and placed in institutions. Experience has shown that there are always some children who are unfitted for the freedom of a foster home, and require the discipline of an institution. The Department frequently receives children from 12 to 14 years of age who, through absence of restraint, have so proved unmanageable, or have truant tendencies, and are consequently so backward in their education, that a special school is necessary. Such children (boys) we send to Bayswater Home and St. Augustine's Orphanage.

The children placed in foster homes have an advantage over children in institutions in the fact that they have a *home*, and form home ties and affections. In fact, in many cases, so strong is the affection of foster parents for the children in their care, that we repeatedly find them bringing the children up with the belief that they really are their own, giving them their name, and most anxious that the children should not be undeceived in the matter.

Receiving Dépôt, Royal Park.—The large increase in the number of children committed has made it an unusually busy year at the Dépôt, and has necessitated the appointments of two extra attendants and two instructors, and also of a trained nurse for night duty.

After a long delay, the new brick buildings to replace the old wooden dormitories have been started, and, when completed, will certainly prove a great convenience to the boys, and will also assist in the administration. A new nursery for the infants is badly needed. A separate dining-room for the junior boys is also necessary, so that a proper scheme of classification can be carried out.

The promised improvements to the schoolroom mentioned in my last report have been completed, thereby enabling the teacher to carry out her work under more favorable conditions.

Returns from the farm and garden have been satisfactory. Apart from results the work is the means of providing healthy and necessary employment for the Reformatory boys.

Rutherglen Viticultural College.—Twenty-six boys are this year in Rutherglen, and are apparently doing well. The boys sent to this College are specially selected, and must bear the best of characters before they will be received. A few extracts from the report of the proceedings at the annual distribution of prizes will give some idea of the work done by the boys:—

“The College was simply an experimental station, where experiments were being made with a great measure of success in connexion with viticultural farming and dairying industries. Particular attention was paid to the boys, for in them they realized the men of the future. If they secured the boys when young, and trained them in the right direction, there was no fear but they would produce the right type of citizen. The boys were given a practical training while at the institution;

farming on paper was useless, and the boys had to go through a practical work as well as theoretical studies. The Education Department had realized the value of the training given to these boys, and some of the class-papers had been published in the school-papers for the benefit of teachers and others all over the State. No boy who had been sent out from the College had failed, and this alone was an encouragement to go on."

Albion Home, Glenroy, for Protestant Girls.—The girls are well trained at this home, and, when fit for service, good homes are readily found for them by the matron.

Bayswater Home for Protestant Boys.—The class of boys placed in this home are those who have proved wayward and unmanageable in foster homes, and also those who, through want of proper care and control, have had little or no education, so that it would be useless to send them to an ordinary State school. The average number for the year was 76, and ages range from 12 to 14 years. Major Head, of the Salvation Army, is in charge of the boys, and, on my several visits to the home, I found them contented and well cared for. There is no doubt that Major Head has the confidence and regard of the boys in his care. The school was visited by a State School Inspector, who reports favorably on the work. I found it necessary to report unfavorably on the boys' dormitories, which I considered unsafe in case of fire, and, at my request, Major Head has had fire-escape doors provided.

Christian Brothers' Home for Roman Catholic Boys, Geelong.—Roman Catholic boys of a similar character to those at Bayswater are sent to this home. The discipline exercised by the Rev. Brothers has, no doubt, a very beneficial influence on the boys. The Rev. Brother in charge appears to have made this his life's work.

Industrial School, Abbotsford, for Roman Catholic Girls.—On visiting this school I was impressed by the excellent work that is being carried on. It is very evident that the satisfactory results which continue to be obtained are in a great measure due to the kindness, combined with the necessary discipline, which is shown by the ladies of this institution to the girls in their care.

PRIVATE REFORMATORIES.

	Boys.				Inmates.	
Bayswater (Salvation Army)	26
Excelsior Home, Brighton (Protestant and Roman Catholic)	13
Heathfield Home, Apollo Bay (Church of England)	8
Kingsbury, Newstead (Protestant)	3
Straight View, Harecourt (Roman Catholic)	2
Mount Paradise, Pakenham (Roman Catholic)	4
	Girls.					
Riddell's Creek (Salvation Army)	23
Murrumbidgee (branch of Riddell's Creek)	31
Mintaro Home, Monnegatta (Methodist)	26
Oakleigh Convent (Roman Catholic)	19
Total	155

Riddell's Creek Reformatory for Protestant Girls.—Only the most difficult class of girls to deal with are sent to this home. On my visit, I could not fail to notice the general contentment which prevailed amongst them. This I attribute to the tact and kindness of the matron (Miss Lane) in dealing with those in her charge.

Murrumbidgee Sub-Reformatory.—This is worked in connexion with Riddell's Creek Reformatory School, but we send here girls who are younger and more amenable to discipline. This classification is most desirable and necessary. The work is carried on in a satisfactory manner by the matron in charge.

Mintaro, Monnegatta, Methodist Home.—Mrs. Adamson, the matron in charge of this home, appears to have the girls well under control, and favorable reports regarding them have been received from her during the year. A good percentage of the girls placed at service give every satisfaction.

Oakleigh Reformatory for Roman Catholic Girls.—Taking into account the class of girls in this Reformatory, results are very good. This is evidently the result of the excellent training received by the girls from the Rev. Mother and Sisters in charge.

Bayswater Reformatory for Protestant Boys.—The average number of boys at Bayswater is eighteen, under the care of Major Head and capable staff. These boys are trained in all branches of farm work, and are so enabled to obtain employment on farms.

Excelsior Home, Brighton.—Considering the number and class of boys that are sent to this home, the Superintendent, Mr. Groom, is exceptionally successful in his method of dealing with them. He imposes practically no restraint upon the boys, but appears to win with ease their entire confidence and regard. He has few, if any, failures, and from my own personal knowledge I can say that many of the boys are in employment and doing well.

Heathfield Home, Apollo Bay, Church of England.—The boys in this home appear to be doing well, and in good health. They are taught farming by the Superintendent, Mr. Dunstan, with good results.

Kingsbury Reformatory for Protestant Boys and Straight View Reformatory for Roman Catholic Boys.—These homes are both in the district of Castlemaine, and only a few boys are sent. These are trained in useful farm work. The health of the boys during the year was good.

Mount Paradise Reformatory for Roman Catholic Boys.—At present there are four boys in this home. This is also a farm home, and boys are trained in farm work.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT.

The Infant Life Protection Act 2102 came into operation on 1st January, 1908, and all infants then in registered homes were transferred to the care of this Department. The number of infants on 31st December, 1908, was 304. The number of deaths during the year was 48, as against 71 for the previous year.

Nineteen children were removed from registered homes, as the nurses were considered guilty of neglect according to the provisions of Section 11, Act 1198, and ten of them became wards of the Department in accordance with Section 15, Act 2102.

Two children suffering with syphilis were removed from registered homes, one of them was taken charge of by the mother, and the other was committed to the care of the Department for Neglected Children.

During the year 156 children became wards of the State according to Section 9, Act 2102, which provides that the child shall become a ward of the Department for Neglected Children upon the weekly payments for such falling into arrears for a period of four weeks.

Upon the whole, the Act is working fairly satisfactorily, though there are a few amendments I shall suggest later on in this report. The provision made for the inspection of registered homes has the effect of making the nurses more careful and anxious for the well-being of the children placed in their care. The registered homes are divided into districts, which are allotted to our four Inspectors, who are required to visit regularly and report to me. Any neglect on the part of any nurse is brought under my notice immediately. Great interest is taken in their work by the Inspectors, and the tactful manner in which they carry out their duties is to be commended. Many of the nurses, no doubt, benefit by the advice and assistance received from the Inspectors. As the proper working of the Act makes adequate supervision an absolute necessity, an additional Inspector is necessary.

Adoptions.—Eighty-seven cases of adoptions were notified during the year. According to Section 22, Act 1198, "Any person adopting a child under five years old shall, within fourteen days, give notice to the Secretary stating his or her name, address, and occupation, also name and age of child." In my opinion this is insufficient, as even supposing it should come to my knowledge that such a person was not suitable to have charge of the child, or not in a position to properly maintain it I have no power to prevent or in any way interfere with the adoption, nor have I any power to inspect or supervise the home or the child. I would, therefore, urge an amendment empowering the Secretary, after receiving notification of the intended adoption of a child, to approve or disapprove of the said adoption, and also to decide whether supervision shall be enforced or not.

Payments for Maintenance.—Another amendment I would suggest is in regard to the application for permission to board out an infant (Section 9, Sub-sections 1 and 3), which requires that the mother shall agree to pay not less than 10s. per week for an infant under twelve months old, and 7s. per week for children over that age. In most cases this is absolutely impossible, as the majority of these mothers earn at most ten or twelve shillings per week. The only alternative is to appear before the court, and have the child committed to the Department. This means a certain publicity, which, in these cases, is the last thing desired. Consequently, it can only be assumed that the infant is eventually placed out to nurse in an illegal manner with an unregistered nurse. I would, therefore, suggest that the clause be amended so that the mother may agree to pay such an amount as the secretary may consider is in accordance with her position or earnings. The balance to be paid by the Department.

Maternity Homes.—I am quite in accord with the views expressed on this subject by the inspectors. A noticeable omission from the Act is the absence of a provision for the registration and consequent supervision by officers of the Department of private maternity homes. An effective way of overcoming the difficulty is to compel the registration of any place let, hired, or engaged by any person for the accommodation of a female during her confinement or lying-in. This is done in South Australia. It is important that the Department should be notified of the birth of every illegitimate infant, in order that steps may be taken to ensure that the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act are not being evaded. Many of these

infants, naturally delicate and puny, who are now placed out with registered nurses by their mothers, have little chance of surviving. If these could be maintained with their mothers in a home provided by the State (such as they have in New South Wales), under the care of a hospital-trained nurse, it would certainly secure to the child a real chance of surviving the dangers of infancy. Again, there are other delicate infants whose mothers are unable to nurse them, and who place them with registered nurses. No doubt these nurses are conscientious and well-meaning, but many have not the necessary training for the care of sickly children. If a cottage for these babies could be provided at the Dépôt, where we have a supply of milk and a trained staff who could give the necessary care and attention, it would go a long way to fulfil the object with which the Infant Life Protection Act was framed.

Amount received from parents during the year 1908 for maintenance of infants in registered homes was £5,759 4s. 9d.

AGES OF CHILDREN IN REGISTERED HOMES ON 31st DECEMBER, 1908.

2 wks.	3 wks.	4 wks.	2 mths.	3 mths.	4 mths.	5 mths.	6 mths.	7 mths.	8 mths.	9 mths.	10 mths.	11 mths.	Bet. 1 & 2	Bet. 2 & 3	Bet. 3 & 4	Bet. 4 & 5	Total.
4	1	8	10	17	15	10	14	5	4	8	8	9	77	54	44	16	304
There were 179 registered homes with 1 child												...	...	...	179	
" " 35 " " 2 children												...	...	...	70	
" " 13 " " 3 "												...	...	...	39	
" " 4 " " 4 "												...	...	...	16	
Total...			231			Total					304		

DEATHS DURING 1908.

Total number of deaths in registered homes ...		...		...		48		
Districts.	Months.	Age at Time of Death.						
Ballarat	...	3	January	...	9	17 days	...	1
Bendigo	...	5	February	...	13	4 weeks	...	1
Brunswick	...	2	March	...	10	5 "	...	1
Brighton	...	1	April ...	...	3	6 "	...	4
Carlton	...	12	May ...	...	2	7 "	...	2
Caulfield	...	1	June ...	...	2	2 months	...	8
Coburg	...	5	July ...	...	2	3 "	...	5
Collingwood	...	2	August	...	1	4 "	...	8
Echuca	...	1	September	...	—	5 "	...	4
Geelong	...	1	October	...	—	6 "	...	3
Mooroopna	...	1	November	...	4	7 "	...	3
Northcote	...	1	December	...	2	8 "	...	4
North Melbourne	...	2		...	—	9 "	...	—
Richmond	...	1	Total	...	48	11 "	...	1
South Yarra	...	6		...	—	12 "	...	1
South Melbourne	...	2		...	—	Between 1 and 2 years	...	1
Stawell	...	1		...	—	" 2 and 3 years	...	1
St. Kilda	...	1		...	—		...	—
Total	...	48		...	—	Total	...	48

CAUSES OF DEATH.

Exhaustion and Heart Failure	...	...	...	...	7
Atrophy	...	...	...	...	2
Athepsia	...	...	...	...	2
Colitis	...	...	...	...	2
Burnt in a bush fire	...	...	...	...	1
Gastro Enteritis	...	...	...	...	8
Enteritis	...	...	...	...	1
Tubercular Meningitis	...	...	...	...	1
Entero Colitis	...	...	...	...	5
Debility and Gastro Enteritis	...	...	...	...	1
Broncho-pneumonia	...	...	...	...	2
Gastritis	...	...	...	...	1
Dysenteric Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	1
Colitis and Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	5
Pericarditis and Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	1
Asthemia and Gastro Enteritis	...	...	...	...	1
Suffocation and Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	1
Acute Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	2
Congenital Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	1
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	1
Physiological Starvation due to inability to digest artificial food	...	...	...	...	1
Exhaustion and Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	—

In addition to the above, six infants who were removed from a registered nurse at Preston on 17th January, 1908, died a few days afterwards at the Depôt, Royal Park. The nurse was prosecuted, and fined £1, with £3 3s. costs, on each of two charges of failing to provide the children with adequate food, &c.

Coronial inquiries were held in 24 cases, and in only one instance the nurse was warned by the Coroner to be more careful in future in the matter of following the doctor's instructions.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

T. SMITH,

Secretary.

To the Honorable The Chief Secretary.

REPORT OF INSPECTORS.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT.

Department for Neglected Children,
Melbourne, 16th June, 1909.

Memo. for the Secretary,—

In accordance with your wishes, we submit for your consideration the following remarks and suggestions on our past year's work.

Visiting the Homes.—We consider that the homes under the Infant Life Protection Act are, as a rule, satisfactory, and in many cases much improved during the past year, the nurses being most anxious to do well by the children.

Maternity Homes.—In our opinion there appears to be a necessity for some supervision over the illegitimate children born in these homes. From what we hear through our work great numbers are said to be born, but comparatively few are registered by this Department.

Cases come under our notice of infants while in these homes—but in the care of their mothers—being often transferred to registered nurses in a state of neglect, owing, we suppose, to ignorance and poverty, the owner of the home apparently taking no responsibility of mother or child once the mother is considered able to care for it herself. This impresses us there is urgent necessity of supervision being exercised over these homes to secure proper attention for these children.

We suggest that a notification of all illegitimate births be sent by all Registrars of Births to the Secretary of this Department, who could then, if he thinks it necessary, see how these children are being disposed of.

This is a matter of such importance to the Infant Life Protection Act that we feel diffident with our limited knowledge of these homes about making further suggestions of methods of dealing with these places, but feel confident there is urgent necessity for an amendment of the Act to deal with this matter.

Adoptions.—Most of the adoptions are at present arranged through these Maternity Homes.

We feel that it is a deplorable thing that children can be disposed of in the easy manner now existing—through daily paper advertisement—in many cases no care being taken by the person arranging the adoption as to the class of mother or home the child is going to.

We find that some children are adopted into good homes, and apparently good circumstances, so far as we can judge from the one visit we pay. On the other hand, it is the adopting mother who is at fault, she often taking the child without proper consideration—perhaps, while feeling the loss of her own dead child, or from a want of companionship for the time being, then, in a little while, she tires of the care and responsibility, which may be through sickness of self or husband, a falling off of income or even a lesser trouble, then the child is looked on as a tax—this then is the time the child needs supervision.

It appears to us most necessary for the welfare of the child that this Department should have the sole prerogative or the privilege of arranging adoptions, and the Secretary could then decide as to whether supervision should be enforced for a limited time or not.

MADELINE MURRAY,
KATHERINE JACKSON, } Inspectors.
K. THOM,

NEGLECTED AND REFORMATORY CHILDREN.

TABLE I.—STATEMENT OF ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES FOR 1908.

	Neglected.			Reformatory.			Grand Total.
	Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1907 ...	2,652	2,356	5,008	78	126	204	5,212
ADMISSIONS.							
Court committals ...	529	483	1,012	47	5	52	1,064
By operation of Section 15, Infants' Life Protection Act No. 2102 ...	6	4	10	...	...	...	10
By operation of Section 9, Infants' Life Protection Act No. 2102 ...	75	81	156	...	...	...	156
Transfers from Gaol ...	...	...	...	10	...	10	10
" " Neglected Children's Department ...	...	...	...	21	24	45	45
" " Reformatory Department ...	10	...	10	...	...	...	10
Returned from Lunatic Asylum ...	1	...	1	...	...	...	1
" absconders ...	20	...	20	7	...	7	27
Total admissions ...	641	568	1,209	85	29	114	1,323
DISCHARGES.							
By Order of the Governor in Council ...	143	177	320	4	...	4	324
" Death ...	36	27	63	...	...	...	63
" Effluxion of time ...	162	97	259	25	21	46	305
" Transfer to Neglected Children's Department ...	...	...	...	10	...	10	10
" " Reformatory Department ...	21	24	45	...	...	...	45
" " Asylums ...	3	1	4	...	...	...	4
Unreturned absconders ...	48	1	49	27	5	32	81
Total discharges ...	413	327	740	66	26	92	832
Number under supervision on 31st December, 1908 ...	2,880	2,597	5,477	97	129	226	5,703
LOCATION.							
* } Maintained in foster-homes ...	1,931	1,780	3,711	...	...	...	3,711
{ " institutions ...	159	132	291	61	100	161	452
In service homes ...	378	370	748	21	21	42	790
With relatives and others, without cost to the State ...	401	309	710	10	8	18	728
In Hospitals ...	10	5	15	...	...	...	15
On a visit to friends ...	1	1	2	1	...	1	3
In Gaol ...	...	...	...	4	...	4	4
Total ...	2,880	2,597	5,477	97	129	226	5,703

* In addition to the-e, 38 (6 males, 32 females), who are free from legal control, are still being maintained by the State as they are incapacitated.

TABLE II.—DEATHS DURING 1908.
LENGTH OF TIME UNDER CARE OF DEPARTMENT.

Age at Time of Death.	Length of Time Under Care of Department.																Total.															
	1 day.	2 days.	12 days.	13 days.	15 days.	17 days.	18 days.	19 days.	20 days.	4 weeks.	5 weeks.	6 weeks.	7 weeks.	2 months.	3 months.	4 months.		5 months.	6 months.	7 months.	8 months.	9 months.	12 months.	2 years.	3 years.	4 years.	7 years.	8 years.	10 years.	11 years.	14 years.	16 years.
Under 1 year ..	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	8	2	1	2	2	0	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	42
Between 1 and 2 years ..	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	55
" 2 3 "	1
" 3 4 "	1
" 4 5 "	1
" 5 6 "	1
" 6 7 "	1
" 7 8 "	1
" 8 9 "	1
" 9 10 "	1
" 10 11 "	1
" 11 12 "	1
" 12 13 "	1
" 13 14 "	1
" 14 15 "	1
" 15 16 "	1
" 16 17 "	1
" 17 18 "	1
" 18 19 "	1
" 19 20 "	1
Total ..	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	8	2	1	2	2	0	3	4	1	2	2	1	3	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	163	

CAUSES OF DEATH.

Gastro enteritis and exhaustion	...	...	9	Acute general tuberculosis...	...	...	1
Marasmus	...	...	4	Tuberculosis and diarrhæa	...	...	1
Malnutrition	...	...	2	Bronchitis	...	...	1
Heat apoplexy	...	...	1	Rheumatic fever and pneumonia	...	...	1
Congestion of lungs	...	...	1	Acute hydrocephalus	...	...	1
Diarrhæa and congestion of lungs	...	...	1	Hæmorrhage of lungs	...	...	1
Typhoid fever	...	...	2	Syphilis and exhaustion	...	...	1
Colitis	...	...	3	Broncho pneumonia	...	...	3
Diarrhæa and exhaustion	...	...	2	Inanition and broncho pneumonia	...	...	1
Colitis and atrespia	...	...	1	Intestinal trouble	...	...	1
Enterocolitis and asthropsia	...	...	2	Enlargement of thymus gland	...	...	1
Heat exhaustion	...	...	1	Diphtheria, broncho pneumonia, and heart failure	...	...	1
Gastritis	...	...	1	Scarlet fever	...	...	1
Heart trouble	...	...	1	Killed by an explosion	...	...	1
Gastro enteritis and debility	...	...	1	Convulsions	...	...	1
Meningitis and asthenia	...	...	1	Gastro enteritis and pertussis	...	...	1
Inflammation of bowels	...	...	1	Congenital asthenia and valvular disease of heart	...	...	1
Hydrocephalus and enterocolitis	...	...	1	Congenital debility, multiple abscess and pyæmia	...	...	1
Measles	...	...	1	Acute intestinal obstruction	...	...	1
Colitis and convulsions	...	...	1	Congenital syphilis and multiple abscess	...	...	1
Tubercular disease and exhaustion	...	...	2	Œdema of brain	...	...	1
Debility and asthenia	...	...	1				

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

Name of Societies or Persons.	Children under Supervision on 31.12.07.	Admissions during 1908.			Children under Supervision on 31.12.08.
		Court Committals.	Transfer of Guardianship.	Voluntary Admissions.	
Presbyterian and Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society	310	15	11	4	299
Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society	592	...	...	70	483
Church of England Neglected Children's Aid Society	110	4	6	16	106
Methodist Homes for Children	352	32	...	21	379
Miss Colvin and Miss Brumby, Clifden Home, Wedderburn	105	...	...	2	107
Gordon Institute, Melbourne	160	5	27	38	218
Burwood Boys' Home	57	1	28	...	70
Geelong Try Boys' Brigade	119	...	...	61	111
Methodist Boys' Training Farm, Burwood East	68	...	1	17	78
Latrobe-street Ragged School Mission	149	2	...	90	92
Mission Rescue and Children's Home, Ballarat East	35	5	...	6	38
Presbyterian Home for Girls, Brunswick	4	3	1	4	6
St. Joseph's Home, Surrey Hills	288	...	2	75	139
Mr. W. M. Forster (Try Society), Hawksburn	18	...	1	17	23
Total	2,367	67	77	421	2,149

TABLE IV.—PARENTAGE OF CHILDREN COMMITTED IN 1908.

Particulars supplied with Order of Commital.	Neglected.	Reformatory.	Total.
Parents dead	13	1	14
" in Germany ... ..	...	1	1
" unknown	5	...	5
" deserted	11	...	11
" drunkards	8	...	8
" of bad character ... ..	...	1	1
" poor, of good character	63	25	88
Father dead; Mother poor, of good character	395	9	404
" " a drunkard	5	...	5
" " doubtful character ... ..	...	1	1
" " deserted	3	1	4
" " in gaol	3	...	3
" " immoral	3	...	3
" " imbecile	2	...	2
Father deserted; Mother poor, of good character	348	6	354
" " immoral	6	1	7
" " an invalid	3	...	3
" " dead	15	1	16
" " in hospital	7	...	7
" " imbecile	1	...	1
" " a drunkard	2	...	2
" " in lunatic asylum	6	...	6
" " in gaol	2	...	2
Father a drunkard; Mother poor, of good character	10	5	15
" " dead	18	...	18
" " immoral	5	...	5
" " a cripple	2	...	2
" " in hospital	3	...	3
Father in gaol; Mother poor, of good character	29	...	29
" " a drunkard	3	...	3
" " dead... ..	1	...	1
" " deserted	2	...	2
" " immoral	1	...	1
Father unknown; Mother poor, of good character	33	1	34
" " in lunatic asylum	4	...	4
" " dead	7	...	7
" " deserted	12	...	12
" " immoral	3	...	3
" " in gaol	3	...	3
" " a drunkard	2	...	2
" " a cripple	1	...	1
Father poor; Mother deserted	8	...	8
" " dead	12	5	17
" " a drunkard	9	2	11
" " imbecile	2	...	2
" " in lunatic asylum	1	...	1
" " in gaol	1	...	1
Father in lunatic asylum; Mother poor, of good character	31	1	32
" " " dead	2	...	2
" " " immoral	1	...	1
Father in hospital; Mother poor, of good character	19	...	19
" " " dead	3	...	3
Father an invalid; Mother poor, of good character	41	...	41
" blind " "	1	...	1
" a cripple " "	3	...	3
" a bad character " " ... ..	...	1	1
" " Mother immoral	1	...	1
" an imbecile; Mother dead	3	...	3
Total	1,178	62	1,240

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

Neglected Children.	Average strength	Items of Expenditure.												Total.
		Provi- sions.	Clothing and Bedding.	Fuel, Light, and Water.	Stores, Stock, &c.	Medical Attend- ance, &c.	Incidental, &c.	Transport and Travelling Expenses.	Tele- phone Services.	Salaries.	Postage and Tele- grams.	Mainten- ance.		
		£ 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 Abbotsford Industrial School ..	110	577 19 4	27 12 9	294 14 1	197 5 0	45 11 10	205 1 0	..	..	1,769 17 8	..	..	3,118 1 8
Training Home for Girls ..	42 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	577 9 0	577 9 0
Service Children ..	3	..	..	..	..	1 11 8	..	..	..	..	..	41 10 11	43 2 7
Boarded-out Child- ren ..	..	..	364 0 9	..	..	..	..	1,004 18 5*	..	..	..	..	1,368 19 2
Telephone Services ..	3,633	..	1,132 9 4	..	..	2,943 6 9	..	632 19 8	..	..	..	50,661 14 10	55,370 10 7
Total ..	3,788 5	577 19 4	1,524 2 10	294 14 1	197 5 0	2,990 10 3	205 1 0	1,637 18 1	70 4 6	1,769 17 8	..	51,280 14 9	60,548 7 6	
Reformatory Child- ren.														
Oakleigh (Girls) ..	25	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	622 16 10	622 16 10
Minbaro (Girls) ..	20	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	687 11 3	687 11 3
Riddell's Creek (Girls) Excelsior Home (Boys) ..	57	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,486 10 3	1,486 10 3
Kingsbury (Boys) ..	9 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	252 11 11	252 11 11
Straight View Farm (Boys) ..	1 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	37 18 5	37 18 5
Mount Paradise (Boys) Heathfield Home (Boys) ..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	109 16 5	109 16 5
Bayswater ..	4 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	114 5 1	114 5 1
Service Children ..	8 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	219 7 11	219 7 11
Telephone Services ..	18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	466 8 0	466 8 0
Total ..	154	..	307 15 3	..	..	..	..	229 15 6	104 8 0	..	..	3,997 6 1	4,639 4 10
Head Office ..	..	..	..	20 16 2	154 3 4	..	238 11 8	644 4 10	..	4,762 13 6	274 11 0	..	6,095 0 6
Grand Total ..	3,942 5	577 19 4	1,831 18 1	15 10 3	3351 8 4	2,990 10 3	443 12 8	2,511 18 5	174 12 6	6,532 11 2	274 11 0	55,278 0 10	71,282 12 10	
Deduct— Amount received for Maintenance of Child- ren, £2,413 13s. 2d. All other receipts, £126 1cs. 11d.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,540 4 1
Net cost ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	68,742 8 9

*£523 15s. 7d. of this expenditure was incurred under Part VIII. of the Neglected Children's Act.

TABLE VI.—AGES, RELIGIONS, AND BIRTHPLACES OF CHILDREN
COMMITTED IN 1908.

AGES.

	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 ...	272	125	103	84	91	61	89	73	59	47	46	46	34	17	11	12	8	1,178
Reformatory ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	5	4	14	15	23	62
Total ...	272	125	103	84	91	61	89	73	59	47	46	47	39	21	25	27	31	1,240

RELIGIONS AND BIRTHPLACES.

	Number Committed.	Religions.				Birthplaces.			
		Protestant.	Roman Catholic.	Jew.	Australia and New Zealand.	England.	South Africa.	Germany.	Unknown.
Neglected ...	1,178	855	320	3	1,169	3	5	...	1
Reformatory ...	62	44	18	...	61	...	...	1	...
Totals ...	1,240	899	338	3	1,230	3	5	1	1

REPORTS OF SCHOOLS.

RECEIVING DEPÔTS, ROYAL PARK.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1908.

During the early part of the year, there was a great deal of sickness amongst the babies. In January, twelve babies were received at the Depôt from one home, two only could be considered healthy, seven were suffering from diarrhoea, six died shortly after admission.

The weather was intensely hot at the time, and all the babies received during that period were affected by the heat, the Medical Officer was coming every day, and generally saw fourteen or fifteen children at every visit.

There were seventeen deaths during the year of infants, and two of older children. They were all in bad health, and in most cases dying when received.

The number of children received at the Depôt was greatly increased during the past year. The infants under one year were twice as many as those received in 1907, and there was a large number of children between one year and three years old.

This means extra work all round, extra nursing, extra washing, and an extra number of outfits to be made in the work room.

An extra attendant was appointed on the staff, but with the country trips and relieving all the year round, we are often working very short-handed, and the accommodation for the staff is very limited, more especially for the one on night duty.

Two large tents have been erected for the children, and they are a great convenience, but I am hoping to see a proper nursery built before long. A new building is to be erected shortly for the senior boys, and I was promised that when that was finished, a nursery should be built for the babies.

We are badly in need of a drying-room, especially during the winter months.

A room for general use is badly required for the junior boys. The room formerly used by them as a playroom has been enlarged, and is now only used as a schoolroom. A teacher and assistant from the Education Department being in charge. There is no place except the dormitories for the boys to go to in the evenings, or wet Sundays.

The children have had several treats during the year, kindly given to them by the following ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Williamson, of the Princess Theatre, gave an invitation to all the girls and boys of the various homes to see "Peter Pan." Sixty of the children from the Depôt, accompanied by officers, accepted the invitation, and enjoyed themselves very much. Some of the members of the Head Quarters Staff of the Salvation Army gave a splendid series of moving pictures one evening, both instructing and amusing, and it was thoroughly appreciated.

The committee ladies and gentlemen gave a very pleasant afternoon at games. Cakes and lollies for tea, and a musical evening for the annual treat.

Other friends have given a gramophone entertainment. The Reverend H. F. Miller attends regularly for religious instruction to the Protestant children, and Mrs. Delaney holds Sunday school. The Reverend Father Keenan attends regularly for the Catholic boys and the Nuns visit the Catholic girls.

E. S. GODDARD, Matron.

REPORT OF ROYAL PARK VISITING COMMITTEE.

1st June, 1909.

The Committee respectfully submit the following report for the year ending December, 1908.

The Committee meets monthly and make themselves conversant with the routine of the Institution, and in many ways brighten the children's lives.

We appreciate the commencement of the new brick buildings for the boys. From the plans, the accommodation with supervision will assist in the better management and comfort of the inmates.

We trust our repeated appeals to the Department for a piano, to assist the many friends of the children in providing entertainments and pleasant evenings will soon be realised.

The necessity for a separate ward for infectious cases is urgent.

The Nursery Department requires re-modelling in up-to-date buildings, and accommodation for infant life. The devotion and attention of the management is commendable, seeing so many of these babies require special care.

The medical report *re* Consumptive buildings for the aged and infirm, adjacent to the boys' dormitory—"Is not prejudicial to the children's home."

To the lay mind, in our opinion, is a menace to the health of the inmates of this Institution.

We desire to express our appreciation of the manner in which the Institution is conducted.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN WALKER, President.
R. P. LORD, Correspondent.

ALBION HOME, GLENROY, FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1908.

With the exception of two or three cases, the general health of the girls has been good. Toward the end of the year one girl had to be sent to the hospital to undergo an operation. She is on a sure way to recovery.

We are able to report general improvement all round in the girls. The school girls are diligent and painstaking. In the work-room girls, we see marked improvement. There is always the few who cause anxiety, both in situations and in the home; but we have faith in the God with whom nothing is impossible, and are believing that even the naughtiest can be made good.

A fine picture, "The Guardian Angel" (handsomely framed by Mrs. Pearson), was presented to the Home, and hangs in the dining-room.

The girls gave a concert in aid of the Church of England Building Fund.

We are truly grateful to the friends who have helped in the many entertainments given to the girls. First came a picnic to Sandringham, where the girls spent a long and most happy day, and later a Bioscope entertainment. These were given to the Home, and are what we term "birthday gifts" to the girls. Following these, entertainments of various kinds, amusing and educational. Beside these, the girls have been taken out to several, not the

least among these being the yearly treat in Melbourne about Christmas time. This year, the presents from Mrs. McKie were beautiful work-boxes, which delighted the girls very much.

In conclusion, I must thank the good friends who never weary in making our holidays and Saturday afternoon such enjoyable times; the Secretary of the Department for his visit; the ministers of the Churches here, and all whose sympathetic assistance has helped us in carrying on the work.

WINIFRED M. HORSLEY, Matron,

BAYSWATER HOME FOR PROTESTANT BOYS.

During the past year, the Boys' Home at Bayswater, operated under the direction of the Salvation Army has sent twenty-eight lads to situations, of whom two have proved unsatisfactory. Ten more have been with their parents on probation, one of whom proved unsatisfactory.

A new departure has been inaugurated in connexion with this Institution, in permission being given to good conduct boys to go home at special holiday seasons. This plan has worked well, not one boy having failed to return at the specified time.

On the occasion of the American Fleet's visit to Melbourne, fully half of the boys were allowed into the city to witness the festivities, a privilege which was much enjoyed, and no anxiety was caused thereby.

A cottage has just been opened, to hold thirty, for the better classification of these boys, it being found of advantage to introduce more of the genuine, helpful home life.

The Christmas season proved one of abundant enjoyment and pleasure, and Biorama entertainments have been given at suitable periods throughout the year.

Considerable progress has been made in the educational branch, a fully qualified and accredited head teacher having been appointed to take charge of the bigger boys. A still better year is anticipated for 1909.

THE REFORMATORY.

Five boys have been sent out to service from the Salvation Army Reformatory at Bayswater, and four have been home on probation, all having proved satisfactory. The work of this institution has been of a most encouraging character, and has never been better in all its past history. Good conduct has been rewarded by a Sunday at home with their parents, also during special *fêtes* in Melbourne, or Christmastide, &c.

A gratuity system is in vogue for quite a number of the advanced boys, and while they are mostly sentenced to remain in the Institution for varying periods until they reach the limit of eighteen years of age, only in exceptional cases are they detained longer than twelve months, provided that good conduct has been observed. Boys are sent out from this Institution, and good opportunities are given them. This is a form of encouragement which, undoubtedly, helps a lad to control himself. During the year, one boy proved uncontrollable.

Brigadier Brav had charge of this enterprise for the first six months of the year, and his skilful management contributed in no small degree to the achievement of the before-mentioned good results.

ALF. G. HEAD, Superintendent.

ABBOTSFORD INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

I have the honour to forward my report for the year ending 31st December, 1908:—

The number of girls remaining in the school on the 31st December, 1907, was 28.

ADMISSIONS.

Remaining in school, 1st January, 1908	...	...	...	28
Admitted (including re-admissions)				23
Transferred from depôt	...	...	...	17
From probation	...	...	...	1
From hospital	...	...	...	1
				—
Total	...	...	...	70
				—

REMOVALS.

To service	...	...	...	39
Discharged on probation	...	...	...	1
Transferred to Oakleigh	...	...	...	1
To hospital	...	...	...	1
Remaining, 31st December, 1908	...	...	...	28
				—
Total	...	...	...	70
				—

During the year the girls' health was good. One death occurred, that of Angela Rogers, who had been a ward of the Department for 36 years; this dear child was a poor little dwarf, never able to enter the ranks of earners—a striking example of what gratitude is due for the benevolence, protection, and charitable support extended by the Department towards poor children unable to do for themselves.

On several occasions, the Industrial School was visited by ladies and gentlemen, notably their lordships the Bishop of Sale and Bendigo, Dean Phelan, Vicar-General, and the Rev. Father Gleeson, R.C. Chaplain of the American Fleet, who addressed encouraging words to the children.

The members of St. Augustine's band very kindly visited and gave an afternoon's entertainment. Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Gollin, from London, also paid a visit, and donated funds for a grand school treat, with distribution of toys and useful gifts for the girls. Those kind friends evinced much interest in the institution.

The number of applicants for servants far exceeded that of girls available.

We beg to thank you, dear sir, also the officers of the Department, for the uniform courtesy extended to us,

And remain,

Yours respectfully,

ANNIE DOWLING,
Provincial Superioress.

TRAINING HOME FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS, EAST MELBOURNE.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year, 1908:—

The health of the inmates has, as usual, been excellent, we only had one case of sickness, that was the youngest child had croup.

The conduct has been excellent, since the troublesome girls have been removed, we have had no trouble at all.

The service girls are staying out fairly well, and, in most cases, are giving satisfaction, they behave wonderfully well, and keep so honest and respectable; I have had no complaints of bad conduct during the year.

We have had a number of visits from the girls at service, who have come here on their days off, we had 80 visits in two months; we have a visitors' book for them to write their names in.

On 23rd December we had a number of old service girls to afternoon tea, about twenty-five in all, some were unable to come as it was so near Christmas; in the evening two of the service girls—Phoebe Westcott and Minnie Burrows—gave the inmates a Christmas tree, which was a great success, Phoebe had been working for months to get the presents ready. She has turned out a good girl; she has bought herself a sewing machine, and makes her own dresses; she is sixteen years of age. The thanks of the Committee are due to our honorary doctors and dentist, Dr. W. R. Boyd, and his brother, Dr. I. H. Boyd. They are most kind and attentive when necessary, and Mr. Baker, the dentist, still looks after their teeth.

The ladies of the committee are most grateful to the friends who have given donations in money or kind, to enable them to carry on the Home, and to give the children and girls a Merry Christmas. We had all sorts of things sent here, including fifteen plum puddings. They are also grateful to the friends who have visited the Home, and taken an interest in the girls and their welfare. The Rev. Newport White and the ladies from the Missionary Training Home have been most attentive. The latter hold services here on Tuesday evenings, the girls take a real interest in them, and greatly benefit by the teaching received.

We have been able to give the girls several picnics and treats during the year, including a Sunday School picnic, and a picnic to Mr. Armytage's, at "Como," Toorak, Miss Armytage kindly paying all expenses, and doing all in her power to give the girls a happy day.

LILIAN M. WATSON, Matron.

MINTARO REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS, MONNEGATTA.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1908. In doing so, it gives me much pleasure to be able to state that the work of the year has been of a satisfactory nature, and whilst at times we have had our difficulties, yet, on the whole, the discipline of the Home has been well maintained, and the girls generally have rendered a cheerful obedience.

The training given in the Home is efficient and useful. The majority of the girls are prepared for domestic service, and those who have them in their employ speak very highly of their general efficiency. Not all of the girls, however, are fitted for this class of work, and when a girl shows an aptitude for higher branches of employment, we invariably seek to prepare that girl for the position she is best able to fill. In this we have been successful in several cases. In a word, we strive to give every girl the best possible opportunity of future usefulness.

In April last we were able to again send the girls for a week's holiday by the sea. It took over a month to accomplish this, and the labour of arrangement was not small. Still, the end justified the effort, in the physical and moral uplift it brought into the lives of the girls. The health of the inmates of this home has been exceedingly good, and, save a few minor ailments, no sickness has come to us. Dr. J. F. Wilkinson, of Melbourne, and Dr. Murdock, from Romsey, are our medical advisers, and Mr. J. W. Tuckfield is our honorary dentist.

The girls in situations are giving general satisfaction. Of course, some are doing better than others, but, on the whole, there is not much cause for complaint, and we have absolutely no difficulty in placing all the girls, immediately they are fit to leave the Home. Indeed, many of the best homes in this State are at our disposal, in which we may place our girls. We strive to keep in touch with the girls after they have passed beyond control, and one of the features of this year's work has been the evident desire on the part of many of the girls to keep in close touch with us. Several of them have been to us for their holidays, and apparently greatly enjoyed themselves. The doors of Mintaro are never closed against those that we can help in this way.

The moral and religious side of our work is not forgotten. The girls are regularly instructed in Sunday school and Bible class, and elementary secular instruction where it is necessary. Divine service is also conducted every Lord's Day at the Home. We always keep before us the moral uplift in the character of the girls committed to our care, and count no work well done unless this is secured. We are contemplating several alterations in our property at Mintaro, which will enable us to classify the girls better, and approximate, as nearly as possible, to a cottage system of home life.

Christmas and New Year brought their usual festivities, and every girl, both in and out of the Home, was lovingly remembered by interested Christian friends. We have also had our regular recreations, both indoor and out, as the weather permits. These, with our quarterly social evenings, help to make the life of the home bright and cheerful, and thus prepare them again for their new life in the outside world.

EMILY A. ADAMSON, Matron.

RIDDELL'S CREEK REFORMATORY.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1908.

Throughout the year, our work amongst the girls has been very encouraging, and although the material has been rough, yet success has attended our efforts. Girls who have entered life on altogether wrong lines have seen the folly of the same, and have chosen the right.

Letters and reports have reached us in regard to many girls who have been discharged, which prove that time, labour, love, patience, and money have not been spent in vain.

The training in housework, various kinds of needlework and knitting, has been continued during the year in a thorough manner.

The Home has been visited by a splendid band, and entertainments of the bioscope, &c., have also been given, and have been much appreciated.

The interest and thoughtfulness of Commissioner and Mrs. McKie in the behalf of the girls have been evinced, as in previous years, and little tokens of their love are highly valued by the girls, as are also the quarterly prizes.

CLARA LANE, Matron.

SUB-REFORMATORY, AT MURRUMBEENA, FOR PROTESTANT GIRLS.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending 31st December, 1908.

There has been a great deal to encourage during the year. Sickness has been almost unknown, and, more pleasing still, in the characters of many of the girls there has been a steady improvement.

The girls attending school seem thankful for the opportunity of bettering themselves. Their earnest attention to lessons makes the teacher's work a pleasure. Useful and necessary instruction is also given in housework, fancywork, &c.

We receive encouraging reports of the girls in situations. Without exception, they are doing well.

At Christmas time, about twenty prizes were distributed for good conduct, school-work, fancy-work, and Bible lessons.

For the girls' pleasure, we have had quite a number of visitors during the year, also entertainments. There was also the annual Christmas treat given by Commissioner and Mrs. McKie, at which each of the girls was presented with a very nice "companion."

The girls present a healthy, pleasant, and happy appearance, and we are hopeful that they will do well when they leave the home.

MARGARET LOWERY, Matron.

OAKLEIGH REFORMATORY FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC GIRLS.

I have the honour to report that the work of this school during the past year shows very satisfactory results, the conditions under which the inmates live and pursue their industrial avocations having been much improved by the addition of new work-rooms, &c.

We desire to thank the many kind friends whose assistance has made this possible, and who continue to aid us in our work in various ways. A lecture, illustrated by limelight views, supplied by Mr. T. O'Leary, proved a fertile source of enjoyment to our young charges.

The health of the girls is generally good, and, on the whole, a spirit of industry is observable among them.

The completion of the addition to the home undertaken during the year makes it now possible for us to accommodate a greater number than are at present under our care.

B. O'ROURKE, Superioress.

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE.

We have visited the Oakleigh Reformatory conducted by the Nuns of the Good Shepherd.

The girls are healthy, and appear cheerful, happy, and quite content with their surroundings, which are all that could be reasonably desired. We are glad to be able to repeat what we have said in our previous reports about the good work done by the Rev. Mother and Sisters, who labour zealously to make the girls happy, and prepare them to become good and useful members of society, when they leave the institution.

We notice with much pleasure the extra accommodation afforded by the recent enlargement of this school, at a cost of about £9,000.

This accommodation will not only be able to afford shelter for more children, but will also enable the good Sisters to make better and more suitable provision for the inmates already under their charge than was possible before.

The dormitories are models of cleanliness and comfort, being thoroughly aired and well ventilated.

The lavatories, &c., are simply perfect as far as convenience, comfort, and cleanliness can make them. The system of sewerage (septic tank system) lately carried out here, must add in no small degree

to the comfort and health of all the inmates. The work-rooms, too, are large and well ventilated, besides being suitably furnished with the necessary requirements for carrying on the work.

We are glad to learn that the girls who have left the institution are giving every satisfaction to their employers. We beg to congratulate the Rev. Mother and Sisters for the admirable manner in which they are conducting the Reformatory.

(Signed) { H. O'CALLAGHAN,
JOHN GAVAN DUFFY,
EDWARD O'DONNELL,
DAN WHITE,
JAMES HOGAN,
T. O'LEARY.

EXCELSIOR HOME FOR BOYS, BRIGHTON.

I have the honour to report on the past year's work. On the whole, it has been highly satisfactory.

I am thankful to say that, in almost every case where the boys have been sent to service, or let home on probation, they are doing well. Many of the latter report themselves here once a month, and experience has shown that they appreciate the trust reposed in them.

The general health has been good, and conduct, with two or three exceptions, exceedingly good, once only was the cane used during the year, and then the superintendent received the cuts in place of the offender, who was made to give three, which proved a severe punishment to the lad, with very good results. Being human, this class of lad is more susceptible to human treatment. They soon lose their waywardness, without recourse to forcible repressive means.

The school reports are good, three of the "home" boys gained prizes at the State school.

I must again acknowledge the services of Dr. Praagst and Mr. Davy; and I take this opportunity of recording my high appreciation of the ready assistance given at all times by the officers of the penal establishment, and to the officers of your Department.

We have had visits from those interested in reformatory work, from this and other States, who express themselves as being pleased with our methods.

I beg to thank all who have helped in my work; but special thanks is due to Judge Moule for his lectures to my boys, and the deep interest he takes in them.

In closing, may I suggest a better method of dealing with the feeble-minded. I would recommend that a trained official competent to impart individual care and instruction, and that they be kept apart, as one may do an incalculable amount of damage amongst others.

W. GROOM, Superintendent.

HEATHFIELD HOME FOR PROTESTANT BOYS, APOLLO BAY.

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1908.

The health of the boys has been good, the climate being a healthy one. One boy had the misfortune to break his arm, which has thoroughly recovered.

The conduct, on the whole, has been fair. There have been abscondings, but that will always happen with this class of boy, the great craving for cigarettes being the cause.

I notice since the introduction of the Children's Courts, we are getting a larger percentage of incorrigible boys, which, I think, shows that the Act is having its desired effect.

The boys are taught farming and dairying in all its various branches, and are fitted to go to situations on farms, and to become respectable citizens.

I find some difficulty in getting openings for boys that are more fitted for trades, &c.

The boys whose terms have expired are doing fairly well.

In conclusion, I must thank the people of the district, and the officers of the Department for their assistance in carrying on the work.

W. H. DUNSTAN, Superintendent.

KINGSBURY REFORMATORY FOR PROTESTANT BOYS, NEWSTEAD.

I have the honour to report that the work done during the past year has been satisfactory.

There were only three boys at the beginning of the year, one of whom absconded early, and has, so far, not been traced.

Four have been admitted during the year. There is one lad at service who is doing well, leaving three in the home at the close of the year.

The health of them all has been good. We had several of the old boys back for a visit, some of whom we had not seen for years, whilst others make it a point of visiting once or twice a year.

There is only one on probation, who is doing well, learning a trade, and living with his mother in town.

In conclusion, I desire to thank all officers of the Department for the help they so readily give.

A. BREBNER, Superintendent.

STRAIGHT VIEW REFORMATORY FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC BOYS, HARCOURT.

I have the honour to forward a report for the year ending 31st December, 1908.

The health of the boys has been excellent, and their conduct during the year has been fairly good.

We had visits from several of the old boys during the year.

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, 1908.

Some of the youths have been troublesome and hard to manage. They have been taught good, useful farm and orchard work, pig and sheep killing and dressing. There is no difficulty in placing them at service as soon as they become trustworthy; and able to command good wages.

I am also in constant communication with those at service, and some whose terms have expired. Several have visited here during the holidays, and hold responsible positions.

No sickness occurred. The boys soon put on condition and muscle.

J. J. MILLANE, Superintendent.