

3. WELLINGTON.

REPORT of the COMMITTEE of JUSTICES at WELLINGTON. Read at the meeting of Justices held 19th July, 1889.

THE committee of Justices appointed by you at a general meeting held on the 28th May to inquire into the matter of neglected and criminal children has completed its investigations, and lays the result before you in the form of nine resolutions.

The evidence of the official authorities has been taken, and it has been found that there is not more than a *pro rata* increase in the amount of juvenile neglect and crime, and that this is liable to fluctuations. It is, however, considered that this rate is altogether too high, and resolutions suggesting proposed amendments in the Police Offences Act and "The Industrial Schools Act, 1882," having for their object the reducing of this rate will be placed before you for consideration.

The statistics supplied by the Education Department are exhaustive and complete. Your committee considers that upon the whole the industrial schools are well conducted, but has some alterations to suggest dealing with the classification of the children and the pursuits to which they should be introduced.

With regard to classification, it is considered that those children who find their way to industrial schools merely through misfortune should not be confounded or mixed with those who are criminal, therefore distinct establishments are necessary for these two classes.

Taking into consideration the generally over-supplied state of labour in the towns and mechanical pursuits, and the large quantity of land in this new country requiring intelligent occupation, your committee feels strongly the desirability of the children now sent to the industrial schools being trained to agricultural and pastoral pursuits, for which purpose it is necessary that farms should be set apart, where this instruction shall be properly organized and conducted.

Resolutions passed at the Meeting of the Justices of Wellington held on the 19th July, 1889.

1. That it is desirable to obtain legislation for the purpose of preventing the present habit of great numbers of children under fourteen years of age wandering about and congregating in the streets and waste places in towns after dark.

2. That any child under fourteen years of age apprehended for or charged with any offence punishable on summary conviction shall be brought before a special Court, and not before any ordinary Court of criminal jurisdiction, and shall not be committed to any gaol.

3. That the Court to exercise jurisdiction in these matters shall be called a "Disciplinary Court," and shall consist of a committee of seven Justices, to be annually nominated in a manner to be provided, of whom any two shall form a quorum.

4. That the special Court shall have power to investigate all cases of juvenile offences or neglect, including wilful destruction of property and such cases as are contemplated in Resolution 1, and power to inflict at its discretion birching, not exceeding strokes in any one case, or to commit to an Industrial School.

5. That, where it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Court that parents have failed to exercise proper control, the parents shall be charged jointly with the children brought before the Court, and if the children are not committed to an Industrial School the parents shall be liable to a fine not exceeding

6. That the committee have reason to believe that the responsibility of parents for the maintenance of children committed to Industrial Schools is not duly enforced, and they recommend that it be made imperative on the committing Magistrate to strictly enforce contribution to maintenance from the parents or guardians.

7. That a distinction be made between children who are criminal and those who have been merely unfortunate or neglected, and that they be separated and confined to distinct establishments.

8. That farms be set apart, one for each class of children, where they be taught agricultural and pastoral pursuits, with a distinct view to their becoming useful settlers upon the land upon reaching manhood.

9. That legislation is desirable in the direction of preventing children under ten years of age selling papers after dark about the streets.

4. CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Office, Kaiapoi, 30th April, 1889.

I have the honour to forward for your consideration the attached copy of a report I have drawn up at the request of the Justices attending the Christchurch and other Courts, together with a letter covering certain resolutions passed at a meeting of the Justices in the Leeston and Southbridge districts.

The resolutions passed and the report I have now to submit to you have been unanimously agreed to by the Justices, and were adopted after much and careful consideration, with a view of strengthening the hands of the Magistrates in dealing with cases of juvenile offenders. I have delayed forwarding the papers, as I understood meetings for the consideration of like resolutions were likely to be carried in other districts.

I have, &c.,

CALEB WHITEFOORD,

Resident Magistrate

The Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington.