

SESS. II.—1897.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# STATE CHILDREN'S COUNCIL.

REPORT OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE CHILDREN'S COUNCIL, AS PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATURE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACT.

*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by leave.*

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SIR,— State Children's Department, Adelaide, 26th July, 1897.  
We have the honour, in accordance with section 19 of "The State Children Act, 1895," to respectfully forward the following report of the State Children's Council for the year ended 30th June, 1897:—

## THE COUNCIL.

The Council met sixteen times during the year, and the meetings were attended by the different members as follows: The President (Mr. Thomas Rhodes, J.P.), 16; Lady Colton, 14; Mrs. Bonython, 15; Mrs. Brown, 10; Mrs. Finlayson, 11; Miss Baker, 11; Miss Clark, 11; Miss Spence, 15; Dr. O'Connell, 9; Dr. Robertson, 14; Mr. Goode, 13; Mr. McPherson, 14. The members have also attended thirty-two committee meetings, and have visited the institutions a number of times. Mrs. Finlayson is away in Europe on leave for about a year.

## PROPOSED AMENDED LEGISLATION.

The amending Bill referred to at length in the last annual report is being drafted, and the Council sincerely trusts that it will be passed during the present session of Parliament. In addition to the provisions referred to last year the Bill, it is hoped, will contain powers which it is believed will in some measure tend to stem the apparently increasing tide of juvenile depravity.

## INTENDED CHANGES IN THE ESTABLISHMENTS.

For some considerable time past it has been felt that the plan of having the Boys' Reformatory and the Industrial School in the same building at Magill is not desirable. During the last twelve months the increase in the number of inmates of both institutions has made the providing of additional accommodation for both schools absolutely necessary. The committal to the Reformatory of boys of sixteen to eighteen years of age, whose knowledge of crime and vice is much greater than that of the younger boys, has made the task of training and reforming the inmates more onerous than formerly. The Council has had to recognise that effective classification is essential for the conduct of the institution, and to carry out this classification increased room is requisite. This necessity alone is sufficient reason for the proposed changes; and the increased population of the Industrial School—consisting mainly of girls aged from fifteen to eighteen years—is an additional and very strong motive for the removal of this institution from close proximity to the Boys' Reformatory. It is therefore intended to transfer the Industrial School to the premises at Edwardstown, now occupied as a reformatory for girls, and to remove the Protestant Reformatory girls from there to the ex-gaol at Redruth, the Roman Catholic girls having already been sent to the denominational reformatory at St. John's, Kapunda. The Redruth premises are now being altered to meet the requirements of a reformatory, and in about three months these changes will be effected. When the Industrial School is transferred from Magill the whole of the premises there will be utilised for the needs of the Boys' Reformatory, and the disadvantages under which that establishment is now carried on will, it is hoped, be removed. The Reformatory will then be better able than now to successfully deal with all boys committed, for the land attached to the institution is ample to give remunerative employment to the inmates; the extra accommodation will provide the necessary, proper, and effective means of classification, and the institution of a drum-and-fife band, together with more complete military drill, will, it is believed, result in the thorough reformation of a large proportion of the lads received.

## THE DEPARTMENTAL COURT.

For some months past only neglected and destitute children have been tried at the Departmental Court, the Police Magistrate having elected to hear charges of larceny in the Justices' room at the Police Court, as the clause in the State Children Act, which was passed in order to make it compulsory for all children to be tried away from the Police Courthouse, is so worded as to allow all charges not punishable on summary conviction to be heard at a place other than this department.