

eleven females) were given the benefit of the first of these sections, it would, I submit, be still more so if, by a well arranged but unobtrusive supervision of these probationary careers, some idea of the result of the operation of the section could be obtained, and I venture to express the hope that this will yet be realised. Section 354 seems to have been allowed to remain inoperative for another year.

*Receiving Dépôts, Royal Park.*—The health and conduct of the very large number of children that passed through the dépôts during the year have upon the whole been satisfactory. The Matron has found herself compelled to ask for an addition to the buildings in consequence of the increased number she has at times to accommodate, and I purpose shortly submitting for your consideration a public-works requisition for two new wards, which I trust will meet with your approval. The thanks of the department are cordially rendered to William Peterson, Esq., and other kind friends for another year's periodical gift of valuable and useful Christmas presents of toys, &c., for the children of these and the other schools connected with the department. In addition to the committee, who visit here regularly, taking the deepest interest in their work, the children have the great advantage of weekly visits from clergymen and ladies and gentlemen, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, for the purpose of imparting to them religious instruction. I regret to say that no outlet has yet been found for disposing with safety to themselves and the general public of the girls to whom I referred in my last and several previous reports, as being mentally and physically unfit to be sent out into the world to earn their living, and yet who are not considered sufficiently deficient to warrant their committal to and detention in an asylum, and for whom we have failed to gain admission to any of the other institutions. There can be no doubt that the continued presence of such girls in a place like the dépôt, where they must necessarily mix more or less with the other inmates, who are mostly young children, is very undesirable. The Matron is continually urging that she should be relieved of them, as, in addition to their incapacity, they are in most instances free from legal control, and consequently cause her a great deal of extra anxiety and trouble in knowing how best to discipline them. I am aware that many other institutions have a similar difficulty on their hands, and are equally pressing for relief; but in the absence of fresh legislation, which apparently is necessary to enable such cases to be more effectually and suitably dealt with than at present, I see nothing for it, so far as this department is concerned, but to do our best to, as far as possible, isolate such girls from the other inmates; and the increased accommodation that the Matron is asking for, and to which I have already referred, will in a greater measure allow of this being done.

*Protestant Training-school for Girls.*—There is still a larger number of children at this school than in former years in consequence of the reduced demand for young servants prevailing at present, but which it is hoped will gradually disappear as the times improve. Meanwhile the inmates have the advantage of the additional excellent training they receive by their further stay in the school, which will doubtless be of ultimate benefit to themselves and their future employers. The matron, Mrs. Banner, speaks in the highest terms of the conduct and generally of the health of her girls, and she will be glad to receive early applications from ladies who may have an opening for any of them in their service.

*Roman Catholic Industrial Schools.*—The Reverend Mother Superioress of these schools reports favourably as to the conduct and health of the children under her care, and I have again to thank her for her willingness to receive the cases that are not deemed suitable for treatment in foster-homes, or, having been tried there, are withdrawn for special reasons and sent to her for a time. Thanks are also due to her for the large number of children she is from time to time taking into Abbotsford that would otherwise, in many instances, probably become a cost to the State by drifting into the hands of the police for committal to the care of this department.

*Boys' Private Reformatories.*—I have in former yearly reports dwelt so fully on the internal working of these private reformatory schools, and their management generally, and also the very excellent results that were being obtained from their establishment, that it seems now only necessary, and it will avoid the appearance of repetition, for me to say that our satisfactory experience of former years is being fully maintained. During the year we had the satisfaction of seeing the "Mount Paradise" Farm Reformatory, for Roman Catholic boys only, opened at Pakenham under the management of Mr. James Millane, who has his mother and several grown-up brothers and sisters associated with him in the good work. They are all taking a deep interest in the lads, and, like those who have been longer engaged at similar work in the other private reformatory schools, feel themselves more or less personally responsible for making the management of their particular school and its results a success.

*Brookside Protestant Reformatory for Girls.*—Mrs. Rowe's report of the year's work is again full of interest. She has, as in former years, met with a few cases of discouragement, but in the large majority of instances the girls are conducting themselves well, both in the cottages and in their service homes. The continued success of the goldfields opened up recently in the immediate vicinity of the school brings an undesirable population, from a reformatory for girls point of view, in too close proximity, which is necessarily causing considerable anxiety as to the suitability of Brookside in the future as a reformatory for girls. Consequently, Mrs. Rowe has already taken steps to meet such a contingency, should it arise, by opening a sub-reformatory on the 3rd March last, under the management of Miss Faris, and in connection with Brookside, and to which she has drafted twelve or fourteen of her girls. St. Ann's, the name of this new venture, is beautifully situated a few miles from Heywood, in the Portland district, and has an area of about 320 acres, on which ample employment of a suitable and varied kind will at all times be available for the inmates.

*Salvation Army Protestant Reformatory for Girls.*—The girls at this school are well reported upon as to their conduct and health. They are taught all kinds of domestic work, as at the other schools, and there can be no doubt that a genuine personal interest is taken in their welfare by every officer who comes in contact with them. I understand it is the intention of the Salvation Army authorities to shortly remove the inmates to Pakenham Reformatory, when it is vacated by the boys, who are about to be transferred to a farm at Bayswater, which has lately been opened as a boys' reformatory, and which, I may say in passing, is admirably adapted for the purpose. This will be a change in the right direction, as it will enable the matron to find more varied and suitable employment for her girls in the country than she can in their present quarters.