

"7. That St. Mary's Industrial School, being a private school under 'The Industrial Schools Act, 1882,' stands on a different footing to Government industrial schools, and is not subject to the same supervision and inspection as Government schools, although the majority of the boys at the school are committed there by Magistrates, and supported by Government or Charitable Aid Boards."

This is a complaint not against the management of the school, but against the existing law affecting all private schools under "The Industrial Schools Act, 1882," and will be dealt with in our recommendations.

On the occasion of a recent visit which we made to the school, we gave the boys an opportunity of making any complaints they desired to make to us. Ten complained. We examined them separately. The complaints were of strokes with the supplejack and rough treatment. Some of these complaints were trivial; none were serious.

At a sitting held subsequent to the issue of the supplementary commission a complaint was made by one Frank McCormick, an ex-inmate of the school, of short feeding and severe treatment, which, as it related to events occurring more than five years ago, was outside our inquiry.

A boy named Thomas Lane, an inmate now in the hospital, who had previously given evidence in support of a complaint by the Charitable Aid Board, complained of ill-treatment, and that he had not received some article his mother told him she had given the Brothers for him; but, as it was shown the mother had died at Wellington in 1895, we made no further inquiries. A letter written by this boy at the hospital on 8th June last addressed to Brother Loctus in terms of affection and gratitude, very inconsistent with his evidence, was produced, and will be found in the appendix.

A statement was made to us by William Ross, a former inmate, that he had been informed an inmate of the school named Thomas Lynch had told some other boy that one of the Brothers had acted indecently with him. We had the boy brought to us, and examined him carefully, the examination being reported in the evidence herewith, with the result that we are satisfied the imputation was a fiction, or, as the boy himself put it, a lie.

Reviewing the evidence given by inmates and ex-inmates respecting the discipline and management of the school, we feel a great deal of it was tainted by exaggeration, the result of strong personal antagonism to certain of the Brothers who have now been removed.

The management of the school by the Brothers has not been satisfactory in respect of the cleanliness of the body and clothing of the inmates, while the condition of one of the dormitories, which is infested with fleas, and of the one used by boys of dirty habits, is not creditable. The limited amount of bath accommodation in the house, and the failure to keep the hot-water apparatus in order, together with the absence of proper and sufficient conveniences accessible from the dormitories, are matters which should receive immediate attention. There should be at least four baths supplied with warm water. A new range has been purchased at a cost of over £90, which has not yet been erected, but which will not only afford better facilities for cooking, but provide a sufficient supply of hot water. The bedding, with the exception above referred to, is good and sufficient.

The Marist Brothers have had no experience in the Australasian Colonies except at Stoke, of any but day-schools, and are therefore untrained in the special duties involved in the management of boys permanently with them, while the habit of life of members of the Order cannot be regarded as calculated to develop those characteristics which are necessary to engender such feelings as should exist in those having charge of young lads. This want would be especially felt by boys as young as nine years, at which age they are, as a rule, passed from the boys' school in charge of the Sisters at Nelson to the school at Stoke, although in cases of unusual precocity they are removed earlier.

The number and ages of boys at both schools are as follows :—

<i>At Nelson.</i>				<i>At Stoke.</i>			
2 aged 3 years.		6 aged 7 years.		2 aged 7 years.		13 aged 12 years.	
1	4	5	8	1	8	24	13
5	5	1	9	7	9	22	14
4	6	1	10	10	10	8	15
				14	11	2	15

Our opinion is that no institution for young boys can be efficiently conducted so as to secure cleanliness in their surroundings, and proper attention in regard to their under-clothing, linen, and bedding, without the assistance of women. In cases of sickness, the