

With regard to the punishment of inmates who may be brought before a Magistrate under section 67 for absconding or other misconduct, and ordered to be sent back to the school when they are punished, we feel strongly that the punishment should be ordered specifically by the Magistrate, and that, if whipping is ordered, it should be given by the police, and not by the school authorities. As showing the necessity for this, we may state that the two boys found in the cells by the members of the Charitable Aid Board who visited the school on the 30th May last had absconded, and were ordered by the Magistrate to be sent back to the school and punished, and were placed in the cells—the usual punishment at the school for absconders.

The want of classification of the inmates at Stoke necessarily adds very much to the difficulty of maintaining discipline in such an institution. The constantly recurring introduction into the school of boys fresh from crime or scenes of vice must keep in a constant ferment the evil existing amongst those already there. We learnt at the school that the Brothers make every effort to prevent the knowledge of the ground of a boy's committal to the school being known, so that all can be on a common footing, and, when they leave, go to the world as from the "Orphanage." When we consider the inmates consist of two classes—criminal and neglected or indigent children—it appears to us that a great risk of injury to one class is incurred for the sake of the other, and that the more unworthy. We are of opinion that criminal children newly committed should, before being associated with the other inmates, undergo a period of probation in some part of the institution (it might be called "the reformatory") set apart for the purpose. We further think it desirable that inmates who have been licensed out for work, and who have returned to the school, should, as far as possible, be kept apart from the ordinary inmates.

It is notable that, no complaint having been previously made, the suggestions of the members of the Nelson Charitable Aid Board on the occasion of their visit to the school in May last were received in good spirit and promptly acted upon: this, with the desire expressed by the authorities of the school that it should be placed under the same regulations and departmental inspection as the Government schools, leads us to anticipate satisfactory results from our inquiry.

We desire to express to your Excellency our recognition of the assistance given to us in our investigations by Mr. Hogben, Secretary of the Education Department; by Mr. Harley, as counsel for the Nelson Charitable Aid Board; and by Mr. Fell, as counsel for the school authorities.

We now return to your Excellency the commissions with which you honoured us, together with the evidence taken, and appendix.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals, this eighteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred.

(L.S.)

R. BUSH.

(L.S.)

H. S. WARDELL.

NOTE.—While entirely agreeing with the foregoing report, I am of opinion that the whole of the old staff of instructors should be replaced by a new one, so as to enable the institution to be carried on for the future entirely free of old associations.

R. BUSH, Commissioner.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Hon. the MINISTER of EDUCATION to the Very Rev. Dean MAHONEY.

SIR,— Office of the Minister of Education, Wellington, 27th August, 1900.

I have the honour to forward herewith copy of the report of the Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor to inquire into and report on the management of the Industrial School for Boys at Stoke, and the treatment of the inmates therein within the last five years.

From this report I regret to find that the punishment of boys at the school has been more severe than is allowed at Government industrial schools, and is more severe than should be allowed at any school. The supplejack has been freely used, and in some cases with great severity. Cuffs and blows, and in two cases kicks, were given by Brother Kilian. Brother Wybertus has been guilty of violence, and both have been proved unsuitable for the position. I am glad to hear that these Brothers have been removed from the school.

The charge of flogging on the bare posterior within five years of the date of the commission has not been proved, and the Commissioners are satisfied that there has been no case of flogging for more than four years and a half.

The cell punishment at Stoke has been much in excess of that authorised at the Government schools, and is more than should be allowed.

In some cases the confinement has been continuous for an unreasonable period. On reading over the evidence and the findings of the Commission, one can scarcely credit that boys should