

The branch at Stoke, which is five miles from Nelson, is used for boys of nine years and upwards, the younger boys and girls being at the Convent at Nelson. The Rev. Father Mahoney resides at Nelson, and is Manager under the Act of both branches.

The development of the institution, and increase in the number of children, led to the acquisition of 675 acres of land at Stoke, and the erection of the present buildings thereon, at a total cost of some £11,000. The property belongs to the archdiocese, and is vested in trustees, of whom Archbishop Redwood is one. The buildings are good, the playground, football- and cricket-grounds, and swimming-bath excellent; but the baths in the house are insufficient.

There is now a debt on the property of £5,000, secured by mortgage, £500 having been paid off during the last two years. Of this sum £300 was taken from the revenue of the school, and £200 was a legacy to Father Mahoney given for the purpose.

Prior to 1890, Father Mahoney had personal management of the school, but in January of that year an arrangement was come to by which the charge of the school was taken over by an Order known as Marist Brothers, a French religious Order of laymen devoted to the instruction of poor boys, under a convention with the trustees, dated 13th May, 1889, by virtue of which the Order is empowered to receive all revenue of the estate and school, and employ the same for the purposes of the institution, a liability remaining with the trustees to supplement the funds if insufficient, with a proviso that, while following in their teaching the methods and rules of their society, they will in all things conform to the laws of the country. The Superior-General of this Order, which numbers some six thousand members throughout the world, resides in France, its members in this and neighbouring colonies being under the immediate control of the Brother Provincial, who is stationed at Sydney, and who visits the schools under the charge of his Order in this colony twice a year, at intervals of about six months.

The staff of the school consists of ten Brothers (of whom one is director) and various employés. Two of the Brothers (including the director) are foreigners, the others English, Irish, Scotch, and Colonials.

No salary is paid to the Brothers, but £15 a year is charged against the income of the school for the clothing, &c., of each of them. The whole revenue is devoted to the institution, none going out of the colony except for goods purchased.

The total number of boys on the books of the school is 224, of whom 125 are resident at Stoke. In respect of fifty-nine of these, the State, by the Education Department, pays directly to the manager the sum of 7s. per week each; while the various Charitable Boards pay for thirty-nine, who have been committed from their districts as indigent children, the amounts following:—

Dunedin Charitable Aid Board, for 9 boys, 6s. 6d. per week each.				
Oamaru	"	1	"	7s.
Timaru	"	1	"	7s.
Christchurch	"	4	"	6s.
Westport	"	2	"	6s.
Greymouth	"	4	"	7s.
Reefton	"	2	"	6s. 6d.
Nelson	"	5	"	7s.
Nelson	"	2	"	5s.
Picton	"	2	"	6s.
Wellington	"	5	"	7s.
Wanganui	"	1	"	6s. 6d.
Auckland	"	1	"	6s. 6d.

And there are twenty-seven for whom no payment by the State is being made.

In response to the public notification of your Excellency's commission of July, a series of complaints were preferred by the Nelson Charitable Aid Board against the management of the school, and one in respect of the limited right of inspection given by statute. The Board was represented before your Commissioners by Mr. Harley as counsel, and the school authorities by Mr. Fell.

The complaints of the Nelson Charitable Aid Board were as follows:—

1. That, although many of the boys at the school are very young, the school is entirely under the management of unmarried men, no matron having been employed there for many years.
2. That the punishment of the boys at the school has been and is more severe than is allowed at Government industrial schools, and more severe than should be allowed in such a school as St. Mary's.