

SESSION II.
1906.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:
BURNHAM INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.
(REPORT OF COMMISSIONER.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable William Lee, Baron Plunket, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

I, the Commissioner appointed by Your Excellency's Letters Patent of the 23rd August, 1906, which Letters Patent were extended on the 19th September, 1906, and by which I was to inquire into the management of the Burnham Industrial School and the treatment of the resident inmates thereof during the last two years in regard to the following matters, that is to say:—

Scope of inquiry : Commission.

- (a.) The suitability and efficacy of the methods adopted in the said school for the classification of the inmates in sections or grades for reformatory treatment:
- (b.) The general treatment of the inmates, having regard to humanity on the one hand and the maintenance of proper discipline on the other:
- (c.) The treatment of the inmates in sickness, and, in particular, the treatment of the inmate Edward Arthur Lewis during or about the months of May and June last:
- (d.) The duties of the members of the staff and whether or not such duties or the conditions under which they are performed entail any undue hardship:
- (e.) The relations between the Manager and Matron and the staff of attendants under their control, and the discretion or otherwise exercised by the Manager and Matron in respect of their dealings with such attendants:

And upon the evidence brought before me in my proceedings as aforesaid, and upon any other evidence that I might in this behalf obtain (but without having regard to the limit of time thereinbefore expressed), to report my opinion as to the extent to which the said school has been successful in improving the moral and social conditions of the inmates, and is generally fulfilling the purpose of a reformatory, have to report as follows:—

(a.) CLASSIFICATION.

Burnham buildings: Method of classification.

The buildings at Burnham are very old, very straggling, and very inconvenient, and do not readily lend themselves to efficient classification. At the present time the inmates are divided into four classes. The classes I, II, and III are each divided into Grades A, B, and C. Class IV is the detention-yard section.

On admission each inmate is classified according to the circumstances of his committal, age, and previous character. He is placed in Grade C of the class decided upon as appropriate to his case. He remains in that grade for six months. If his conduct is satisfactory during that period he is promoted to Grade B of the same class, and if he continues satisfactory, to Grade A; and so on to the highest grade in the highest class obtainable.

Monitors.

Monitors are selected on account of fitness, age, and conduct.

Class I.

In Class I are placed the younger and exceptionally well-conducted boys, whose character and circumstances of committal are very carefully considered. These are kept apart as much as possible from other inmates. They have the advantage of a special recreation-room and playground, and they occupy a separate dormitory. From this class are selected the boys who reside in the two so-called cottage homes in connection with the institution, and who on that account are considered to have greater privileges than the boys actually resident in the institution. I shall have occasion hereafter to refer to these cottage homes at some greater length.

Class II.

In Class II there are those boys who are not fit for Class I, but whose continuance in their class constitutes a sort of period of probation. These boys are kept apart as much as possible from those of Class III, and a portion of the large playground is reserved for them, and they sleep in a separate dormitory.

Class III.

Those boys in Class III are the older, bigger, and more troublesome ones, who by reason of their general conduct and demeanour require firm discipline. They are kept to themselves as much as possible. They can qualify without difficulty for promotion into a higher class.

Class IV. Detention-yard for "incurrigibles." Need for removal of these boys.

Class IV is the detention-yard section, and this contains the most troublesome and dangerous boys in the institution. It is made up generally of absconders from the school who have been guilty of crime, of boys transferred from gaol, of hardened offenders, and defectives of a low type. This detention-yard was established by the Education Department in August, 1903, and was designed to supply what was then considered a crying need. It was a practical admission of a defect in the reformatory system, which herded all sorts of boys together in the one institution, with very little facility for real classification. It was a recognition of the absolute necessity for exceptional treatment of a number of boys who might be termed "incurrigibles," and who were at all times and under all conditions a source of contamination to the other inmates. I am not going to discuss here whether this yard was rightly and wisely established, or whether it has adequately served its purpose. This may be all a matter of opinion, and it is sufficient to state that the yard exists, and is believed to serve a good purpose. It is a piece of ground enclosed by a high fence, with a portion of it covered over as a shed, presumably for use in wet weather. In this enclosure the delinquents do such work as is possible under existing conditions, and they are subjected to, and thoroughly need, very strict discipline. The yard has its special attendant. The boys there are kept apart from the other inmates to a larger extent than the other classes, but they have their meals in the common room, and on occasions work outside with the other boys. The average number of boys in the yard is from ten to twelve, and the period of detention varies from a few hours to as much as seventeen months in the case of one boy. No stronger proof could be adduced of the necessity for improved classification in our reformatory system than the existence of this yard. But the reform must come, not by improved classification within the institution as now existing, but by the entire removal of these and other boys to another institution or institutions, where no opportunity of contamination can possibly exist. I hold very strongly the opinion that so long as certain boys are allowed to remain at Burnham the State is not doing its duty by those other children in the institution, whose care and reform it has undertaken, and whom it is morally bound to do its very best to turn into good and decent citizens. I shall have occasion at a later period of this report to return to this subject.

Classification not maintained.

The attendants throughout the institution are instructed to keep the classes as much apart as possible. This is necessarily very difficult to do during working hours, owing to the nature of the work required to be done by the boys. The classes, as I have already stated, play in separate playgrounds, and are kept as far as possible in separate recreation-rooms. They all, however, have their meals in the same room. On Sundays the three sections, I, II, and III, march together, though nominally in separate sections.

Pocket-money.

A system of pocket-money exists, by which the boys benefit according to their classes. There is considerable inducement offered here to boys to behave themselves, and by promotion to obtain increased benefits in this direction.

(b.) GENERAL TREATMENT OF INMATES.

General treatment good.

The general treatment of the inmates is distinctly good. As the result of a very long and exhaustive inquiry, I consider that it is amply shown that all possible regard has been had to the true interests of the boys, while an honest attempt has been made to enforce such discipline as, being absolutely necessary, it has been possible to carry out under most difficult circumstances.

Punishments. Exceptional case.

Under this heading, of course, has to be considered the question of punishments. A considerable amount of corporal punishment is inflicted at Burnham for all sorts of offences, varying in severity according to the Manager's view of the seriousness of the offence. I hold no brief for or against corporal punishment in industrial schools. Personally I am, as a rule, opposed to corporal punishment; but I fully recognise that a large number of persons, whose opinions are

entitled to carry more weight than mine, and who certainly have as full a sense of responsibility, consider that this form of punishment is the only means by which you can appeal to the type of boys who are at Burnham. This, of course, implies that the fear of physical pain is the only deterrent from wrong-doing. However this may be, I do hold the most decided opinion that when it is considered necessary to inflict such punishment it should only be done with the utmost discretion. There has been given in evidence an account of one occasion upon which corporal punishment has been inflicted on a lad by ex-attendant Crowley that is positively sickening in its details. Such a result as has been described should be absolutely impossible under all circumstances, and I am glad to know that this is an isolated case. Mr. Archey is in no way responsible for the affair, as he was not at Burnham at the time.

(c.) TREATMENT OF INMATES IN SICKNESS.

All reasonable care shown to the sick. Case of E. A. Lewis. Allegations of cruelty not warranted.

In my opinion, all reasonable care is shown to sick inmates. It is, of course, very easy to be wise after the event; but in considering any case—and they are very few—in which, perhaps, there may be circumstances that would appear to point to a certain degree of carelessness or neglect, it must not be lost sight of that there is no attendant in the institution who has the slightest pretensions to trained knowledge of sickness or nursing. With children it frequently happens that symptoms of illness vary greatly, and are often difficult to diagnose. An ailment may thus, to the average lay judgment, appear to be slight and trifling, or to have been overcome, and may afterwards prove to have been but the forerunner of a serious and even dangerous malady. These remarks seem to me emphatically to apply to the case of the inmate Edward Arthur Lewis. This lad is sixteen years of age, and does not give one the impression of being a boy of very robust physique. He was first taken ill on the 22nd May, 1906, and complained of sore throat. To avoid any possible risk of contagion, and to enable his condition to be watched, he was removed into the room of the sub-matron, where he remained for some time, and then back to the dormitory. His condition by this time was so much improved that there was every justification for the belief on the part of those immediately responsible that he was quite convalescent. On Thursday, the 31st May, and on the following day he was up and about the institution. On the Saturday morning he got up and had breakfast with the other boys. In the afternoon of that day he went to look on at a football match, and returned to the institution about 5 p.m. During the whole of this time he himself states that he was feeling quite well, and his appearance and demeanour certainly gave no indication that there was anything the matter with him. On the Sunday morning he got up with the other boys, and did his turn of work in the kitchen. After morning parade he went for a short walk, and then returned and had dinner. Up to this time he says that he felt perfectly well. In the afternoon he went for a longer walk, and then began to feel stiff and tired. He was given the option of going to bed, but declined to do so, and sat up with the other boys. On Monday he remained in bed all day, feeling very stiff and unwell. On Tuesday he was taken back to the Sub-matron's room, where he remained during the whole of that day and Wednesday. On Thursday, the 7th June, he was brought to the Christchurch Hospital, where he still is, though now convalescent. He was found to be suffering from a severe attack of sub-acute rheumatism, and there is little doubt in my mind that, owing to the boy's low condition of health, as the result of the first attack of tonsillitis, he contracted the rheumatic attack when standing in the playing-field viewing a game of football on Saturday, the 2nd June—a cold, raw, winter day. Of course, it is most regrettable that the lad should have suffered to the extent he has done, but I am in no wise prepared to hold any person in Burnham responsible for it. It seems to me that it is one of those unfortunate occurrences that might happen to a lad at any time, under the most favourable circumstances. There is absolutely nothing in the evidence to warrant the serious allegations of inhumanity and cruelty that have been made against the management, and it seems to me that no person, reading the evidence, can come to any other conclusion. During the progress of this inquiry the cases of other inmates have been fully investigated, which were alleged to indicate a lack of consideration on the part of those in authority. I do not propose to refer to these in detail. I am convinced from the evidence that no blame can reasonably attach to either the Manager or the Matron in connection with these cases.

(d.) DUTIES AND CONDITIONS OF THE STAFF.

Burnham staff.

The staff at Burnham is composed of the following, in addition to the Manager and Matron: Male—Clerk and assistant-clerk, storeman, labour master, gardener, carpenter, shoemaker, tailor, first farm hand, second farm hand, detention-yard attendant, schoolmaster, cook. Female—Sub-matron, machinist, laundress. Their duties are set out in a return which has been put in as an exhibit.

Hours and conditions. Qualifications of attendants.

It is certain that the hours are long, and that the conditions under which the attendants work are exceedingly trying. The work is of a peculiar nature, inasmuch as in addition to his ordinary duties each attendant has to take his turn at the more intimate and special work of controlling, supervising, and, I might almost say, humanising, the boys. An enormous amount of special responsibility is thus cast upon each individual attendant, and it must be apparent that no man can possibly do his fullest measure of duty to the inmates unless he has certain qualifications of a special nature, and takes such interest in the boys with whom he is brought into close and constant contact as will enable him to study and understand their characters and natures. Necessarily a good attendant must be a good disciplinarian; but a great deal more than this is needed. To secure the very best man, and therefore the most valuable service, it seems to me that the conditions of service and life generally should be made as attractive as may reasonably be. Constant changes

in the staff at Burnham must necessarily mean a loss of power, and there can be no question but that these changes have been far too frequent of late to be other than a distinct injury to the best interests of the institution. A number of these changes have been brought about from various causes, but in several instances the attendants have left to better themselves financially or otherwise. Burnham, as a locality in which to live, is most unattractive, being isolated and dreary, and depressing in its surroundings.

Holidays. Suggested increase of holidays. Scale of pay.

The attendants receive as holidays fourteen days annual leave, one Saturday and Sunday each month (with railway-ticket), and one Sunday in addition each month.

I think that the lot of the average attendant would be very materially improved and his position made very much more attractive by the grant of an extra week's holiday in each year, as well as an extra day's holiday in each month. The extra cost and inconvenience thereby incurred would be more than compensated for by the improved service that would be rendered as the result of an all-round satisfaction. Owing to the distance from Christchurch and the difficulties of getting there and back, the fullest benefit from the present monthly holidays cannot possibly be secured. Speaking generally, there does not seem to be any reason to find fault with the scale of pay. I have not gathered during the course of the inquiry that any real discontent exists on this score. In the case of the assistant-clerk the salary paid would appear to be very small; but then it must be remembered that the duties are those which might be readily discharged by a cadet for a similar wage, in which case the remuneration would be ample. In the case of the present officer, he is evidently contented with his position, or it suits him to remain there; or he would certainly have gone further afield long ere this.

(a.) RELATIONS BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND STAFF.

Statements not repeated on oath.

A number of statements have been made from time to time, both in the public Press and elsewhere, with regard to the treatment of attendants by the Manager and Matron, both as to the hours worked and the want of consideration shown for the staff and their feelings. In order to clear up this matter in the fullest possible way, I have during the course of this inquiry examined upon oath all the present attendants at Burnham and six of the ex-attendants. There can be no doubt that at one time there was a great deal of simmering discontent among certain of the attendants at Burnham; and when the unfortunate incident occurred of Miss Lang being peremptorily discharged while suffering severely in health, this simmering discontent became very active, and culminated in certain statements, seriously reflecting upon the management, being publicly made. Many of these statements were greatly exaggerated, and some of them absolutely untrue. They were, however, circumstantially told, and bore the impress of truth, and quite justified the action of those to whom they were told in taking steps to have the fullest possible inquiry made into the whole condition of things at Burnham. After the most complete inquiry, and the affording of the amplest opportunity to all concerned to substantiate their grievances, I have come to the conclusion that those who complained so loudly were not prepared to substantiate their complaints on oath.

Case of Miss Lang.

The incident in connection with Miss Lang was, as I have already stated, a most unfortunate one. This lady had been at Burnham for some two years in the capacity of machinist, and was a most valued servant of the institution. For some time previous to the trouble she had been working at high pressure, mainly owing to the institution being shorthanded. The Sub-matron had recently left, and Miss Lang had been temporarily acting in that capacity. A Miss Fischer had been taken on as a temporary machinist, but was entirely inexperienced in the general work of the institution, and would be practically helpless in an emergency. Owing to the long hours required to be worked, and to the heavy strain of extra responsibility imposed on Miss Lang, she had run down in health, and was suffering a good deal with her teeth. She decided that she must go to Christchurch to have her teeth attended to, and she asserts that she made the Matron aware of her condition, and explained the position to her, and asked for leave. Mrs. Archey, the Matron, although recognising the fact that Miss Lang was entitled to leave, told her that she could not possibly be spared at that time from the institution, but could take her leave in the following week, and the missed holiday could then be made up to her. Miss Lang then wrote the following note to Mrs. Archey:—

"Mrs. Archey, Matron.

"I REGRET to say I must take my Saturday and Sunday after all. The work is well in advance, and I think Miss Fischer can manage now.

"E. LANG."

Mrs. Archey, regarding this as an act of insubordination, addressed the following note to Miss Lang, terminating her engagement:—

"Memorandum from the Matron, Industrial School, Burnham, to Miss Lang.

"April 14, 1906.

"As you refuse to carry out my orders, your services are no longer required.

"S. ARCHEY, Matron."

Mrs. Archey now states that had she known that Miss Lang was suffering pain to the extent she has since described she would most certainly have allowed her to go, and would have taken over her duties herself. There is, of course, a conflict of evidence between Miss Lang and Mrs. Archey as to the extent of the latter's knowledge of the former's condition of health; but I find it quite impossible to reconcile Miss Lang's present account of her relations with the Matron with the tone and style of her letter to Mr. Archey, written four days after leaving the institution, as follows:—

"Mr. Archey, Manager.

"DEAR SIR,—

"Styx, April 18, 1906.

"Will you kindly return to me the references sent in at the time I applied for position, together with one from the Matron and yourself, which I am sure you will not refuse me, considering the length of time I was there.

"I am sincerely sorry that such a misunderstanding should happen between the Matron and myself. Had she known my state of health she would not have been so unfeeling as to refuse the little I asked for.

"Kindly forward my references by return post, as I have another position in view.

"Yours sincerely,

"E. LANG."

This letter practically represents the whole incident as the result of a misunderstanding between the two, and admits a want of complete knowledge of the circumstances on Mrs. Archey's part. The whole of the facts of the case are here set out, and they call for no further comment.

First petition.

On the 17th March, 1906, ten of the male attendants wrote a letter in the following terms to the Manager:—

"To the Manager, Burnham Industrial School.

"SIR,—

"(17/3/06.)

"We, the undersigned members of the staff, ask your earnest consideration of the following, namely:—

"That as, owing to the extreme isolation of the school, our time off—particularly the intermediate Sunday—affords us little or no opportunity for change or recreation, and that we are limited strictly to our monthly holiday for purposes of business or pleasure, we respectfully suggest that you should use your influence with the Department on our behalf, so that we may be as far as possible placed on the same footing as the members of the Asylum staff, who receive two consecutive days, we think, per fortnight, and two fortnights' holidays per year. Apart from this superiority, their hours are limited strictly to those included in their respective shifts.

"The ladies have not been troubled in the matter, but we trust that any concession granted to us will also be extended to them.

"J. H. GALE.

"P. C. CROWLEY.

"P. C. CALKIN.

"J. H. DEAN.

"J. H. COOPER.

"H. E. COX.

"A. G. TAUBMAN.

"TIM GRENEY.

"J. WILSON.

"J. POWER."

This was followed, on the 22nd March, by the following further communication:—

Second petition.

"To the Manager.

"SIR,—

"21/3/06.

"As it is now several days since the presentation of our petition, and as we have received no official acknowledgement of the fact, we should be obliged if you would let us know whether we can rely on your support when referring the matter to the authorities, and, if so, in what manner we may expect your assistance.

"J. H. DEAN.

"J. WILSON.

"J. H. COOPER.

"A. G. TAUBMAN.

"J. H. GALE.

"P. C. CALKIN.

"J. POWER.

"TIM GRENEY."

"H. E. COX.

The Manager replied to this to the following effect:—

"The Attendants, Industrial School, Burnham.

"22nd March, 1906.

"I AM in receipt of petition (no date). The same has received due consideration. My recommendation will be submitted to the Secretary for Education, and his reply will be duly communicated to the staff.

"I also received last evening, 21st March, 1906, a communication which I consider a deliberate insult—probably, and I believe honestly on the part of some, unintentional.

"A petition containing definite proposals is submitted to me, with the suggestion that I should use my influence with the Department on behalf of the petitioners. There is no suggestion offered, or desire expressed, to discuss the proposals, with a view of ascertaining whether such proposals, if adopted, would be prejudicial to the efficient management of the institution or otherwise.

"I am then asked (21/3/06) whether 'we can rely on your support when referring the matter to the authorities, and, if so, in what manner we may expect your assistance.' My recommendations are for the Department's consideration, and I do not intend to discuss them with the employees of the institution.

"When proposals were submitted by me respecting consideration of the salaries of the staff, the proposals were not submitted to the attendants, but the results were received with satisfaction.

"I have always been led to understand that the staff recognise and appreciate my efforts on their behalf. I have at all times been only too glad to discuss any suggestion promoting the welfare of the staff and institution. I do not intend to be dictated to by any attendant respecting the management of the institution.

"I have addressed this communication to Mr. Gale, he being the oldest attendant (length of service).

"T. ARCHY, Manager."

Formal acknowledgment preferable. Manager's efforts *re* staff. Confinement to Burnham.

It would, of course, have been very much better, and would have saved a great deal of unpleasantness and misunderstanding, if Mr. Archey had promptly, on the receipt of the attendants' letter of the 17th March, formally acknowledged it. He did not, however, do so, and certain of the attendants took great offence at the omission; and this feeling was probably accentuated by the tone of the Manager's letter quoted above, which can scarcely be considered as of a conciliatory nature. It is only fair, however, to Mr. Archey to state that he had spoken to some of the attendants who had signed the original document, and discussed the position with them, and had given them to understand that he would send the matter on to Wellington, with certain recommendations. He evidently thought that this would be all that the attendants would expect of him at that stage, as they must know that the decision on all such matters must rest ultimately with the Department. However, the mischief was done, and the simmering discontent was intensified, and relations between the attendants and the Manager became very much more strained in consequence. The correspondence between the Manager and the Department proves conclusively that for a long time past Mr. Archey had been doing his best to get the position of the attendants improved in the matter of quarters, pay, hours of service, holidays, and general conditions. It is equally clear that, as the result of his persistent representations, many very important and valuable concessions had been granted, and these, too, not in any way as the result of agitation on the part of the attendants. And since this last misunderstanding—for such merely I consider it to have been—the conditions of service have been still further improved, until at the present time the great majority of the attendants profess themselves perfectly satisfied with their position, with the one exception of the demand for increased holidays. This demand, as I have already said, I consider reasonable, and almost an absolute necessity in the best interests of the institution. The lack of opportunity for the attendants to get to town, and so get lifted out of the dull daily routine, the tendency to become so imbued with the atmosphere of their narrow surroundings as to imagine that these constitute the one important feature of their lives, and the inevitable inducement to magnify insignificant troubles and difficulties, must always, I think, militate against the spirit of contentment amongst the attendants, unless their conditions are altered to the extent suggested.

Attendants generally satisfied. Manager's treatment of staff. Attendants' antagonism to one another. Need for remedy. Unity of aim.

Most of the attendants have expressed themselves as quite satisfied with their positions and with their treatment by the Manager and Matron. Even in those cases where discontent has been shown, and a tendency been exhibited to show up the management in the worst possible light, there has been very little evidence indeed of anything personal to Mr. and Mrs. Archey. The post of manager of a reformatory such as Burnham is one of very great difficulty, and it is almost inevitable that at times there should be little causes of friction arising between the staff and the Manager. Speaking generally, I believe that the Manager has been imbued with a desire to do the very best possible for his staff, to improve their positions, and to make them happy and comfortable, and so make them the better qualified to render efficient service to the institution under his control. When Mr. Archey was first appointed Manager in March, 1899, he was given absolute control over the appointment and dismissal of his staff. There is no evidence that he has ever abused this power. He must have felt at times that some members of the staff were not altogether loyal to him, and that things were happening which might seriously affect the discipline of the school, and that, on that ground alone, he might fairly effect certain changes; but still he held his hand—and I am not prepared to say quite wisely. It is very evident that, apart altogether from the relations between the staff and the Manager, a somewhat bitter feeling of antagonism and distrust has grown up between certain of the attendants towards themselves. It is impossible that this can be allowed to continue, for the effect of it is bound to react on the boys. And, in fact, there is evidence that this is now actually the case. Things must be put now on a different footing, and the Manager should adopt drastic measures to insure this being done. The interests of the inmates should be his first consideration. Many of the attendants show a very high appreciation of their duties and responsibilities, and are clearly capable of rendering very valuable services. The air has now been cleared, and all should work together with one common end in view—to carry out to the fullest extent the objects of the institution. It is perfectly useless to make a grievance of such minor matters as whether the male and female attendants should have their meals together, or as to whether certain punishments should be inflicted on certain boys. On matters such as these the judgment of the Manager must rule, and in neither instance can I see any just ground for criticising his action.

Unsatisfactory accommodation, &c.

A very real cause of complaint has existed among the members of the staff in the matter of insufficient and uncomfortable accommodation, and the absence of any means of recreation. All this may very easily be remedied when the scheme of rebuilding is entered upon, such as I believe is now a necessity.

RESULTS OF THE REFORMATORY.

Valuable departmental records.

It is, of course, very difficult to accurately state under this heading the details of the many cases which might fairly form the subject of remark and theory; but I have gone to very considerable trouble in tracing the after-life of a number of inmates of all classes and descriptions—those who became inmates from their own inherently vicious tendencies, and those who are victims of environment or heredity. A most complete and valuable record is kept by the Education Department of the history of every boy who passes through Burnham, where such can possibly be obtained.

Successes achieved. Removal of incorrigibles and defectives.

During the last five years the total number of boys who have been inmates of Burnham, and have now ceased to be so, is 235. Of these there is definite information that 155 are of good character, and show every indication of becoming good and valuable citizens; 8 are classed as only fair; 23 are bad; 5 are weak-minded, and only partially responsible; 23 are reported as missing; 3 are at sea; 2 have died; 1 was discharged very young, and his record has therefore not been kept; and there are 15 about whom no reliable information can be obtained. These figures, working out as they do, cannot be considered as other than distinctly favourable and encouraging, and fully justify the opinion that Burnham, with all its drawbacks, has achieved a large measure of success in improving the moral and social conditions of the inmates, and in generally fulfilling the purpose of a reformatory. But to my mind there is no adequate reason why we should not do better still, and I am convinced that improved classification by the removal of the "incorrigibles" and the "mental defectives," and a few minor internal improvements on the lines that I shall hereafter summarise, will in the future show still better results. In considering all questions such as these, it must be remembered that every lad reclaimed and reformed and made a good citizen is a distinct gain to the State, and the saving by the good citizen as compared with the criminal can scarcely be estimated in all its many aspects.

GENERAL.

Land exceedingly poor. Teaching of trades. Preference to outdoor pursuits. Improvements of farming conditions. Irrigation.

There are about 1,100 acres of land attached to the Burnham Industrial School. This land is exceedingly poor in quality, and gives a very poor return indeed for the labour expended upon it. A smaller area of good agricultural land would prove a much more valuable asset to the school, both from an economical point of view and as a training-ground for the boys in farming and outdoor pursuits generally. It is, no doubt, useful that boys should be taught a knowledge of certain trades, such as tailoring, shoemaking, and carpentry; but I am not at all prepared to say that, having regard to the antecedents of the boys and to their future interests, they should in the main be taught such trades as would be liable to gradually incline them to centres of population, where the temptations of life are greater, and where the boys would inevitably in many instances be brought in contact with the very environment from which they had been taken at the time of commitment. I am inclined to the opinion that every facility should be afforded the boys to take up outdoor pursuits in preference to trades. Many of these boys are what I may term "sexual degenerates," and strong physical exercise is one of the greatest safeguards in that direction. There is little at Burnham at present to encourage the boys to take a real interest in farming and all that pertains to it, for the reason that the results are so absolutely discouraging. True, there is an excellent garden, which affords a most valuable training-ground for the boys, and is a credit to the institution in every way. But I see no reason why a great deal more should not be done to improve the general farming conditions, and I hope that something will be done in that direction. I would suggest the carrying-out of an inexpensive system of irrigation as a first step.

Locality of Burnham.

There are many people greatly interested in the school who express the opinion very strongly that Burnham is not a suitable locality for the reformatory, owing to its position and to the extreme pooriness of the soil. These opinions are entitled to great respect, but I am not disposed to say that I am convinced they are quite sound. There is no doubt a great deal to be said both for and against Burnham, and as the result of mature consideration I see no reason to doubt why the school should not be an unqualified success under improved conditions. Very little money has been spent of late years on the upkeep of the main buildings. These are old, dilapidated, and inconvenient. If it is decided to continue to carry on the institution where it is, the Department will require at once to enter upon a scheme of gradually rebuilding the whole of the main buildings upon more modern and up-to-date lines, and providing the best possible means of classification of the inmates, as well as improved accommodation.

No dairy-work.

I have been struck with the fact that there is no attempt whatever to give any instruction in dairy-work at Burnham. No course of instruction in general farm-work can possibly be complete without this, and I consider that steps should be at once taken to supply the omission. It seems extraordinary to me that not a single pound of butter is made on the farm.

Kitchen arrangements inconvenient. Bread.

The kitchen arrangements at the school are inconvenient, inadequate, and out of date. This department should be made a valuable training-ground for the boys, but this is almost impossible under existing conditions. And in this connection it seems to me an extraordinary thing that no bread is baked on the premises (speaking practically), and that therefore no instruction in baking is given. I consider that a brick oven should at once be built, and that all bread required for the institution should be baked on the premises. At present the bread is supplied from a distance, under contract; and there is evidence that previously to the existing contract the bread supplied was of a disgracefully inferior quality.

Food.

The food supplied for the use of the inmates is, speaking generally, excellent in quality and ample in quantity.

Sea training.

In connection with the general training of the boys, a most valuable suggestion was made by Professor Haslam, of Canterbury College, in the evidence which he tendered. He strongly advocates a system of training boys for the sea without the aid of a training-ship, by the erection of certain material in the school grounds. This system of training on land is most successfully followed at the Liscard Sea-training Home for Boys. I commend very heartily this scheme to the favourable consideration of the Education Department. Its trial would not involve any very large outlay of money, and, apart from its practical value as affording a training-ground for those boys who might desire ultimately to become sailors, I believe it would be most valuable as a means of extra physical training of a most interesting nature.

Burnham, healthy locality.

It speaks well for the healthy locality of Burnham that, considering the constitutions of many of the boys there, and the fact that they are drawn from all parts of the colony, there is so little sickness of a serious nature. Since Burnham was established as a reformatory in 1900 there have only been two deaths, and one of these was the result of an accident.

Sexual degeneracy.

I have previously indicated that a large number of boys at Burnham are sexual degenerates. To counteract the effect of their vicious tendencies is one of the greatest troubles and anxieties that the Medical Officer, ably assisted as he is by the Manager, has to contend with. I cannot here refer in any detail to this subject, but it seems to me a matter for serious consideration whether the State should not seek statutory authority, and surround it with rigid safeguards, to apply the operation of vasectomy to many of these degenerates. The results of the few instances available appear to support this view. The matter is a weighty one, and one may well hesitate to express any very decided opinions upon it. Dr. Symes, the Medical Officer of the institution, has given a very great deal of special attention to this subject in all its bearings. His evidence on this and many other matters affecting the school will well repay perusal.

Manager's absences. Deputy manager. Sub-matron a trained nurse.

During the progress of this inquiry I have been impressed with the fact that the institution has suffered in some degree from the very frequent absences of the Manager. I have been astonished to find that in one year he was absent on no less than 132 occasions, an average of 2.5 days per week. He is able to show that all these absences were on the business of the institution, and he has submitted a detailed statement of the causes of these frequent absences; but it must be apparent that other arrangements must be made, by which many of the almost trifling matters that now require the personal attention of the Manager, either in Christchurch or elsewhere, shall be performed by a subordinate officer specially appointed for the purpose, and who shall be a sort of deputy- or sub-manager, to assume absolute control at Burnham upon the occasions when the Manager is unavoidably absent. In the past this matter of deputy control has given rise to a considerable amount of friction, and has seriously interfered with the discipline of the school. This sort of thing will be entirely avoided by a permanent appointment such as that indicated.

The position of Sub-matron of the institution is one of great weight and responsibility. Upon her devolves, in addition to her other duties, the care of the sick boys. There is a general consensus of opinion on the part of all those best qualified to speak that the position should be filled by a trained nurse, who, as such, would be able to render invaluable service when need arises. I entirely agree with this view, and I strongly recommend that in future only a qualified nurse be appointed to the position.

IMPROVED CLASSIFICATION.

Impossibility of effective classification. Moral lepers and defectives. Disciplinary reformatory.

The one weak spot at Burnham is the absolute impossibility of carrying out an effective system of classification, owing to the presence of a large number of hopelessly bad boys, who are a constant source of contamination to the others, and who, having shown themselves to be absolutely incapable of being reformed, are retained there only to become an ever-present menace to the safety of the institution. Such boys as these have no right to be in Burnham. They have ceased by their conduct to be entitled to such humane treatment as that. They are moral lepers, and must be treated as such. They number about 12 per cent. of the present inmates, who total 112. They should be removed without delay to a separate institution, which should be a sort of disciplinary reformatory, as distinguished from a first-class reformatory such as Burnham ought to be. I know of no place that would be better suited for such a purpose than the present Timaru Gaol. It is very little used now for its original purpose, and, if obtainable, could be very easily adapted for use as a disciplinary reformatory. I strongly recommend this suggestion to the favourable consideration of the Government. I can scarcely overestimate the importance of this change. And, in addition to the inherently vicious boys that I have referred to, there are at least 10 per cent. of the others who are mental defectives, and who on no account should be allowed to remain at Burnham. These are boys who by their lack of mental development are incapable of being benefited by ordinary reformatory methods. In a sense they are just as vicious as the others, and quite as fruitful sources of contamination, but their sense of responsibility is not, of course, as great. They are not subjects for a mental hospital, but they are equally not subjects for Burnham. They should be separately and specially treated. I see no reason why they could not be adequately provided for in such a disciplinary reformatory as I suggest the Timaru Gaol should be made into.

Perfect classification possible.

If these two hopeless classes are removed from Burnham, I see no difficulty in carrying out in the existing institution an almost perfect system of classification, with most excellent results. There will be no necessity for any detention-yard, and this space will be available for a purpose far more beneficial to the institution, such as a gymnasium or other improvement.

Age-limit for State control.

In connection with the disposal of these two classes referred to, it must not be lost sight of that the control of the State over these boys ceases at the age of twenty-one. At the present time most of them are between sixteen and nineteen. It is from these classes that so many Burnham boys qualify for long sentences in gaol. It will become a serious question as to whether the State, admitting its failure to reform these boys, will be prepared to undertake the responsibility of turning them loose upon society when they arrive at the age of twenty-one. It is not in any way necessary for me to discuss this aspect here.

Cottage homes. Burnham cottage homes ineffective.

In connection with the question of improved classification, there naturally arises the consideration of the result of the cottage-home system. I do not consider that this system is made use of at Burnham to the extent that it might be, with great advantage to the inmates. There are two so-called cottage homes there, to one of which there are five boys attached, and to the other three boys. These boys go to the home every evening at about 7 o'clock, go to bed at 8, get up at 6 next morning and return to the institution. They eat no meals in the home, and practically breathe nothing of that atmosphere of home-life, which, to my mind, is so essential to the proper upbringing of dependent children. I know of no direction in which so much valuable work might be done in reclaiming certain boys of the type of many of the present boys at Burnham, than by establishing a proper system of cottage homes. The expense would not be great, and the results would be invaluable. The only difficulty would be the obtaining of suitable persons to take charge. On the discretion shown in the selection of these would depend the entire success of the system.

Boys' Training-farm at Levin.

I have had an opportunity of visiting and of thoroughly inspecting the Boys' Training Farm at Levin. This is an industrial school recently established by the Department in furtherance of the scheme entered upon some years ago for classification of the industrial-school children throughout the colony. To my mind it is a great and inspiring advance in the interests of those children, and reflects credit upon all concerned in its establishment. It is not a reformatory, and, therefore, of course, cannot be judged as to its results by the same standard that one would apply to Burnham; for at Burnham there are the picked bad boys from all the industrial schools, public and private, throughout the colony, besides the boys directly committed by the Magistrates. But at Levin the cottage-home system is an important part of the general training, and with excellent results so far. Three more cottage homes are in process of erection, so that every possible opportunity is to be given of testing the value of the system. The boys appreciate the homes, and this is the best warranty of value.

Burnham might be equally successful.

Admirable as the work is that is being done at Levin under the enlightened and sympathetic management of Mr. Burlinson, assisted and helped forward as it is by the generous treatment of the Department, and admitting that the material upon which Mr. Burlinson has to work, as regards the boys' natures, is very different there from what it is at Burnham, yet I can see no sound reason why Burnham, with the removal of the incorrigibles and defectives, and improved classification of the remainder by the establishment of cottage homes, and in a few other directions, should not, in a way, prove just as successful a factor as Levin in dealing with those children whose care the State has to assume.

THE MANAGER AND MATRON.

Baseless statements.

It will, of course, be expected that I should express my opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Archey in relation to their duties at Burnham, and to the manner in which they discharge them. A great many wild and baseless statements have been made about both of them, and I have already dealt with the general aspect of these as applied to the staff and the inmates.

Charge of intemperance untrue.

It has been attempted to prove habits of intemperance against Mr. Archey. I have thoroughly sifted this, and am of the opinion that there is no foundation in fact for such an allegation. The evidence against the allegation is overpowering.

Little real fault.

Looking to the material with which the Manager has to deal, to the extreme difficulties of his position, to the want of sympathy and help in his work, and to the lack of up-to-date arrangements in the buildings and consequent facilities for the proper carrying-out of his duties, I am astonished, as the result of this long and searching inquiry, that there is so little real fault to be found with the institution and its management. I consider that it constitutes a great record for Mr. Archey. It would, of course, be quite easy to find fault with many small details, and the effect of these

might easily be magnified and made capital of as against the institution; but, viewing the whole question broadly, I consider the result wonderfully good. I can give no more convincing proof of the sincerity of this opinion than by stating that as the result of this inquiry I have totally changed my opinion of Burnham and its work and management. I shall be much more charitable in my criticism in the future than I have been in the past.

The Matron.

As regards the Matron, I consider that she has been honest and sincere in the discharge of her duties, and there is no doubt that she is a valuable factor in the management.

Commissioner's thanks due to Mr. Pope and to Miss Rout.

In closing this report I desire to place on record my appreciation of the very valuable assistance rendered to me throughout this inquiry by Mr. R. H. Pope, the Assistant Inspector of Industrial Schools. Mr. Pope has made a special study of the industrial-school system in this colony in all its bearings. But he has done more than this, for he has made himself acquainted with the life-histories of a vast number of the boys in all the many institutions, and has shown himself ever ready to help forward any movement that may tend to improve their lot and condition. I shall hope to see Mr. Pope in a position in relation to industrial schools in which he can render still more valuable service to the cause he has so much at heart.

I desire also to acknowledge my indebtedness to Miss Rout, who has rendered such valuable and efficient service as shorthand reporter and secretary to the Commission.

Report of evidence.

The full evidence taken before me is forwarded herewith.

Signature.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this eighteenth day of October, in the year one thousand nine hundred and six.

H. W. BISHOP,
Stipendiary Magistrate and Commissioner.

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