

matter how homely an institution is made, the difference cannot be got over. My idea is to disperse the children, and not to concentrate them. I feel sure that to place them in cottage homes would be a retrograde step; it would not advance the object it is wished to attain. The present system is by far the most humane one. The children now have splendid opportunities of making lifelong friends, and, by mixing with others in a natural way, are less likely to give rise to the idea that they are in some way or another different from other people. If this impression is fostered under the institutional system there is more likelihood of the children becoming isolated, as it were, and realising more fully their friendless condition. As a rule they are very sensitive about their position as "institution children," and it is nice to know that they look on their foster-parents as *real parents*, and have the advantages of a real *home life*.

I certainly think that girls ought to be brought into residence at the schools at the age of twelve or thirteen years for a special training in housework, and not placed at service until fifteen. It is young enough then for them. They could attend the day-school until fourteen, and have a year after that for domestic work only. In cases where the domestic training in the foster-home is thoroughly good, and the foster-parent wishes to continue to take a lively interest in the child, the present arrangements might continue. If a thorough course of training were given in this way, and the children received certificates of proficiency, there would be some guarantee to mistresses, and at the same time the girls' services would command higher wages. It would, however, be advisable to keep girls of this class separate from troublesome girls in residence who had failed at service.

The cottage-home system might answer well in connection with children who, for special reasons, require to be kept in residence, but I certainly do not think that it would give anything like the satisfactory results of the boarding-out system if adopted in place of the latter.

It would give me great pleasure to submit a list of past inmates who have called at the school since I became Manager here, and who, in my opinion, are a great credit to the institution.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

HARRIETT PETREMANT, Manager.

The following is a letter from the Rev. R. L. Gwynne, who is actively engaged in rescue and preventive work amongst boys in England, and who on a recent visit to New Zealand made inquiry as to the methods adopted here in connection with such work:—

DEAR SIR,—

Palmerston North, N.Z., 26th June, 1909.

May I send you my cordial thanks for enabling me to visit your Boys' Farm near Levin. I took some time to go over the shops, examined the lads in the school, and went through the farm to some extent, and ended by giving the lads a short talk on "sport and service."

I congratulate the Government on the whole conception and character of the farm. The able master is thoroughly at home with the lads, who seem to be an enlargement of his family. There are many who are mentally deficient, or incapable of continuous control or labour.

We are trying in England a gymnasium as a means of reformation. Each prison is supplied with good physical instructors, who teach the poor weakened mind and will through the body-culture. With many cases, this has been a most wonderful success. To your other progressive plans I sincerely trust you will soon be able to add the moral and mental apparatus of a good physical laboratory, for such is the new body-culture in reality.

The whole tone, order, and discipline are excellent—not ironbound, but of willing minds. Not a face did I see darkened with morose and despondent features, but all seemed gay and boyish.

With renewed thanks and best wishes.

Yours, &c.,

R. L. GWYNNE.

The Hon. G. Fowlds, Minister of Education.