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1885.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

TRAINING SCHOOL FOR BOYS, CASCADES :

REPORT FOR 1884.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



*THE First Report of the Managers of the Boys' Training School, Cascades, from
21st July to 31st December, 1884.*

IN preparing a Report of an Institution that has been in operation only a few months, the Managers feel that they have but little information that they can give. The Superintendent has forwarded them a report which they think is deserving of particular notice, being thoroughly practical, at the same time suggestive, and will be appended to this document.

He says his report is "for the past six months," whereas the Institution was not opened until the 21st July, so that *five months* is all that is embraced. Some time must elapse in a newly formed establishment before it can be considered to be in working order; but the present period seems suitable for taking a retrospective view of what has occurred,—a time for ascertaining what progress has been made, and for considering, with the experience gained, whether any alteration can advantageously be effected.

There is one matter which the Superintendent has not referred to which has had the serious thought of the Managers,—viz., the admission of full-grown youths who have possibly, at least to a large degree, become hardened in crime. It is feared that the introduction of such young men into the company of very young lads will tend to produce most injurious results. The subject has been represented to the Government, and a promise has been made that it shall have careful attention.

Shortly after the opening of the Institution some of the boys manifested a little restlessness, and some of them absconded, but they were speedily brought back. They soon settled down most satisfactorily, and are now under excellent discipline and show considerable interest in their work.

The officers are efficient, and give thorough satisfaction.

Much of the work that has been accomplished during the past five months has been of a preliminary character, but, it is expected, will yield fruit in the future.

As milk was urgently required for the use of the boys, which could not be obtained except from the New Town Farm at considerable inconvenience, application was made to the Government for permission to keep a cow, also for some additional land for her maintenance. This was acceded to, and about four acres of land were appropriated for the purpose. Since then arrangements have been made to utilise all the land at the Cascades belonging to the Government for the benefit of the Institution, and to establish a dairy for the supply of milk to the Hospital for the Insane and the C. D. Hospital, as well as the Boys' Training School. A farm labourer is to be employed to instruct some of the boys in agriculture and milking, and to conduct the necessary farming operations.

As cattle could not be kept unless fences were erected, the strength of the establishment has been directed to fencing the ground, and a large amount of work of this kind has already been accomplished. Additional desks and other fittings for the school have also been prepared in the Institution.

Through the kind assistance of the Superintendent of the New Town Farm, some ground has been ploughed and sown, and the crops are now looking well, so that food for the cattle will shortly be ready.

The garden is being put into order, and seems likely to be productive. In another season it is expected that it will yield more vegetables than can be consumed by the establishment, and, with the dairy, will tend considerably to lessen expenses.

Difficulties have presented themselves from time to time, as might have been expected, in the inauguration of such an institution; but as they have arisen they have been met, and, the Managers hope, have been overcome. They have spared no pains to make the Institution a success, and they trust that the labours of their hands have been blessed, as everything is progressing most satisfactorily. In connection with this the Managers especially record their high sense of the valuable services rendered by their Secretary, Mr. J. B. Mather, to whose thoughtful and unremitting labours much of the success is due.

It does not seem needful to add anything further, as the Superintendent's Report appended deals with the admission of inmates, and gives other interesting particulars.

R. MACLAREN WEBSTER, *Chairman.*

To the Hon. the Chief Secretary.

SUPERINTENDENT'S Report to the Managers of the Boys' Training School, Cascades.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE much pleasure in presenting a Report on the Boys' Training School for the six months ending 31st December, 1884.

It might be well at the outset to state briefly the general principles on which I have endeavoured to conduct the Institution.

- 1st. To inspire as much as possible a family feeling in the School.
- 2nd. To strive to create a home influence in the Institution, and supply to the lads—what a good many have been unhappily deprived of—viz., a happy home.
- 3rd. To give as much freedom as is compatible with the good order of the Establishment, and to stimulate the inmates to prove themselves worthy of confidence by their conduct.
- 4th. To avoid as much as possible corporal punishment,—agreeing most cordially with a great authority, Dr. Fitch, who remarks—“I am convinced that corporal punishment is almost wholly unnecessary; that it does more harm than good; and that just the proportion in which teachers understand their business they will try to dispense with it. The great triumph of school discipline is to do without punishment altogether.”
- 5th. To make every effort to infuse a good moral tone into the School; and
- 6th. To try to exert a personal and parental influence over every inmate, so that each may feel himself a member of a family.

Similar principles to these are at the foundation of the most successful of Reformatory Schools in the old world, notably Metray, the famous French school, and Redhill, in Surrey, England.

I shall, under different headings, endeavour to put before you a number of facts connected with the Institution.

Admissions.

Seventeen boys have been admitted; and that number remained in the Institution on the 31st of December, 1884. Twelve were sent from Hobart; one from Launceston; one from Longford; one from George Town; one from Glenorchy; and one from Kingston.

Ages of Boys when admitted.

Under 11 years, one; under 12 years, six; under 13 years, six; under 14 years, one; under 15 years, two; under 17 years, one.

Period for which the Boys were sentenced.

For 1 year, one; for 2 years, one; for 3 years, eight; for 4 years, four; for 5 years, three.

Offences for which committed.

For theft, 12; burglary, 1; malicious mischief, 1; idle and disorderly, 2; forgery and uttering, 1.

Parental condition.

There were that had lost both parents, 1; lost their father, 4; lost their mother, 2; had both parents living, 10.

Educational condition.

Of the seventeen boys received into the school, ten could neither read nor write; three could read and write a very little; four could read and write fairly; five could do the simple rules of arithmetic, twelve could not. It is apparent from this that their educational state is very backward, and decidedly below the average of the same class in either England or Scotland.

General conduct and health of the Boys.

Since the Institution started, the conduct of the boys has been remarkably good. Their health has been exceptionally good. There has been an entire absence of illness. The mark system has worked admirably, and has obviated almost entirely any severer punishment than that which the loss of marks entails.

Industrial Department.

It is evident that this is a very important department in all reformatory institutions. Morally it is essential to the well-being of the inmates, whose misdirected faculties must be trained and strengthened by it to prepare them for the duties of life. Nine boys are learning to be carpenters, and eight to be gardeners. They are making good progress, and show a praiseworthy anxiety to get on. The Dairy, which it is proposed to start at an early date, will be a great boon. Some of the boys will then be taught agriculture, also to milk and feed cows,—a most important training to colonial boys.

Recreation.

Perhaps the hours of recreation are those which demand most watchfulness. During this time the natural disposition displays itself more than at any other. It has been my rule to allow considerable freedom from restraint during play time, but have sufficient superintendence to detect and check anything wrong. I do not consider it a sure sign of well doing in young people to see them sitting silently at all times, for "still waters run deep" and "dumb dogs are dangerous." I have tried to vary the amusement as much as possible, being convinced that even in play no long period should be allowed if it is likely to become wearisome either for mind or body. I have found it most beneficial and invigorating to the boys to take an excursion now and then into the country, where they could collect wild flowers or various objects of natural history. This has at all times afforded an agreeable amusement.

The Committee of the Hobart Athletic sports kindly allowed all the lads admission to the games free of charge, which was most heartily appreciated.

The Honorable Adye Douglas, the Premier, most generously provided a football and cricket requisites for their amusement at Christmas.

General Remarks.

Some of the Magistrates apparently lean to the notion that a sentence of detention for five years is too severe a punishment, and, as will be seen from the admissions, only three boys have been sent for the full time.

It cannot be too strongly stated that the Training School is not a place of punishment; it is a place for reclamation, its object being to impart a useful education and to train the lads morally and industriously so as to fit them for fighting the battle of life. That object cannot well be accomplished when the sentence is short; it can best be attained when the sentence is for the full term of five years. Not that the lads will necessarily be detained all that time in the Institution, but that the power may be given to retain them if it may be expedient, and to let them out on licence if they are fitted to go. The knowledge that they may be let out before the expiry of their sentence is a great incentive to the lads' well doing, and to merit that mark of confidence. When they are out on licence, too, they are under surveillance, and are aided and assisted in their endeavours to do well at their start in life.

No great effort has yet been made to enforce Section XXI. of the Training Schools Act, which compels parents, who are able, to contribute to the support of their children who may be committed to such institutions. This is a preventive to the benefits of Training Schools being used by worthless parents in order to get rid of their responsibilities. This is a matter that at the present time is receiving much attention of the authorities in England. In the recently issued Blue Book, Colonel Inglis, the Inspector, says: "I know of no question more pressing than the necessity of altering the law so as to give increased facilities for enforcing and collecting parental contributions, and thus disabusing the careless and dissolute parent of the idea that to let his child drift into a Reformatory is a ready and cheap way of escaping from his parental responsibility, and of ensuring to his child, at the expense of the public, education, food, clothing, and lodging of a kind unattainable by the children of his more honest and respectable neighbour. The parent, who in nearly all cases is solely to blame for the condition of the child, should be made to suffer more than he does at present for his carelessness and neglect." These remarks of Colonel Inglis speak for themselves, and are quite applicable to Tasmania.

It would be a decided advantage to the Institution and those connected with it if gas were introduced. The cheerful gaslight is far more stimulating and agreeable than the heavy smelling kerosene.

The drum and fife band, which it is proposed to start at an early date, will be of much benefit.

I will only add, in conclusion, that to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. J. B. Mather, I have been particularly indebted for the kindness, courtesy, and counsel he has been at all times ready to bestow.

The Institution is in its infancy, and can as yet point to the accomplishment of no great triumphs. Still, hitherto the Lord has helped us, and, with a continuance of His blessing, the Cascades Training School may prove the means of rescuing many a poor lad from a life of crime, and training him to earn an honest livelihood so that he may become a useful member of the community.

JAMES LONGMORE, *Superintendent.*

ACCOUNT Current, Boys' Training School, Cascades, 1884.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Funds provided by Government.....	1126	16	0	By Salaries.....	195	15	3
				Furniture.....	113	5	5
				Clothing, Bedding, and Stores.....	239	6	7
				Provisions, &c.	88	10	6
				Washing, Fuel, and Light	23	10	8
				Stationery, &c.	8	18	6
				Petty Expenses	9	19	5
				Incidental	26	0	0
				Alterations and Repairs.....	168	12	10
				Timber.....	108	5	10
					982	5	0
				Balance unexpended.....	144	11	0
					£1126	16	0
					£1126	16	0

Current Maintenance.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Clothing, Provisions, &c.	185	2	3			
Salaries	195	15	3			
				380	17	6

Permanent Works.

Alterations, Repairs, &c.	307	6	2			
Furniture and Furnishing	294	1	4			
				601	7	6
				£982	5	0

Much work has been done by the officers and boys in the erection of fences, &c., which cannot be estimated, but the Managers have thought it should be referred to in their Report, as it has saved considerable outlay.

R. MACLAREN WEBSTER, *Chairman.*