

to gaols or reformatories the parents should be made to pay for their maintenance while they are inmates of such establishments. It seems clear that, when the parents have, by their own neglect of their natural responsibilities, brought about the misconduct of their children, they ought also to be made with the children to suffer to some extent the punishment due for the offences committed. It seems very likely that, if proper regulations were made, farmers would be glad to take lads or girls for a term of years; and several farmers have expressed their opinion that a good many children could be properly provided for under some such system. At present a farmer scarcely cares to take a town lad and go through the trouble of instructing him in useful farm-work, only to find that at the end of the term the boy goes away for higher wages to some one else, or the boy's parents remove him for the like purpose. Of all the practical measures which I am desirous to bring under your notice there is none deserving of more careful consideration than that of the establishment of a sea-going training-ship; and it would give the Magistrates here great satisfaction to know that the Government contemplated taking the necessary steps for such a purpose. I believe I am correct in stating that there are already in the records of the proceedings of the House of Representatives resolutions to the effect that it is considered desirable that training-ships should be provided for the purpose of juvenile reformatories. The success that has attended the establishment of such ships in England and, I believe, the adjacent colonies has been undoubted.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington.

C. WHITEFOORD, R.M.

REPORTS upon the NAUTICAL SCHOOL-SHIP "VERNON," New South Wales. (Printed in accordance with Resolution of both Houses of Parliament.)

The SUPERINTENDENT, Nautical School-ship "Vernon," to the UNDER-SECRETARY of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

SIR,—

Nautical School-ship "Vernon," Sydney, 18th July, 1888.

I have the honour to submit, for the information of the Minister of Public Instruction, my report upon the "Vernon" for the year ended the 30th June, 1888.

2. The work of the institution showed a large increase upon that of any former year since establishment twenty-one years ago. Admissions numbered 204, and discharges 206. The average daily number on board was 218. The total daily average, including apprentices, under my control was 638.

3. Notwithstanding the increase in the numbers, the ship cost £400 less than in the preceding year. The cost per head showed a substantial reduction of £2 7s. 3d. for the boys maintained on board, and a reduction of 12s. 2d. per head on all boys under control. Including all expenditure, the year's cost per head to the State of the whole of the boys under my legal guardianship was £8 13s. 11d., which is the lowest rate yet reached. The following table will show the growth, &c., of the establishment:—

| | For Year ending 30th June. | | |
|---|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 1877. | 1887. | 1888. |
| Admissions | 63 | 189 | 204 |
| Discharges | 78 | 192 | 206 |
| Cost per head— | | | |
| Inmates only | £36 18s. 3d. | £26 13s. 8d. | £24 6s. 5d. |
| All boys under control | £13 8s. 6d. | £9 6s. 1d. | £8 13s. 11d. |
| Average daily number— | | | |
| On "Vernon" | 99 | 214 | 218 |
| All boys under control | 275 | 638 | 638 |
| Percentage to total admissions of boys over fourteen, showing that older lads are now committed than was formerly the case | 18 per cent. | 38 per cent. | 43 per cent. |

4. The health has been excellent. No deaths, and scarcely any sickness, have occurred. Illness has been almost wholly confined to newcomers, who arrived suffering with cutaneous eruptions, neglected sores, and other complaints produced by neglect. This immunity from disease is the more remarkable when the crowded state of the vessel for the greater part of the year is considered. Altogether 404 boys were on board at various times during the year, and the greatest number ever on board at one time was reached on the 11th April last, when 237 boys were on the roll.

5. The demands for apprentices have been more numerous than hitherto, and I have thus been enabled to find room for newcomers by apprenticing boys as they became available for service by conduct and by the twelve months' period of detention. There are still undealt with over two hundred applications, and it is satisfactory to find that out of these a fair proportion come from persons who have already had "Vernon" lads in their service.

6. The conduct of the boys on board has been very good, taking into consideration their antecedents, and the fact that they are only sent here when all other means of controlling them have proved ineffectual. We have now to deal with older lads than was the case ten years ago, when only 18 per cent. of the then limited number on board were over fourteen years of age. No less than 43 per cent. are now over fourteen, notwithstanding that this necessitates more