

SESS. II.—1897.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# STATE CHILDREN'S COUNCIL.

REPORT OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN STATE CHILDREN'S COUNCIL, AS PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATURE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACT.

*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by leave.*

SIR,— State Children's Department, Adelaide, 26th July, 1897.  
We have the honour, in accordance with section 19 of "The State Children Act, 1895," to respectfully forward the following report of the State Children's Council for the year ended 30th June, 1897:—

## THE COUNCIL.

The Council met sixteen times during the year, and the meetings were attended by the different members as follows: The President (Mr. Thomas Rhodes, J.P.), 16; Lady Colton, 14; Mrs. Bonython, 15; Mrs. Brown, 10; Mrs. Finlayson, 11; Miss Baker, 11; Miss Clark, 11; Miss Spence, 15; Dr. O'Connell, 9; Dr. Robertson, 14; Mr. Goode, 13; Mr. McPherson, 14. The members have also attended thirty-two committee meetings, and have visited the institutions a number of times. Mrs. Finlayson is away in Europe on leave for about a year.

## PROPOSED AMENDED LEGISLATION.

The amending Bill referred to at length in the last annual report is being drafted, and the Council sincerely trusts that it will be passed during the present session of Parliament. In addition to the provisions referred to last year the Bill, it is hoped, will contain powers which it is believed will in some measure tend to stem the apparently increasing tide of juvenile depravity.

## INTENDED CHANGES IN THE ESTABLISHMENTS.

For some considerable time past it has been felt that the plan of having the Boys' Reformatory and the Industrial School in the same building at Magill is not desirable. During the last twelve months the increase in the number of inmates of both institutions has made the providing of additional accommodation for both schools absolutely necessary. The committal to the Reformatory of boys of sixteen to eighteen years of age, whose knowledge of crime and vice is much greater than that of the younger boys, has made the task of training and reforming the inmates more onerous than formerly. The Council has had to recognise that effective classification is essential for the conduct of the institution, and to carry out this classification increased room is requisite. This necessity alone is sufficient reason for the proposed changes; and the increased population of the Industrial School—consisting mainly of girls aged from fifteen to eighteen years—is an additional and very strong motive for the removal of this institution from close proximity to the Boys' Reformatory. It is therefore intended to transfer the Industrial School to the premises at Edwardstown, now occupied as a reformatory for girls, and to remove the Protestant Reformatory girls from there to the ex-gaol at Redruth, the Roman Catholic girls having already been sent to the denominational reformatory at St. John's, Kapunda. The Redruth premises are now being altered to meet the requirements of a reformatory, and in about three months these changes will be effected. When the Industrial School is transferred from Magill the whole of the premises there will be utilised for the needs of the Boys' Reformatory, and the disadvantages under which that establishment is now carried on will, it is hoped, be removed. The Reformatory will then be better able than now to successfully deal with all boys committed, for the land attached to the institution is ample to give remunerative employment to the inmates; the extra accommodation will provide the necessary, proper, and effective means of classification, and the institution of a drum-and-fife band, together with more complete military drill, will, it is believed, result in the thorough reformation of a large proportion of the lads received.

## THE DEPARTMENTAL COURT.

For some months past only neglected and destitute children have been tried at the Departmental Court, the Police Magistrate having elected to hear charges of larceny in the Justices' room at the Police Court, as the clause in the State Children Act, which was passed in order to make it compulsory for all children to be tried away from the Police Courthouse, is so worded as to allow all charges not punishable on summary conviction to be heard at a place other than this department.

The Council is much concerned at this return to the old plan, against which it successfully protested some years ago, and it trusts that the representations it has made on the subject may result in all children being tried at the Departmental Court, whatsoever the charges may be.

The statistics attached hereto of the proceedings at the Departmental Court, in consequence of the hearing of felony charges at the Police Court, do not comprise (as in the past) all the children arrested; but, in order to show the total number of children charged, a supplementary return is added of the cases heard at the Courthouse. From these returns it is seen that the total number of children charged is 304, compared with 217 during the preceding year; the increase being in charges of felony, 122 against 52; misdemeanors, 52 against 43; and uncontrollable, 34 against 19.

*The Departmental Court.*

Charge.	Number charged.	Sent to the Industrial School.	Sent to Boys' Reformatory.	Sent to Girls' Reformatory.	Whipped.	Sent to Gaol.	Fined.	Locked up till Evening.	Bound over to be of Good Behaviour.	Committed for Trial.	Discharged with a Caution.	Withdrawn.	Dismissed.
Felony ...	56	...	17	1	24	2	...	...	6	1	3	...	2
Misdemeanour	52	2	4	1	15	...	22	3	1	...	3	...	1
Uncontrollable	34	13	6	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	7
Neglected ...	27	22	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Destitute ...	69	68	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
	238	105	28	10	39	2	22	3	7	1	6	1	14

*Police Court.*

Number charged.	Sent to Boys' Reformatory.	Whipped.	Punished by Parents to the satisfaction of the Court.	Liberated under First Offenders Act.	Sent to Gaol.	Convicted, but not punished.	Fined.	Dismissed.	Total.
66	20	23	9	5	1	1	1	6	66

NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER CONTROL.

In the last annual report attention was drawn to the fact that on the 30th June, 1896, the number of children under the control of the Council was lower than in 1895, and that the then decrease was the first for ten years. On the 30th June, 1897, however, the wards of the State numbered fifty-five more than in 1896, the figures for the three years 1895, 1896, and 1897 being 1,124, 1,122, and 1,177 respectively. The children at present in the care of the State are as follows:—

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
In the Industrial School ...	15	39	54
" Boys' Reformatory ...	103	...	103
" Girls' Reformatory—Protestant ...	...	18	28
" " " Roman Catholic ...	...	10	
Placed out ...	484	453	967
In the Lunatic Asylum ...	1	4	5
" Blind Asylum ...	1	...	1
" Hospital ...	4	1	5
" Gaol ...	1	...	1
Absconders ...	7	6	13
Totals ...	616	561	1,177

THE NEW COMMITTALS.

From the year 1892 until 1896 there was a steady annual decrease in the number of committals, which fell from 219 in the former to 173 during the latter year. The year 1896-97, however, shows so unusual an increase as to make a record in the matter of committals of children to the care of the department, the total number being 260.

That there is an increase in the number of children received as "destitute" should not occasion surprise considering the bad season; but the increase from 93 last year to 111 is not extraordinary. The comparatively large number of children sentenced as uncontrollable—35 as against 19 for 1895-96—appears serious, although during 1894-95 the number of such committals was 38. The large majority of these uncontrollable children, however, consist of boys under thirteen years of age whose principal fault was truancy, to which was added the practices of sleeping out, associating with bad companions, and petty thieving. To truancy, however, is mainly due their committal, for in some instances, at least, parents would not have troubled themselves in the matter had it not been for fear of fine under the Education Act.

The committals for stealing, burglary, unlawful possession, &c., also show an unusually large increase compared with the preceding year, the figures being 38 for 1895-96 and 60 for the year under review.

The great increase in the number of inmates in the Reformatory due to the increased committals led the Council to draw particular attention to the matter, and at your request it made special inquiry into the causes of the evident increase in juvenile crime. The Council obtained reports from the Police Magistrate and the Inspectors of Police, and forwarded to you an exhaustive report, setting forth the causes of the increase of criminal practices amongst boys and youths, and embodying suggestions which, if carried out, it believes will tend to arrest—so far as legislation can do—the apparent progress of deterioration in the morality of the youth of the colony.

#### THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

The number of children in the Industrial School on the 1st July, 1896, was 41 (18 boys and 23 girls), and during the year 394 (192 boys and 202 girls) were received, comprising 187 (113 boys and 74 girls) newly committed, 205 (78 boys and 127 girls) readmitted, and 2 (1 boy and 1 girl) transferred from reformatories. The new committals show an increase of 68 (50 boys and 18 girls) over the number received in 1895-96.

The discharges during the year number 381 (195 boys and 186 girls), including 211 (125 boys and 86 girls) boarded out, and 4 girls placed out without subsidy, 110 (36 boys and 74 girls) sent to service, 13 (6 boys and 7 girls) released on expiration of term of detention, 6 (4 boys and 2 girls) released after remand, 5 (3 boys and 2 girls) released on petition to the Governor, 6 (2 boys and 4 girls) placed with relatives on probation, 7 (5 boys and 2 girls) transferred to reformatories, 13 (10 boys and 3 girls) sent to hospital, 2 girls died, and 4 boys absconded, leaving 54 (15 boys and 39 girls) in the school on the 30th June.

The majority of the inmates are girls of service age, many of whom are detained in the school owing to the difficulty of obtaining suitable situations for them, while a number are unfit for service until they receive some disciplinary training.

The general health of the inmates has been good. The two children who died were infants, aged two months and three weeks respectively, and were in a dying condition when admitted.

#### THE GIRLS' REFORMATORIES.

On the 1st July, 1896, the number of inmates of the Girls' Reformatory was 30, and during the year there have been 31 admissions, comprising 11 new committals, 18 readmissions, and 2 transfers from the Industrial School.

The discharges were 33, of which number 12 were placed at service, 3 were released on expiration of term of detention, 1 was released on petition to the Governor, 2 were placed with relatives on probation, 1 was transferred to the Industrial School, 1 was sent to the Lunatic Asylum, and 13 absconded. The number in the reformatories on the 30th June was 28—*i.e.*, 18 at Edwardstown, and 10 at St. John's, Kapunda.

On the 4th June the Roman Catholic inmates to the number of ten were transferred from Edwardstown to the reformatory at St. John's, Kapunda, which has been proclaimed specially for Roman Catholic girls, and is under the charge of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The Council has the same control over this institution as over the Edwardstown Reformatory, and the inmates of both establishments are subject to the same regulations. The department pays the sisterhood 10s. per week for each girl while she remains an inmate, and this sum is to cover all expenses for the maintenance and training of the girls. In consequence of the transfer of the Roman Catholic girls the staff at Edwardstown has been reduced by one.

The Council is greatly interested in the transfer of the Roman Catholic girls to the care of a sisterhood, and it has hopes that the result will fully justify the new legislation which provides the machinery for this departure from former methods.

#### THE BOYS' REFORMATORY.

The number of inmates on the 1st July, 1896, was 59, and since that date there have been 93 admissions, comprising 62 new committals, 24 readmissions, 4 transfers from the Industrial School, and 3 transfers from country homes. The offences for which the newly-committed boys were sentenced are: Uncontrollable, 6; sleeping in the open air, 1; stealing, 44; housebreaking, 3; unlawfully on premises, 2; unlawful possession, 3; wilful damage, 2; assault, 1.

During the year there were 49 discharges—*viz.*, 1 placed at service, 12 released on expiration of term of detention, 8 released on petition to the Governor, 1 released after remand, 1 transferred to the Industrial School, 2 sent to the Hospital, 1 committed to gaol for horse-stealing before admission to the Reformatory, and 23 absconded. The number of boys in the institution on the 30th June was 103, the highest on record.

For the first half of the year some trouble was experienced in consequence of the committal of boys over sixteen years, whose bad conduct not only caused the Superintendent much anxiety in managing the boys themselves, but in counteracting the unsettling influence which their conduct had upon the other inmates. It is satisfactory to be able to say that for some time the conduct of these older boys has greatly improved under the training of the Reformatory, and that the general conduct of the inmates is satisfactory.

The work done at the institution during the year has been considerable, the improvements consisting of increased facilities for poultry-rearing, the excavation of a large reservoir, and the planting of additional fruit trees.

The drought was felt very keenly, the water-supply having almost entirely failed ; consequently the quantity of produce fell off considerably, the value of all vegetables, milk, fruit, and pigs supplied to institutions and sold being £600 6s. 11d., compared to £618 17s. 11d. for last year. Forage to the value of £204 for the consumption of the cattle was also produced.

The carpenters' shop has been kept busy, and the work therein shows a profit of £64.

#### THE CHILDREN PLACED OUT.

The number of children other than those in industrial and reformatory schools under the control of the Council on June 30th was 992. These children were distributed as follows : Boarded out, 612 (336 boys and 276 girls) ; placed at service, 239 (113 boys and 126 girls) ; adopted, 51 (14 boys and 37 girls), placed out without subsidy, 6 (1 boy and 5 girls) ; placed with relatives, 45 (15 boys and 30 girls) ; apprenticed, 1 boy ; out of colony with guardians, 14 (5 boys and 9 girls) ; in hospital, 4 boys ; in lunatic asylum, 5 (1 boy and 4 girls) ; blind asylum, 1 boy ; in gaol, 1 boy ; absconded, 13 (7 boys and six girls).

The supervision of the children placed out has been efficiently carried out, every child, with few exceptions, having been visited several times during the year. The number of reports received from honorary visitors and visiting committees was 3,840 ; from official inspectors, 2,011 ; and from school teachers, 1,734 ; making a total of 7,585. The visitors' and inspectors' reports are classified with regard to the child and the home with the following result : Good, 5,457 and 5,730 ; fair, 313 and 106 ; indifferent, 74 and 9 ; bad, 17 and 6 respectively.

There has been a large number of children returned from homes and transferred from one home to another for various reasons, the total of such returns and transfers being 547. A considerable number of service boys and girls were returned by farmers solely because the latter could not afford to keep them.

The number of applications for children received was 287, of which number 56 were from Roman Catholic applicants, and 231 from Protestants. The Council approved 211 of these applications, refused 39, and 37 were withdrawn or deferred.

The amount paid to the department for wages of children shows a falling off compared with last year in consequence of the Council having had to make concessions to employers in regard to the rate and payment of wages in consideration of the bad times. The account with the savings-bank is as follows :—

#### *Analysis of Transactions with the Savings-bank, 1896-97.*

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Balance in bank, June 30th, 1896—				Paid to sundry—			
Wages accounts .. ..	2,912	8	11	Wages accounts .. ..	699	3	1
Other trust accounts .. ..	564	3	10	Other trusts accounts .. ..	114	4	8
Interest added by bank—				Balances in bank—			
Wages accounts .. ..	80	15	1	Wages accounts .. ..	3,010	2	10
Other trusts accounts .. ..	19	17	1	Other trust accounts .. ..	640	14	7
Received and paid in since—							
Wages accounts .. ..	716	1	11				
Other trusts accounts.. ..	170	18	4				
	<u>£4,464</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>		<u>£4,464</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>

The following lists show the names of the ladies and gentlemen forming the various visiting committees and acting as honorary visitors to the State children throughout the colony, and the Council takes this opportunity to again express its indebtedness to these ladies and gentlemen for the willing and valuable assistance rendered by them :—

#### LIST OF VISITING COMMITTEES, 1897.

*Angaston.*—Mrs. W. Hague, Miss E. Smith, M. E. Salter ; Miss A. E. Roberts correspondent.

*Auburn.*—Mrs. Yeatman, correspondent.

*Aldgate.*—Mrs. H. Carr, Mrs. Captain J. Hill ; Mrs. A. S. Magarey, correspondent.

*Burra.*—Mrs. Killiccoat, Mrs. Sangster ; Mrs. Moore, correspondent.

*Carrieton.*—Mrs. O'Grady, correspondent.

*Clare.*—Mrs. Culleney, Miss Gillen, Mrs. W. Hosking, Mrs. Lloyd, Mrs. Lester, Mrs. Stacy ; Mr. L. S. Stacy, correspondent.

*Glenelg.*—Mrs. P. Healy, Mrs. E. M. Mayfield, Mrs. S. Summers, Mrs. J. Tassie, Mrs. Weaver ; Mrs. W. Storrie, correspondent.

*Gawler.*—Miss Duffield, Miss Jones, Mrs. Broderick, Mrs. B. Rudall, Mrs. Prendergast ; Mrs. Deland, correspondent.

*Goolwa.*—Mrs. A. Graham, Mrs. Kendrew ; Miss Goode, correspondent.

*Gumeracha.*—Mrs. E. J. Henderson, Mrs. Vercoe, Mrs. W. Wise ; Miss Norsworthy, correspondent.

*Georgetown.*—Mrs. J. S. Lewis, correspondent.

*Goodwood.*—Mrs. W. J. McBride, Mrs. C. Bronner, Miss McKay, Miss McLellan ; Mrs. J. Harris, correspondent.

*Hammond.*—Mrs. F. H. Rix, correspondent.

*Mount Barker.*—Miss Peterson, Mrs. Patridge, Mrs. Sanders, Miss Sanders, Miss Witt, Mrs. Williams ; Mrs. J. G. Ramsay, correspondent.

- Macclesfield*.—Two Sisters of St. Joseph.  
*Mount Gambier*.—Mrs. Keiselbach, Mrs. Matschoss; Miss Engelbrecht, correspondent.  
*Naracoorte*.—Mrs. Clarke; Mrs. McLeod, correspondent.  
*Norwood*.—Mrs. A. Byrne, Mrs. T. Behrens, Mrs. B. Mitchell; Mrs. Auld, correspondent.  
*Orroroo*.—Mrs. Disher, Mrs. Moffatt; Mrs. Bungay, correspondent.  
*Port Pirie*.—Mrs. Dowling, Mrs. Haslam, Mrs. Reed, Mrs. R. W. Stewart, Mrs. Upton; Mrs. W. Wood, correspondent.  
*Petersburg*.—Miss Blumsden, Mrs. Blumsden, Mrs. Fuhlbohn, Mrs. Pomeroy; Mrs. W. Howard, correspondent.  
*Pekina*.—Mrs. Canny, Mrs. Burns, Mrs. Milton; Miss Hanna, correspondent.  
*Quorn*.—Mrs. Conway, Mrs. Franks, Miss George, Mrs. J. Rock, Mrs. White; Mrs. Matthews, correspondent.  
*Riverton*.—Mrs. Angwin, Mrs. C. Bowden, Miss H. Buckley, Mrs. J. Cooper, Mrs. J. Kelly, Mrs. M. Williams; Mrs. O. Horner, correspondent.  
*Redhill*.—Mrs. A. Claridge, Mrs. T. Hynes, Mrs. M. J. McGrath.  
*Strathalbyn*.—Mrs. Davidson, Mrs. McDonald, Miss Natt, Mrs. Stanton, Mrs. M. Rankine; Miss Gemmell, correspondent.  
*Snowtown*.—Mrs. J. Allen, Mrs. W. Jacobs, Rev. S. C. Mugford; Mrs. W. H. Hall, correspondent.  
*Semaphore*.—Mrs. Dunstan, Mrs. A. Inglis, Mrs. E. Ramm; Mrs. E. E. Burge, correspondent.  
*Willunga*.—Mrs. Rowland, Mrs. Heysed, Mrs. Raymont, Mrs. Tuohy; Miss Williams, correspondent.  
*Wilmington*.—Mrs. Wiltshire, correspondent.  
*Yankalilla*.—Mrs. Hodge, Mrs. Morse, Mrs. Prior, Mrs. Walsh; Miss A. Robertson, correspondent.  
*Yatina*.—Mrs. E. Harding; Mrs. Burton, sen., correspondent.

## LIST OF VISITORS.

Mrs. Adams, Port Adelaide; Mrs. Blackburn, Woodville; Mrs. Blackney, Kadina; W. J. Botton, Esq., Meningie; Rev. S. J. Batten, Port Broughton; J. Blake, Esq., Balaklava; Mrs. E. G. Blackmore, Prospect; Miss Brown, Voules Terrace, Brighton; Mrs. Buckley, Tarlee; Mrs. Bednall, Ovingham; Miss Benham, Clarendon; Mrs. Boucaut, Jamestown; Mrs. H. A. Brooksbank, Lyndoch; Rev. W. G. Blackmore, Elliston; Lady Colton, Hackney; Mrs. Cornelius, Bridgewater; Mrs. T. Chaplin, Nangkita; Miss Cole, Freeling; Miss T. Cullen, Marrabel; Mr. T. J. Cockburn, Wirrabara; Mrs. Davidson, Angas Plains; T. Dunstan, Esq., J.P., Blyth; Mrs. W. Ellis, Meadows; Mrs. T. Farrell, H.M.'s Gaol; Mrs. J. H. Finlayson, Stanley Street, N. A.; Mrs. C. S. Grey, Balaklava; G. A. Groth, Esq., Mern Merna; Mr. A. G. F. Geyer, Tanunda; Miss A. S. Grant, Marion; Mrs. H. Hunwick, Hindmarsh; Rev. P. B. Hoefner, Rhine Villa; J. Harris, Esq., J.P., Hamley Bridge; Mrs. C. H. Hollingdrake, Renmark; Mrs. J. A. Holden, Plympton; Mrs. T. Hair, Kanmantoo; Mr. G. Illman, Wauraltee, S.Y.P.; Mrs. G. Illman, Wauraltee, S.Y.P.; Mrs. Jacka, Melrose; Rev. J. Jackson, Mannum; Mrs. James, Moonta; Mrs. J. J. Jones, Alberton; Miss S. Kay, College Town; Mrs. J. C. Kirby, Port Adelaide; P. J. Leo, Esq., Uroonda; Miss Long, Moppa, near Greenock; Rev. T. Lee, Marrabel; Miss Lowe, Encounter Bay; Mrs. Lee, Caltowie; Mrs. Maidment, Hindmarsh Island; Miss Mercer, Magill; Mrs. Maughan, Malvern; Mrs. Mattinson, Port Adelaide; Mrs. Mounster, Rosewater; Miss Murray, Coromandel Valley; Mrs. McTaggart, Dashwood's Gully; Mrs. C. H. Myles, Morpett Vale; J. McCann, Esq., Hornsdale; M. M. McDonough, Esq., Lucindale; Mrs. John Miller, Merriton; Miss E. Melville, Port Lincoln; Rev. W. H. Newbold, Truro; Mr. Ottaway, Meningie; Rev. H. J. Parkinson, Lower Light; Miss Phillips, Yorketown; Rev. W. B. Stephenson, Mallala; Mrs. Geo. Stone, Baroota; Mrs. M. Sunly, Lobethal; Mrs. Schroder, Wallaroo Bay; Mrs. Sauerbier, Parkside; Miss Spence, Norwood; Mrs. W. H. Thompson, Port Augusta; Mrs. S. Wayland, Mount Pleasant; Mrs. J. Warren, Springfield, Gawler; Mrs. S. J. Williams, Murray Bridge; Mrs. R. C. Willshire, Wilmington; T. Walkin, Esq., J.P., Tarcowie; J. Wilsdon, Esq., J.P., Appila; Mrs. Windebank, Hamilton.

## MORTALITY.

The number of State children who died during the year was ten. The following table shows the ages of the children, causes of death, &c. :—

Sex.	Age.	Cause of Death.	Place.
Female .. .. .	Seven and a half years ..	Meningitis .. ..	Hospital.
Female .. .. .	Five months .. .. .	Debility from birth ..	Lying-in Home.
Male .. .. .	Eight and a half years ..	Accidentally drowned ..	Gawler.
Female .. .. .	Two months .. .. .	Marasmus .. .. .	Industrial School.
Male .. .. .	Six months .. .. .	Convulsions .. .. .	Brompton.
Female .. .. .	Seven and eleven-twelfth years ..	Accidentally killed ..	Gawler.
Female .. .. .	Two months .. .. .	Debility from birth ..	Industrial School.
Male .. .. .	Two and five-sixth years ..	Meningitis .. .. .	Adelaide.
Female .. .. .	Four and a half years ..	Croup .. .. .	Semaphore.
Female .. .. .	Six and five-sixth years ..	Croup .. .. .	Mount Barker.

## THE LICENSED FOSTER-MOTHERS.

That all persons who receive infants from their parents to nurse should be subject to control, and that it should be the duty of the State to see that the infants are properly cared for, is generally admitted. The law requiring all persons acting as nurses to infants to be licensed was passed in this colony in 1881, and similar enactments have been passed in other colonies and in Canada. When the provisions respecting the control of foster-mothers were transferred from the Act of 1881 to the Act of 1895 Parliament made a very important alteration. In the original statute every person taking a child "with or without fee or reward" required to be licensed. In the law of 1895 the words in italics were struck out, and "for gain or reward" inserted. The consequence is that while all respectable careful women who do not fear inspection apply for licenses, those over whom supervision is most necessary evade the law and escape punishment by asserting that they receive no fee or reward for keeping the child. Recently the department, being dissatisfied with the character of a licensed foster-mother, cancelled her license and gave her notice to return the infant in her care to its mother. She gave up the license, but kept the child, she having agreed, so she stated, to adopt it without any payment in future. This woman, therefore, who is regarded as unfit to be entrusted with the care of children, continues to keep a child, and because she conspires with the child's mother to assert that she receives no payment the department cannot take any action, even to see that the child the law allows her to keep is properly cared for. The Council has urged that the words "for gain or reward" should be repealed, as while the law stands in its present form it is practically valueless as a means of preventing baby-farming.

The number of applications for licenses received was 124, comprising 69 for new licenses and 55 for renewal of old licenses. Licenses were granted to 115 applicants, refused to 6, and 3 applications were withdrawn. Three licenses were cancelled during currency. The number of licenses in force on the 30th June was 94.

The foster-mothers had in their charge during the year 148 infants, of which number 28 died. The mortality appears high, and it is due largely to the fact that numbers of the children are never nursed by their mothers, but are placed in the care of foster-mothers sometimes from birth. The frequent removals by their mothers of infants from one foster-mother to another, and the consequent changes in diet and methods of feeding bring on marasmus, diarrhoea, and consumption of the bowels, which ailments are the causes of death in the majority of instances.

All the licensed foster-mothers appear to take great care of the infants in their charge, and on the whole their homes are clean and well kept.

## LICENSED LYING-IN HOMES.

The law requiring all private lying-in homes to be licensed is, like that regarding foster-mothers, rendered more or less ineffectual by the words for "gain or reward" being included. If these words are repealed, as recommended by the Council, the department will then be better able than now to require all lying-in homes to take out licenses and to keep the records of the birth and disposal of infants required by the Act.

There were twenty-two licensed lying-in homes on the 30th June, 1897, and during the year there were sixty confinements in these homes.

## THE REVENUE.

The total revenue for the year is £1,388 14s. 4d., an increase of £248 17s. 10d. over the revenue for 1895-96. This sum is made up of £1,219 11s. 10d., maintenance fees; £142 7s. 4d., proceeds of sales of produce and stock from the Boys' Reformatory; £11 13s., license fees; £3 18s. 6d., amount paid by guardians for deficiencies in outfits of children returned; and £11 3s. 8d., sundries.

## THE COLLECTION OF MAINTENANCE FEES.

During the year 1895-96 the sum of £994 2s. 4d. was collected from parents and relatives towards the maintenance of children in the care of the Council, and during the year under review the amount so obtained was £1,219 11s. 10d., or an increase of £225 9s. 6d.

In addition to this amount the department also collected on account of mothers of children not under the charge of the State, the sum of £1,145 0s. 2d., making a total of £2,393 1s. 6d. (including £28 9s. 6d. costs) obtained from relatives for maintenance fees.

Legal proceedings were taken in 188 cases for desertion, non-compliance with maintenance orders, and for maintenance of illegitimate children. Of these 188 informations, 88 were withdrawn on the defendant making satisfactory arrangements with the department, 6 were dismissed by the Court, and in 94 cases the Court ordered the persons summoned to contribute maintenance fees or punished them.

## THE EXPENDITURE.

The total expenditure for the year was £14,831 19s. 8d., or £800 11s. 8d. more than for the preceding twelve months. The principal increases are in the Boys' Reformatory, £457 8s. 8d., due entirely to the large increase in the number of inmates, and "Placing out, &c.—Children placed out," £363 0s. 4d., caused mainly by the expenditure necessary to supply overcoats to all boys placed out, and additional expense of placing out a larger number of children. Increases are also present in the expenditure under "Central administration," £67 14s. 11d.; Girls' Reformatory, £42 6s. 9d.; and licensed foster-mothers and lying-in homes, £69 18s. 5d. (the expenditure shown in last report was for six months only). There is a decrease of £4 7s. 8d. under "Industrial School," and £195 9s. 9d. under "Maintenance of children placed out," due to reduction in rate of subsidy.

Compared with last year the *per capita* cost per week is lower in the Industrial School, 8s. and 6s. 9½d.; in the Boys' Reformatory, 8s. 7½d. and 7s. 9½d., respectively; and higher in the girls' reformatory, 14s. 8½d. and 16s. 3½d., and "Supervision, &c., of children placed out," 1s. 2½d. and 1s. 4½d. respectively.

The following table gives full particulars of the expenditure :—

Heads of Expenditure.	Actual Expenditure.		Proportion of Administrative Expenditure.		Total.		Average Number of Children in Schools and placed out.	Cr. by Produce sold and supplied to Institutions.		Dr. to Produce from Boys' Reformatory.		Cost per Head per Week, 1896-7.		Cost per Head per Week, 1895-6.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.		£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
The central administration	1,911	10 0	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31	9 9	0	7½	0	7½
Industrial School ..	670	7 10	84	15 5	755	3 3	51	..	143	12 7	6	9½	8	0	
Girls' Reformatory ..	1,096	7 9	48	4 1	1,144	11 10	29	..	85	18 5	16	3½	14	8½	
Boys' Reformatory ..	1,880	15 8	126	6 6	2,007	2 2	76	664	9 11	196	18 10	7	9½	8	7½
Placing out, medical attendance, and supervision of children placed out	1,871	12 1	1,652	4 0	3,523	16 1	994	..	31	0 0	1	4½	1	2½	
Subsidy for boarded-out children	7,281	7 11	..	..	7,281	7 11	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Licensed foster-mothers and lying-in homes	119	18 5	..	..	119	18 5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
										*142	7 4	†33	3 0		
Total ..	14,831	19 8	1,911	10 0	14,831	19 8	1,150	664	9 11	664	9 11				
Less revenue ..	1,388	14 4													
Net cost to the State	13,443	5 4													

\* Sold.

† Profit on carpenters' shop.

We have, &amp;c.,

T. RHODES, President,

J. B. WHITING, Secretary.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

## APPENDIX.

REPORT *re* INCREASE IN COMMITTALS TO THE BOYS' REFORMATORY.

The inquiries of the Council show that the causes of the increase in the number of inmates of the Boys' Reformatory are—

- (1.) Increased number of boys committed.—The committals during the last five years are—1892-93, 27; 1893-94, 14; 1894-95, 25; 1895-96, 36; 1896-97 (ten months), 54.
- (2.) The extension of the age of detention from sixteen to eighteen years of age.—Of the 54 boys sentenced, 8 were over sixteen years of age, and 3 under sixteen when committed are now over that age. In addition to these, 2 boys committed between January and June, 1896, nearly and over sixteen years old, are still inmates.
- (3.) The difficulty of obtaining situations for eligible inmates in consequence of the drought in agricultural districts.—Number placed at service in 1892-93, 12; 1893-94, 13; 1894-95, 6; 1895-96, 5; 1896-97, 1.

Thus is practically explained the cause of the increased number of inmates in the Reformatory. It is felt, however, that the increase in the committals was evidence of an increase in juvenile criminality, and the Council has endeavoured to ascertain if this is so and the reason for such a condition of things. It has obtained reports from the Police-magistrate, the Inspectors of Police, and Mr. F. R. Burton on this subject, and has also had the statements of a number of the boys recently committed as to their previous mode of life, &c.

The Inspector of Police states that, in his opinion, juvenile crime is increasing, and the following statement apparently proves this: Number of boys charged with offences in the city of Adelaide during—1895-96, 87, of whom 48 were for larceny; 1896-97 (ten months), 131, of whom 87 were for larceny. This return would be subject to modification if the ages of these boys could be ascertained, because for the first half of 1895-96 the record applies only to boys under sixteen years old. Assuming, however, that the percentage of boys over sixteen is the same for that six months as the number committed to the reformatory during the second half of 1895-96 (9 per cent.) the total of that year would be only increased to 91.

From the reports referred to, the statement of the boys committed, and the experience of the officers of the department, it seems that this evident increase of juvenile criminality is largely due to laxity of parental control and parental indifference to the conduct of children. Truancy is a considerable factor in the genesis of the juvenile delinquent, and though it cannot be said that it is altogether the result of parental neglect, yet in many instances boys begin playing truant and become confirmed truants because their parents care nothing about them attending school. To parental neglect is due the practice indulged in by numerous children of running the streets in the evenings and until late at night for the purpose of begging and pilfering. These boys (truants and street runners) mix with other and vicious boys who instruct them in the many vices indulged in by themselves; they sleep out at nights, and eventually become criminals.

Drunken and dissolute parents not only neglect their children, but send them out in the streets to sell newspapers, vestas, &c., in order that they (the parents) may obtain money to spend in drink. "Most of this class of children are brought up without any idea of education or religion," says Inspector Sullivan; and this neglect, added to the bad example of their parents and the demoralising effect of street life, makes criminals of the children.

The employment of boys by unscrupulous marine-store dealers as bottle-gatherers is responsible, according to Inspector Sullivan, for a large proportion of juvenile crime. While boys are in the back premises of houses ostensibly to ply their business "it is a great temptation to steal anything they can lay hands on, they knowing well that dealers will buy anything they bring without questioning how it was obtained."

Parental neglect, want of control, truancy, &c., and the employment as bottle-gatherers, are the means of making the boys criminals; and the following may be put down as the incentives to steal.

- (1.) Tobacco smoking.—Almost every boy (even those of nine years of age) confesses to spending stolen money in the purchase of cigarettes and cigars.
- (2.) Betting.—Numbers of the boys (from ten years up) committed admit that they stole in order to obtain money to bet by means of "place totes"; and the experience of the police is that "this evil is growing very much amongst boys now, and they will by any means, fair or dishonest, obtain money for this purpose."
- (3.) The desire for fruit, lollies, &c., is accountable for a good deal of petty thieving, much stolen money being expended in them.
- (4.) Bicycle riding.—Large numbers of boys are in the habit of hiring bicycles by the hour, and the Inspector of Police says that boys will do anything to obtain money to indulge in this pastime.
- (5.) Immorality.—Some of the older boys received state that they stole for the purpose of spending money in driving and treating girls with whom they had immoral relations.

In conclusion the Council is of the opinion that the question of the increase and decrease of juvenile criminality depends very much upon the economic condition of the community, for boys and youths who find difficulty in obtaining employment and are compelled to idle their time away are more likely to yield to temptation than those in regular work.

So also the enforced idleness of parents is responsible for much misery, vice, and crime, for it is beyond doubt that the many older boys and girls who are seen in numbers in the streets and parks are induced to thus seek distraction and pleasure, with the risks of contamination by vicious companions, because of the disorganisation and unattractiveness of their homes.

It appears evident that owing to the neglect of parents, the temptations of street life, illegal betting, and tobacco, numbers of children are being led into criminal practices. The Council is convinced that the matter is one of serious moment, and it urges that legislative action be taken to so amend and add to the existing laws as to enable the police and this department to successfully minimise the evil influences to which children are now subjected.

It is recommended that the Amending State Children Bill, which the Government has authorised to be drafted, should contain the following provisions in addition to those already suggested:—

- (1.) Power for the police to warn children under a fixed age found in the streets at night to go home, and if necessary to take them home; also power to punish parents who wilfully allow children to be in the streets after the hour fixed.
- (2.) Making it penal for any person to supply tobacco in any form to a child.
- (3.) Making it penal for any person to bet in any way with a child.
- (4.) To prevent the sale to or by children of impure and demoralising literature.
- (5.) Power for magistrates when dealing with juvenile delinquents, in addition to existing methods, to—  
 Fine the child and require the parent to guarantee payment in a lump sum or by instalments:  
 Order the child to be whipped, or require the parent to give security for his good behaviour:  
 Order the child to be sent to a probationary school.

The Council also suggests that—

- (1.) Power should be given to the police to license and supervise marine-store dealers and their premises.
- (2.) A probationary school should be established as contemplated by the State Children Act, 1895.

The police have in the past so willingly and ably assisted this department in its efforts to control and supervise children, and the Commissioner and his inspectors are so deeply interested in the welfare of the children more particularly concerned, that the Council has no hesitation in suggesting that the constables might be requested when on duty to pay special regard to any children who appear to be in need of control, and to show a friendly interest in such children by advising them to go home, and thus prevent many from becoming criminals, &c.

The Council regrets that the practice, which was in force for some years until the last few months, of trying all children charged with offences at the office of this department has been departed from. It is of opinion that all charges against children should be heard here instead of at the Police Courthouse. An officer of this department could then have the opportunity of being present at trials and would be able to assist the Court in obtaining the fullest knowledge of cases, so that possibly fewer children might be committed.

T. RHODES, President.

J. B. WHITING, Secretary.

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