

In some of these cases the confinement has been continuous for an unreasonable period, and has been solitary, except that the boy has been taken out for church services, and visited by a Brother four times a day, at meals and at bedtime. The boy has been fed as the other boys, but on some occasions water has been given instead of tea for one or two days; and in two, if not more, cases strokes of the supplejack were given upon the hand at intervals during the confinement. A mattress and sufficient blankets were provided at night.

The boy Skilton, who was confined for over two months, had repeatedly absconded; and in dealing with him for a criminal offence (horse-stealing) the Supreme Court ordered that he should be sent to Burnham, but that institution not being ready to receive him, he was detained at Stoke, and as he threatened he would escape on the first opportunity he was confined in a cell at night, and taken out morning and afternoon for work and exercise in charge of a Brother. The boy, who was confined for three months, had been guilty of a grave offence against morality, and was punished by seclusion for the period named. He slept in the cell, was taken out in the morning and afternoon by a Brother, but not allowed to associate with other boys. In the other cases enumerated, the punishment has been for absconding, insubordination, and immorality.

We have no proof of any boy having been confined in a dark cell. Two of the old inmates spoke of a cell under a staircase, lighted only by an opening the width of the door, and about 4 in. wide, but we have no reason to believe any boy has been confined in it during the last five years.

These cell punishments were ordered by Brother Loetus, as director, without the knowledge of Father Mahoney, the Manager, were not reported to him, and no record of the punishments kept.

We find no particular fault with the cells used at Stoke, except that they were too isolated. The cells at Burnham are, we are informed, more like the ordinary police lock-up, but better lighted. The cells recently used at Stoke were demolished on the 1st of June last, in compliance with a suggestion by members of the Nelson Charitable Aid Board, who visited the institution about that time. There is, however, a room in which are three subdivisions, apparently originally constructed for cells, but which certainly have not been used for that purpose for five years and upwards.

“ 3. That the boys' food has been and is insufficient in quantity, poor in quality, and not sufficiently varied.”

On this complaint we are of opinion that the food supplied at Stoke prior to June last was not sufficiently varied, the dietary table for dinner being a monotonous repetition of stews, composed of meat, potatoes, and vegetables, no joints being served except on festivals, and puddings but seldom; but it was sufficient in quantity, and wholesome in quality; if it had been otherwise, the health of the inmates must have suffered, whereas the medical witnesses told us the boys are healthy and well-conditioned. Some of the witnesses complained of the use of dripping or fat, and of the mode of its preparation; but, in our opinion, without justification.

Since June last the following dietary table has been adopted :—

Breakfast, 7.30 a.m.

Sunday : Cocoa or coffee, bread and jam or butter.
 Monday : Tea, bread, porridge, milk and sugar.
 Tuesday : Tea, bread and jam.
 Wednesday : Same as Monday.
 Thursday : Same as Tuesday.
 Friday : Same as Monday.
 Saturday : Same as Tuesday.

Dinner, 12 noon.

Sunday : Cold beef or mutton, steamed potatoes and vegetables, pudding.
 Monday : Stew of mutton or beef, potatoes and vegetables, bread.
 Tuesday : Same as Monday.
 Wednesday : Sausage or mutton, potatoes and vegetables, pudding.
 Thursday : Same as Monday.
 Friday : Tea, bread and butter, mashed potatoes, cheese.
 Saturday : Same as Monday.