

have been confined for the periods proved. In the case of the boys Skilton and others, had the offence warranted the punishment it would have been preferable to have handed them over to the authorities.

I am pleased to know, from the findings of the Commission, that these cell punishments were ordered by Brother Loetus, as director, without your knowledge, and that they were not reported to you.

The Commission find that the food supplied at Stoke prior to June last was not sufficiently varied, although sufficient in quantity, and wholesome in quality.

The Commissioners find that the clothing has been sufficiently good in quality, although made of rough material. Many of the jerseys were thin, and some not whole. The Commissioners recommend that either under-vests or outside jerseys should be worn in addition to linen shirts by all the boys during the winter months. They find that the ordinary clothing was adequate for the purposes of warmth.

In respect of the charge that certain of the work required to be performed by the inmates was too hard, the Commissioners report that the evidence adduced and observations made by them do not establish this complaint, although in 1894-95 it was proved that the boys had made four trips in the day up the hill, about 1,200 ft. high. The Commissioners, however, find that the work the boys were called upon to do is no harder than that of bush-settlers' sons of the same age.

As to the complaint that the boys who died in the school were buried in the grounds connected with the school, the Commissioners find that there is no good ground for complaint, as the burial-place is a public cemetery, dedicated and gazetted ten years ago.

They report that they gave an opportunity to the boys of making any complaint they desired to make to them, with the result that ten complained, and were examined separately. The complaints were strokes with the supplejack, and rough treatment. The Commissioners find that some of these complaints were trivial, and none were serious.

With regard to the complaint made respecting the boy Thomas Lane, the Commissioners state that the alleged ill-treatment must have occurred before 1895, and that the letter written by the boy on the 8th June last, addressed to Brother Loetus in terms of affection and gratitude, was inconsistent with his evidence.

The Commissioners find that the statement that one of the Brothers had acted indecently with the boy named Thomas Lynch was a fiction.

They further find that the management of the school by the Brothers has not been satisfactory in respect to the cleanliness of the body and the clothing of the inmates. The condition of one of the dormitories has been unsatisfactory, as it is infested with fleas, and that one of the dormitories used by the boys of dirty habits is not creditable. They also find that the bath accommodation requires immediate attention.

The Commissioners find that the assistance of women at the Stoke School is indispensable, and consider that at least two married women should be employed there, whose husbands might be engaged as cooks, garden or farm hands.

They do not think that the management has been satisfactory with regard to outside work, there having been no system, and they are of opinion that men skilled in garden, dairy, and farm work should be employed. They are also of the opinion that more technical education should be given.

The Commissioners find that the system of punishment until quite lately has been unsatisfactory. It has been too severe, flogging with supplejacks on the body, now long discontinued, having verged on cruelty.

They find that the administering of doses of mustard-and-water in all cases of indisposition was highly condemned by all the medical witnesses, and that, although no direct mischief has been traced to this, they recommend its immediate discontinuance.

They find that the retaining of Brothers Kilian and Wybertus in their positions for a considerable time after their unsuitability was manifest is a serious blot on the management.

The Commissioners find that you are blamable for having allowed the management of the school to practically pass out of your hands, and having failed to make yourself familiar with the discipline of the school while under your care. They advise that this must not be allowed to continue, and that you must recognise your responsibility and control as Manager.

Whilst recognising that no complaint has been made against, or any unfitness shown by, the remaining members of the old staff—Brothers Loetus, Wybertus, and Kilian having been removed—the Commissioners are at the same time of the opinion that it would be in the interests of the institution to gradually replace them by Brothers not associated with the past administration of the school, of British nationality, and of cheerful disposition.

The Commissioners advise that a duly qualified medical man should be appointed to visit the school periodically, and to report in a book kept for the purpose the result of his visit, and that all punishments be reported to him at his first inspection following the punishment.

They advise that there is a want of classification of the inmates of the school, and that this adds to the difficulty of maintaining discipline. They are of the opinion that criminal children newly committed should, before being associated with the other inmates, undergo a period of probation in some part of the institution set apart for the purpose. They are further of opinion that inmates who have been licensed out for work, and who have returned to the school, should be kept apart from the ordinary inmates.

After carefully going through the report and sifting the evidence, the Government have come to the conclusion that the reforms indicated are necessary; and that, in order to carry them out they must have from you, as Manager of the institution, an undertaking that the following conditions will be complied with, otherwise the removal of the boys from your control will be necessary:—