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NEW ZEALAND AS A PARENT.

THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM AND BURNHAM SCHOOL, CHRISTCHURCH.

NEW ZEALAND shows something of its civilization by the care and consideration it extends to the children of the state. In many old and professedly civilized countries more attention is paid to levying taxes and training soldiers than to the claims of parentless boys and girls. New Zealand recognises that young human life is of vast importance, and she takes care of it accordingly.

By virtue of an Act of Parliament the Government of New Zealand can obtain complete control and act in every way as the natural parent of 'any child found wandering about or frequenting any street, thoroughfare, or any public place, or sleeping in the open air, not having any house or settled abode; any child residing in any brothel, or dwelling with any prostitute, habitual drunkard, or person committed of vagrancy.' It is under this Act that the Government becomes the parent. It feeds and clothes the children, gives them lodgings, educates them, trains them, or sees that they are trained, and all this is done under what is called 'The Industrial School System.'

There are four industrial schools maintained by the Government. One of the largest and most important of the four is Burnham. This institution is situated about 18 miles south of Christchurch on the great Canterbury Plain. The schools and houses are surrounded by a farm of 1,000 acres, which is worked by the boys under skilled management. Besides the farm there is a big vegetable garden and a well-kept orchard, so the boys are able not only to get a good training in agriculture, horticulture, and gardening but they are able to supply most of the food stuff required by themselves and their sister school-fellows.

When I visited Burnham a few weeks ago Mr T. Palethorpe, the director of the institution, informed me that there were 574 children on the books—352 boys and 222 girls. There were in the school itself 84 boys and 35 girls; out at service, 123 boys and 65 girls; boarded out under licence, 89 boys and 77 girls; with friends under licence,



GROUP OF GIRLS TRAINING FOR DOMESTIC SERVICE.

46 boys and 36 girls. There were 10 missing or absconded, and 14, chiefly girls, who were under charge of such institutions as St. Mary's and Mount Magdala, where strict religious training was considered necessary for their welfare.

The figures I have given require explanation. The Burnham School is really the centre of a system with Mr Palethorpe as its legal head. I stated that there were 166 children boarded out. This means that these children, instead of being kept at the school, are placed

with foster parents. Most of them are quite young, some being infants. The foster parents are paid from 6s to 8s per week for the maintenance of their charges, and in some cases, where children require special care, even 10s per week is paid, and every child on entering its foster home is supplied with a stock of clothing by the school authorities. These boarded-out children, if of sufficient age, must attend the State School, and local visitors are appointed to see that this is done, and also to see that the children are properly fed and clothed. These visitors supply the authorities with a monthly report on the children in their district, so that their condition is well known at the school.

The 188 mentioned as being at service have been placed in situations, the girls as domestic servants, the boys on farms or in workshops. This class are the young people who have gone through a course of training and education at the school, and who have proved themselves trustworthy. Their employers bind themselves to provide sufficient meat, clothes, lodging, and all other necessities, and generally to pay a fixed wage. The wages, according to law, belong to the State, which has acted as their legal parent, but as a matter of fact they are generally paid to the worker, and he or she is supposed to remit any savings to the master of the school, who banks the money to their credit. I saw the account sheet of the money received by the director from those out at service, and knowing the usual extravagance of colonial youth, I was surprised to find that some Burnham boys and girls had sums to their credit at the P.O. Savings Bank varying from £15 and £20 to £40 and £50. This money accumulates at interest until its owner reaches the age of 21,



DIRECTOR, ASSISTANTS, BOYS AND GIRLS OF BURNHAM INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Wheeler, photo.

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