
PROVINCIAL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

—:o:—

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

*Honourable W. J. Bowser,
Attorney-General, Victoria.*

SIR,—I have the honour to submit this (the fifth) Annual Report of the Provincial Industrial School (formerly known as the Juvenile Reformatory), covering thirteen months, from 1st November, 1908, to 30th November, 1909.

During the year twenty boys have been admitted, their sentences ranging from two to five years each, making a total of 113 boys who have entered the institution since it was opened on 1st February, 1905.

Thirty boys were liberated during the year. Out of that number, twenty-four were either pardoned or paroled for good conduct. At present there are forty-five boys in the school.

Out of sixty-eight boys who have been liberated since the school was opened, fifty-four of the number were pardoned or paroled on the recommendation of the Superintendent. The fourteen who served out their full time were held, in nearly every case, because they had no home to go to, or their so-called home was not a desirable place for them to return to.

In the early part of the year, four small boys made their escape, but were captured a few hours afterwards.

One boy, mentioned in my last annual report as having escaped on 27th October, 1907, and residing in the United States, returned to Canada, and on 10th February, 1909, voluntarily surrendered himself to Superintendent Donaldson, at Victoria, and accompanied him back to the school to serve the remainder of his sentence.

Although the grounds around the school are without a fence and surrounded by thick bush, into which any boy who so desires can easily make his escape, yet for the past nine months we have not had a single case of a boy attempting to run away. Judging from the experience of other schools which the Matron and myself visited during the past summer, this is a record experience.

Most of the boys who have left the school are conducting themselves in a satisfactory manner; quite a number of the larger boys are in good positions, earning an honest livelihood, and give promise of becoming good and useful citizens.

The general health of the boys has been excellent. We had two serious cases of illness, which necessitated having a trained nurse for several weeks. One boy had an attack of typhoid and pneumonia; another boy suffered from rheumatism and St. Vitus dance. The latter left the school in March last, but never got strong, and passed away at his own home in the following August. Three boys who had been neglected at their homes were successfully operated on by Doctor F. X. McPhillips, the result being that one boy, who would have been an invalid for life, is now one of the cleverest acrobats in the school.

As a preventive against scarlet fever, mumps, and measles, which were epidemic in the city in the early part of the summer, I stopped the boys going to church for about ten weeks, and, acting on the advice of the medical attendant, I also prohibited friends in the city from visiting their boys. The good results justified the precautionary measures adopted.

During the year we opened up a tailoring-shop, in which we are now making the boys' uniforms and overalls; also uniforms for the officials. A number of the boys are becoming very proficient in this department. One of the members of the Grand Jury that visited the school in October last, being a master tailor, was shown a pair of uniform trousers made for one of the officers by a boy fifteen years of age, and he expressed the opinion that very few city shops could turn out better work.

The opening during the year of the gymnasium building, with a thoroughly competent gymnasium instructor and drill sergeant, has had a marked effect in the discipline of the school.

A very great improvement in the physique of the boys can be noticed shortly after their admission to the institution. Lots of fresh air, good wholesome food, well-ventilated sleeping-rooms, healthy exercise at work, games, and sports, and the training they get in physical exercise and military drill, all play an important part in their development into young manhood.

Since the installation of fire escapes in each dormitory, I have considered it wise to give the boys considerable fire drill, thus preparing them for an emergency, should it arise, and have also taken the precaution of having a small steel crowbar chained at each fire-escape exit, so that in case of fire, should there be any delay in the matter of keys, the staples can be jerked off without a moment's delay. At fire drill the dormitories are emptied in about two minutes and a half after the fire alarm has sounded. During the year a night-watchman was appointed who passes through and around the building at regular intervals.

Our garden has furnished nearly all vegetables used by the school; also turnips, mangolds, etc., for the cattle. The work of planting, weeding, and harvesting affords healthy and profitable work for many of the boys, and during the year a good deal of real hard work was done by the larger boys, clearing up several acres of land, felling trees, sawing and splitting up about a hundred cords of firewood, painting the barns, fences, etc.

Our floral department was a success. Nothing has a more elevating effect than flowers, and quite a few of the boys had considerable experience during the year in this most interesting department.

All the boys are enrolled in school and receive three hours' instruction each afternoon, taking up the regular public-school studies. The mornings and forenoons are given up to work in the kitchen, bakeshop, dining-room, dormitories, laundry, tailor-shop, garden, farm, etc.; also a class in carpentering and manual training. It is astonishing how boys who have been persistent truants take readily to this latter department of school work. Almost every boy that enters the institution becomes deeply interested in manual-training exercises. It is a kind of work that develops their mental powers, and at the same time trains their hands to do work that in this new and growing Province will be of great advantage to them in after years in assisting them to fight successfully the great battle of life.

The religious training of the boys is not overlooked. Bible-reading and prayers are conducted every morning and night, led by the Superintendent. Each Sunday morning, if the weather is at all favourable, the boys parade and march to Fairview and attend Divine

service at one of the churches. Every Sunday afternoon a religious service is held in our own schoolroom. The services are made bright and interesting and the various speakers are listened to with the greatest attention, while the singing of the boys is an inspiration to themselves and to those who attend the service.

During the year the Superintendent and Matron were privileged to visit many industrial schools and kindred institutions in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, thereby gaining much valuable information, which will be very helpful to us in our work.

The following are the names of the present staff of officials :—

Superintendent—D. Donaldson.

Matron and Housekeeper—Mrs. C. Donaldson.

1st Assistant and Instructor—A. W. Jones.

2nd Assistant—Thos. Calbick.

3rd Assistant and Drill Instructor—Wm. Forsyth.

Gardener—E. L. Woodruff.

Baker and Cook—S. Stephens.

Night-watchman—A. M. Evans.

Respectfully submitted,

D. DONALDSON,

Superintendent.

30th November, 1909.

VICTORIA, B. C.:

Printed by RICHARD WOLFENDEN, I.S.O., V.D., Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty
1910.