Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline, Victoria

1871 – 1872

Details

The Royal Commission on Penal and Prison Discipline considered the problems posed by 'neglected' and criminal children in Victoria's industrial schools and reformatories. Its Report in August 1872 recommended that industrial schools be abolished, and replaced with a system of boarding-out.

The 1872 Royal Commission on Industrial and Reformatory Schools condemned the industrial school system for the 'care' of 'neglected' children, on the grounds that:

- the deprivation of all the natural domestic associations injuriously affected the health and spirits of the children
- bringing together large numbers of children exposed them to dangers of 'contagion, both physical and moral'
- the number of children in the schools made any individual attention impossible, this being 'the only effectual means of bringing moral and religious influences to bear'
- the trades taught in the schools encouraged children to settle in town and cities 'with their inevitable snares and temptations'
- that children in industrial schools were not able to form any kind of family or domestic ties

The Commission concluded that 'the whole system of congregated charitable schools is based on a wrong principle, which, in its practical development, is injurious alike to the interests of the children brought up in them and to the state'.

It urged that the industrial schools system be replaced with the boarding out system, 'under which the children would be boarded in respectable cottagers' homes, under regular supervision by honorary local Ladies' Visiting Committees'.

More info

Related Entries

Related Organisations
- Convent of the Good Shepherd, Abbotsford (1863 - 1974)
- Reformatory for Boys (1864 - 1893)
- Sunbury Industrial School (1865 - 1880?)
- The 'Sir Harry Smith' (1865 - 1873)

Resources

- *Reformatory Schools*, The Argus, 19 August 1872

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