age 11.5.12

Album

Serah M

age 11·5·12

Issue of Tights

M.&C.

THE WASTE OF BABY LIFE.

Truth 10.08

Failure of Protective Legislation.

Inadequate and Ineffective Measure

It has been remarked that no single member of a Government which is unusually fo
of belauding the Acts placed on the Sta
Book during its regime has at any
made the smallest mention of the Vic
Infant Life Protection Act of 1907.
passed with a great flourish of t
Legislators on both sides of the
declared with great emphasis tha
machinery was provided for the co
of the baby life of the State. Ba
were to find their revolting occupa
The parents of the illegitimate i
to be constrained by unassailab
ligations to observe their moral
offspring. In short, the baby
had just about arrived. The pu
all the political guff. It genera
might, too, have forgotten a
matter and gone on in serene
ness but for Bent and Co.'s
boasting of all the marvellou
ferred by them upon Victori
mous silence of Ministers is si
Infant Life Protection Act of
spicuous and lamentable failu
the nice things that were s
the time of its passage, it nev
of being anything else. It w
the beginning. And at t
months, during which it ha
tion, it has accomplished—
then, it makes no effective
and reaches nowhere. If
sessed any knowledge of
sued in other countries—i
stance—they have been
concealing the fact. I
original ideas of the
the scope and inter
measure, they presum
with a celerity and compl
of the baby farmer hers
rial alteration effected b
the transfer of the duty
the police to inspectors a
lected Children's depart
solitary effective check h
the ghouls who traffic i
awful slaughter goes on
baby farmers' insecurity
nor less than it was ni

* *

The first essential pro
the Protection of Infant
that children to be pr
birth, come within th
people charged with
the law. Otherwise
to ensure that any
visions of the Act a
short, no Infant Lif
begin to protect chil
ence its administrato
And there, right at
most important matte
subsides into a condi
ness. For it contain
for the guidance of
lected Children's dep
the Act. Certainly
every person to wh
age of five years
registered, that th
boarded out must
for permission so t
ments for mainte
within certain limi
through the depa
gatory by reason
vision already mentioned. The baby farmer simply doesn't register, and the woman who wants to be wholly rid of an unwelcome infant, and doesn't care by what means that riddance is effected, doesn't apply for permission to board out her infant in a registered home, where the inspectors could come along and see it at any time. But then neither of them ever did these things. It is not conceivable that they ever will. And unless somebody or other makes it his or her business to inform the department that Mrs. So-and-So has a baby that doesn't belong to her, there is no likelihood of the department ever hearing of Mrs. So-and-So, the baby farmer. For it has no means of knowing of the existence of such a baby, and, of course, it can't look after the baby it doesn't know anything about, or do anything to the unregistered person it never heard of, or the mother it never saw. So the law is a fool of a law from the start. It should have contained as its leading article a provision that every illegitimate child should, ipso
e, and
regis-
with
otection
result
ren are
is only
dicated
eached.
ousands
othing,
rs with
ed, and
s abun-
glected
of the
Punish-
uld be
places
traffic
ed Chil-
stop it.

ayment
led out
curtail
ot less
respect
hs, and
a child
yments
e child
young
scretion
that of
he devil
unceas-
contra-
g their
strink-
y legal
they
ill-paid
burden
uch to
nd the
of the
strong
s. For
egs of
middle-
ry and
lesome.
eserved
sexual
l their
enance,
ler the
rge of
n. they
regis-
charge
is not,
n such
here is
her so
who
not ere
rd. So
ntends,
rarying
to the
he de-
e limit
m the
a prac-
course.
hrough
having
fallen into arrear, the whole cost of maintenance falls upon the State, because though the secretary of the Neglected Children's department has power upon investigation to make an order against the mother for payment of such a sum as he may adjudge to be within her means, such an order may be regarded as a most exceptional thing. The necessity for committal is the strongest evidence of the mother's inability to maintain her child and herself also. There are other directions, too, in which the Infant Life
tection Act falls far short of requiremer
and others again towards which it makes no attempt at movement, and possibly "Truth" may indicate some of these on another occasion. But until the initial blunder by which the law shuts its eyes to the birth and parentage of the children its ostensible aim is to protect has been remedied, all other amendment is mere wasted effort.

Young people out at night.

INFANT LIFE DESTRUCTION

Herald 11.08

KNOWN AND UNKNOWN BABES

RECORDS FOR THIS YEAR

The discovery within a few days recently of the dead bodies of two unknown babes, one in the sea at Elsternwick and the other in the ladies' waiting-room at the East Richmond railway station, has called public attention to the undoubted prevalence of the crime of infanticide.

Very many newly-born babes are unquestionably done to death at or soon after birth, either wilfully or by want of attention. The number of bodies discovered, however, is much smaller than casual attention to the records of the cases that are reported to the Coroner would have one to suppose.

From January 1 of this year up to date, the Coroner has had thirteen such cases reported to him. It must not be taken, however, to represent anything like the total number of infants who may be said to have died through wilfulness or neglect in the ten months and a half under notice. It is, unfortunately, beyond doubt that only a very small percentage of the bodies of the babies whose lives are taken are discovered. The great majority are disposed of so safely that they are never found. It is the discovery of two or more within a few days that conveys to the public mind an idea of what is going on.

During the ten months and a half of this year only thirteen bodies of infants who have undoubtedly or presumably been murdered have been discovered. Inquests on these have been held, and in all but one case no trace has been found of the persons concerned in the murder or the identity of the infants. They remain on the records of the Coroner's office as unknowns. The list is as follows:—

March 24.—Female child, about three months old, found dead floating in the Yarra at the Australian Wharf. At the inquest there was not sufficient evidence to determine the cause of death, and no evidence to show how, when or where the child was placed in the water. Verdict: Found dead.

March 28.—Newly-born male infant, found washed ashore at Brighton beach. Not sufficient evidence to determine the cause of death, and no evidence to show how, when or where the child was placed in the water. Verdict: Found dead.

May 5.—Newly-born female child found at Burnley. Cause of death found to be suffocation, probably due to some mechanical interference during birth. No evidence to determine how or when the death took place. Verdict: Found dead.

May 16.—Newly-born female child o

THE WASTE OF BABY LIFE.

Failure of Protective Legislation.

Inadequate and Ineffective Measure

It has been remarked that no single member of a Government which is unusually fond of belauding the Acts placed on the Statute Book during its regime has at any time made the smallest mention of the Victorian Infant Life Protection Act of 1907. It was passed with a great flourish of trumpets Legislators on both sides of the Assembly declared with great emphasis that all the machinery was provided for the conservation of the baby life of the State. Baby farmers were to find their revolting occupations gone. The parents of the illegitimate infant were to be constrained by unassailable legal obligations to observe their moral duty to their offspring. In short, the baby's millenium had just about arrived. The public accepted all the political guff. It generally does. And might, too, have forgotten all about the matter and gone on in serene unconsciousness but for Bent and Co.'s bad habit of boasting of all the marvellous benefits conferred by them upon Victoria. The unanimous silence of Ministers is significant. The Infant Life Protection Act of 1907 is a conspicuous and lamentable failure. Despite all the nice things that were said about it at the time of its passage, it never had a chance of being anything else. It was botched from the beginning. And at the end of nine months, during which it has been in operation, it has accomplished—nothing. But, then, it makes no effective aim at anything, and reaches nowhere. If its framers possessed any knowledge of the methods pursued in other countries—in France, for instance—they have been most successful in concealing the fact. If they had any original ideas of their own as to the scope and intention of such a measure, they presumably stifled them with a celerity and completeness equal to that of the baby farmer herself. The only material alteration effected by the Act has been the transfer of the duty of supervision from the police to inspectors appointed by the Neglected Children's department. But not one solitary effective check has been placed upon the ghouls who traffic in baby lives. The awful slaughter goes on just as before. The baby farmers' insecurity is neither greater nor less than it was nine months ago.

* * *

The first essential provision of an Act for the Protection of Infant Life is one ensuring that children to be protected shall, at their birth, come within the knowledge of the people charged with the administration of the law. Otherwise there remains nothing to ensure that any of the remaining provisions of the Act are complied with. In short, no Infant Life Protection Act can begin to protect children about whose existence its administrators are totally ignorant. And there, right at the threshold of this most important matter, the law founders and subsides into a condition of imbecile helplessness. For it contains no provision of the sort for the guidance of the officers of the Neglected Children's department, who administer the Act. Certainly the Act provides that every person to whom an infant under the age of five years is boarded out must be registered, that the parent of the child so boarded out must apply to the department for permission so to board it out, that payments for maintenance shall be restricted within certain limits, and shall be made only through the department, but they are migatory by reason of the absence of the provision already mentioned. The baby farmer simply doesn't register, and the woman who wants to be wholly rid of an unwelcome infant, and doesn't care by what means that riddance is effected, doesn't apply for permission to board out her infant in a registered home, where the inspectors could come along and see it at any time. But then neither of them ever did these things. It is not conceivable that they ever will. And unless somebody or other makes it his or her business to inform the department that Mrs. So-and-So has a baby that doesn't belong to her, there is no likelihood of the department ever hearing of Mrs. So-and-So, the baby farmer. For it has no means of knowing of the existence of such a baby, and, of course, it can't look after the baby it doesn't know anything about, or do anything to the unregistered person it never heard of, or the mother it never saw. So the law is a fool of a law from the start. It should have contained as its leading article a provision that every illegitimate child should, ipso facto, be a ward of the State, and its birth be notified to and registered with a department charged with the administration of Infant Life Protection laws. Not otherwise can the desired result be encompassed. Illegitimate children are the prey of the baby farmer, and it is only by some such enactment as that indicated that these inhuman creatures can be reached. And that in its absence there are thousands of children of whom the law knows nothing, who have been placed by their mothers with women who have never been registered, and have no intention to be registered, is abundantly clear to the officers of the Neglected Children's department. Avoidance of the obligations of the law is so easy. Punishment, where detection occurs, should be swift and sharp. There are dozens of places in and around Melbourne where the traffic in babies is going on, and the Neglected Children's department is powerless to stop it.

* * *

Again, the legal provision as to payment for the maintenance of a child boarded out with a registered person hamper and curtail its effectiveness. Under the Act not less than 10s. per week may be paid in respect of a child under the age of 12 months, and not less than 7s. 6d. in respect of a child up to the age of five years, and if payments fall into arrear for four weeks, the child becomes a ward of the State. Many young women who have committed the indiscretion of maternity without preceding it by that of matrimony are thus placed between the devil and the deep sea. On the one hand unceasing impecuniousness; on the other contravention of the law. Fearful of exposing their lapse to an unsympathetic world and shrinking from the publicity occasioned by legal proceedings against their betrayers, they must struggle along—generally in ill-paid domestic positions—bearing their burden alone. Ten shillings a week is too much to ask these poor creatures to pay, and the alternative—committal to the care of the State—is terrifying to the girl of strong maternal instincts and pure affections. For these young mothers are not the dregs of society. Generally speaking, they are middle-class girls of the shop, office, factory and domestic type; hard-working, wholesome, well-intentioned girls, who have deserved better of life than to be caught in the sexual maelstrom. And when they find all their scanty earnings mopped up in maintenance, it is not to be wondered at that under the subterfuge of themselves taking charge of the child and maintaining it with them, they are constrained to remove it from a registered home and place it at a reduced charge with an unregistered person. There is not, and cannot be, any effective check upon such proceedings under the present law. There is another alternative before the mother so beset—a shocking alternative—and who knows that the effect of the law has not ere this been to drive the girl thitherward. So that, as the department itself contends, there should be some provision for varying the rate of maintenance according to the means of the mother of the child, the department making up the balance to the limit required by the law. And apart from the ethical side of the question, there is a practical consideration to recommend this course. When a child becomes a State ward through its mother's maintenance payments having fallen into arrear, the whole cost of maintenance falls upon the State, because though the secretary of the Neglected Children's department has power upon investigation to make an order against the mother for payment of such a sum as he may adjudge to be within her means, such an order may be regarded as a most exceptional thing. The necessity for committal is the strongest evidence of the mother's inability to maintain her child and herself also. There are other directions, too, in which the Infant Life Protection Act falls far short of requirements, and others again towards which it makes no attempt at movement, and possibly "Truth" may indicate some of these on another occasion. But until the initial blunder by which the law shuts its eyes to the birth and parentage of the children its ostensible aim is to protect has been remedied, all other amendment is mere wasted effort.

INFANT LIFE DESTRUCTION

KNOWN AND UNKNOWN BABES

RECORDS FOR THIS YEAR

The discovery within a few days recently of the dead bodies of two unknown babes, one in the sea at Elsternwick and the other in the ladies' waiting-room at the East Richmond railway station, has called public attention to the undoubted prevalence of the crime of infanticide.

Very many newly-born babes are unquestionably done to death at or soon after birth, either wilfully or by want of attention. The number of bodies discovered, however, is much smaller than casual attention to the records of the cases that are reported to the Coroner would have one to suppose.

From January 1 of this year up to date, the Coroner has had thirteen such cases reported to him. It must not be taken, however, to represent anything like the total number of infants who may be said to have died through wilfulness or neglect in the ten months and a half under notice. It is, unfortunately, beyond doubt that only a very small percentage of the bodies of the babies whose lives are taken are discovered. The great majority are disposed of so safely that they are never found. It is the discovery of two or more within a few days that conveys to the public mind an idea of what is going on.

During the ten months and a half of this year only thirteen bodies of infants who have undoubtedly or presumably been murdered have been discovered. Inquests on these have been held, and in all but one case no trace has been found of the persons concerned in the murder or the identity of the infants. They remain on the records of the Coroner's office as unknowns. The list is as follows:—

March 24.—Female child, about three months old, found dead floating in the Yarra at the Australian Wharf. At the inquest there was not sufficient evidence to determine the cause of death, and no evidence to show how, when or where the child was placed in the water. Verdict: Found dead.

March 28.—Newly-born male infant, found washed ashore at Brighton beach. Not sufficient evidence to determine the cause of death, and no evidence to show how, when or where the child was placed in the water. Verdict: Found dead.

May 5.—Newly-born female child found at Burnley. Cause of death found to be suffocation, probably due to some mechanical interference during birth. No evidence to determine how or when the death took place. Verdict: Found dead.

May 16.—Newly-born female child of

a domestic servant at Carlton died at birth from suffocation and strangulation by a piece of tape wilfully tied round her neck by her mother. Coroner found a verdict of wilful murder against the mother, who was placed on trial, but was acquitted on the ground that she was temporarily insane at the time She was committed during the Governor's pleasure.

May 25.—Newly-born male child, unknown, found dead at Toorak, having died at birth from strangulation during the previous twenty-four hours. Verdict: Wilful murder by some person or persons unknown.

August 3.—Newly-born male child found at the South Melbourne beach, near Kerferd road pier. It had died some few hours previously from suffocation, due to some cause or causes unknown. Verdict: Found dead.

August 20.—A newly born female child was found in the Yarra at South Wharf, having died about seven days previously from suffocation from some cause or causes unknown. No evidence to show how or by whom the body was placed in the water. Verdict: Found dead.

August 25.—At Albert Park a newly born female child was found dead, having died from suffocation about three days previously. There was no evidence to determine how the suffocation was caused or by whom the child was left where it was found. Verdict: Found dead.

August 31.—A newly born male child, unknown, was found in the Yarra at South Wharf, having died from strangulation about 14 days previously. Verdict: Wilful murder by some person or persons unknown.

September 19.—A newly-born female child was found dead on the railway enclosure near Raglan street, Balaclava. It had died within the previous twenty-four hours from suffocation due to want of care at birth. There was no evidence to show by whom the body was placed in the enclosure. Verdict—Found dead.

August 8.—A newly-born male child, unknown, was found dead at Essex street, Prahran, having been wilfully strangled on or about the date on which the body was found. Verdict—Wilful murder by some person or persons unknown.

November 3.—A newly-born female child was found in the sea at Elsternwick, having died from suffocation a few days previously. There was no evidence to show how the suffocation was caused, or by whom the body was placed in the water. Verdict—Found drowned.

October 26.—At the railway station, East Richmond, a newly-born male child, unknown, was found in the ladies' waiting room. It had died during the previous 24 hours from suffocation, but there was no evidence to show how the suffocation was caused or by whom the body was placed in the waiting-room. Verdict—Found dead.

This list does not include the cases of infants whose deaths have been caused by being accidentally overlain in bed by their mothers, or by improper feeding, or the many summer complaints to which infants are subject. It includes only those in which wilful violence has been shown or may be reasonably presumed.

WAVE OF JUVENILE IMMORALITY. 1809

Big Guns Fire Blank Cartridges.

Obscure Sex Problem in Smoke.

During the past fortnight there has been considerable skirmishing around the pivot upon which the great Sex problem revolves, and large quantities of blank ammunition have been fired off by judicial and legislative big guns. Sir John Madden considers libidinous hes should be punished, and salacious shes protected; Premier Murray is of opinion the State has already done a lot of reformatory work; Treasurer Watt does not think distracted mothers who kill their offspring should be held responsible, and Coroner Cole wants the State "to do something"—he does not say what—to prevent the dreadful waste of innocent child life, which is a disgrace to civilisation. No doubt all the gentlemen named mean well, and, if they chose, could translate their words into actions, but they are barred by the mealy-mouthed, ethical standards of pseudo-pietical purists. In countries where adolescents arrive at the puberty stage before their intellectuality reaches its equipoise, it is necessarily wellnigh impossible to completely restrain sexual impetuosity and "indiscretion"; but much that is not done could be done in an ameliorative direction.

* * *

The promoters of a suburban "refuge" presented their annual report to donors and subscribers last week. They made hairs stand up like the quills of a porcupine on many a wowseristic pate. Mere chits of girls, they said, not more than 13 years of age, had come to them in the family way, whilst 50 per cent. of the whole of those who had applied for confinement beds were between the ages of 15 and 20. During the last 12 months 85 girl-mothers had been delivered of living babes. In all cases the putative fathers were youths in their teens. What do those deplorable figures show? Simply this: That licentiousness, immodesty, and salacity is on a rapid and alarming increase among the young girls of the State. A salacious girl is far more dangerous to a virtuous boy than a libidinous boy is to a virtuous girl. That is the painful experience of innumerable parents, who have seen their smooth-faced lads placed in the criminal dock on a charge of having had carnal knowledge. A severer punishment, however, falls on the girl, who suffers the pangs and fears of motherhood, and carries to her grave the indelible mark of unchastity. That furnishes some excuse for the law regarding her sympathetically, but she is really as guilty, if not more so, then her youthful paramour. The State should view them both in the light of wrongdoers, and both should be amenable to prosecution. Under existing conditions a girl under 16 years of age is protected as a victim, while a boy is persecuted as a criminal assailant. The only allowance in his favor is made when the girl is the same age, or older, than he is.

* * *

In favorable environment, the girl's natural passivity tends to the preservation of her chastity, and if the girls remained proof against impropriety instead of encouraging it, the boys would be correspondingly virtuous. The cure or mitigation of the evil has therefore more to do with the upbringing and care of the girl than the assumed inherent wickedness in the boy, who, in purist circles, is termed a seducer and vile betrayer of innocence. It has been suggested that much could be achieved by raising the age of consent, but obviously the remedy is not in that direction. Young girls should be restricted to home life surroundings until they are at least 18 years of age. It is shocking to see impudent, well-developed, bright girl-children working in big factories by day and seeking recreation in the streets or dance rooms by night. They should be compelled to attend school until they are 16, and should not be permitted to compete in the world of labor until they are 18. It is only the contemptible Holy Joe sweater who would suffer pecuniarily if such restrictive legislation was passed..

* * *

On Tuesday last Dr. Cole held inquiries into the cause of death of three babies who had been picked up dead in the streets or vacant land. He said:—

> I have no doubt that these three children were done to death, murdered, in fact, either by deliberate design or by criminal neglect. We seem in Melbourne to be drifting into a state of things similar to that which existed in the worst period of the Roman Empire, when infanticide became so common as to be neglected altogether. Here at the Morgue cases of what appear to be nothing else but child-slaughter are constantly recurring, and we can do nothing to stop them.

It is well known to everyone that both foeticide and infanticide is extensively practised, and that there are professional murderesses willing to either procure abortion or slaughter babies that persist in coming into the world alive; but the baby has little to do with the solution of the Sex Problem except as the outward and visible sign of sexual amours. It is not the effect, but the cause, which demands attention, and ameliorative legislation should be at once concentrated on the adolescence. Married women who practice foeticide or use preventives are wilfully wicked, matured men who seduce young women are scoundrels, young women who love not wisely but too well and give away marital privileges on trust are victims of natural feminine weakness, but it is the boys and girls who can and should be saved by sensible broad-viewed State intervntion. If parents relax their controlling influence the State should assume it.

* * *

It is no use, as Sir John Madden proposes, punishing boys with greater severity and extending a greater sympathy than previously to salacious girls. Where both are consenting parties, both are equally guilty, and a punitive hand should be laid on each. It is reprehensible in the extreme for Premier Murray to lie back in an armchair and prate about what has been done in the face of deplorable facts and figures which are being daily augmented. If what has been done is ineffective, something more is needed to achieve effectiveness. It is beside the question when Treasurer Watt excuses child-slaughter on the ground of girl-mothers' distraction. The distraction should not be created. It is folly for Coroner Cole to say we permit child murder because we can do nothing to stop it. We can. Adequately remunerate the adult bread-winners, enable them to provide comfortable, pleasant homes for their sons and daughters, abolish the iniquitous sweater who grows sleek and fat

on child labor, sweep young girls, and for that matter young boys, out of factories and workshops; place them in schools, and encourage filial regard; keep them off the streets by the establishment of State-controlled recreative and amusement resorts, and make the inculcation of secular morality a leading feature in every scholastic curriculum. The sooner the big guns on the bench and in Parliament cease firing blank shells, which only raise clouds of smoke and obscure the real issue, and get to the earnest work by grasping the nettle, the better.

Herald 10 8 09

Maternity Patients' Home

The annual meeting of subscribers to the Maternity Patients' Convalescent Home is being held in the Town Hall as we go to press this afternoon. The committee's report states that during the year 27 girls had passed through the home, making a total of 1157 since the inception of the society in 1883. The decrease in the number of girls assisted, it was considered, signified an improvement in the moral tone of the community, but the committee believed that the quiet manner in which the home was conducted militated against its benefits becoming known to girls in want of help. A number of situations had been found for the girls. The receipts amounted to L102 8s 2d, and the expenditure to L117 3s 11d.

CIGARETTE-SMOKING.

Argus 18 8 09

BAD FOR BOYS.

At the request of the Premier (Mr. Murray) the Government medical officer (Dr. O'Brien) has supplied him with a memorandum on cigarette-smoking. In this Dr. O'Brien says:—

"Daily observation verifies the fact that tobacco-smoking, more especially in the form of cigarettes, is a marked and increasing habit among a large proportion of juveniles. Indeed, to such an extent is this the case that in the interest of the mental and bodily health of our youthful population urgent legislation would be perfectly justifiable. . . . It is apparent, whether the injurious effects are due to the nicotine, to pyridine, or to the cyanide and sulphid of ammonia vapours, that tobacco taken by the adult in excess frequently causes symptoms which are the evidence of disturbance to the mental and physical organisation. No doubt, in moderation, its influence is soothing up to a degree. It is said to be a stimulant to the brain in small quantities. I am satisfied no such property exists, and the experience of most smokers confirms this view. Tobacco in excess presents the symptoms of an irritant and narcotic poison, and the indications have been experienced by most smokers in their first attempt. . . . On the other hand, we know that many tobacco-users are capable of smoking to an extent which would be regarded in others as excessive, without presenting for a considerable time any injurious objective or subjective symptoms. . . . Tobacco in any shape or form, and I say more especially in the form of cigarettes, has a distinctly injurious effect upon a growing lad. From the increasing habit he soon becomes listless, indolent, pale, nervous, irritable; is more often a looker-on than a participant in boyish games; his heart's action is weak, rapid, may be irregular; and at work he is not in it with the abstainer. . . . With the youthful consumer of tobacco (more especially the inhaler and the chewer), the injurious influences can have but one end, and that the direct and evil influence on the mental and bodily faculties."

SAVING THE INFANTS.

age 1909

LADY TALBOT MILK INSTITUTE.

FIRST YEAR'S OPERATIONS.

The first annual report of the Lady Talbot Milk Institute, which was established in Melbourne about a year ago, after the manner of the Gouttes de Lait in France, with the object of reducing the number of deaths of infants in the city and suburbs from milk poisoning in the summer months, was presented at a meeting of subscribers held at the Town Hall yesterday. Lady Carmichael presided.

The report stated that so far only one dairy farm—that of Mr. Hope, of Caulfield—had complied with the conditions specified, and it was from this farm that all the milk distributed by the board during the past summer had been obtained. The Willsmere Certified Milk Company had secured the tender for the pasteurisation, bottling and delivering of the milk. During the five months that the institute had been distributing milk 39,594 pints had been supplied to 294 families, at a cost of £659 18/ for milk and £74 for ice. About 300 infants had been fed with this milk, and of these only eight had died. This was considered to be a splendid record, considering that a large majority of the children, when first put upon the milk, were already suffering from diarrhœal troubles due to the defective milk that had been previously supplied to them during the summer months. The price paid by the institute to the Willsmere company for the milk was 4d. a pint, and the price paid by the parents was, on an average, 2d. In Melbourne and suburbs over 1200 infants died each year. The board felt confident that if it received generous support in its work from the councils, the various charitable trusts and the public, it could save at lease 300 of those lives, besides helping the coming generation of children to far healthier constitutions, and at the same time improving the surroundings in the poorer homes. The members of the board had not spared themselves in working up the details of this life saving scheme, but their efforts would come to nought unless they meet with an active response from the Government and from other sources.

Dr. A. J. Wood, in submitting the report, remarked that the beneficial results of the institute's operations were already apparent in the form of a reduced mortality among very young children formerly fed on impure milk. During the first half of the present year only 31 deaths had occurred among young children in the Collingwood district, the lowest number recorded for many years. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. Barrett, in moving the adoption of the report, said actuarial investigation had shown that the capital purchase value of every child saved to the community was £240. The Talbot Milk Institute was able to save 300 of those lives annually.

Lady Carmichael said she found it a great pleasure to take part in a movement that was fraught with so much importance in regard to the saving of child life as was this pure milk supply movement. The lives of infants were precious to the country they were born in. They were perhaps all the more obviously so here in Australia where the need for increased population was so generally recognised. (Hear, hear.) The Talbot Milk Institute was touching the very crux of this question, as it helped children at the very outset o. their lives to gain health and strength, especially in the hot season. (Applause.) The society not only guaranteed a supply of absolutely pure milk, but in hot weather it suppl ed ice, and ice chests with the milk to keep it fresh. The society also employed a nurse, whose duty it was to periodically visit the houses to which the milk was sent, in order to advise mothers what to do if the babies were not thriving. The success of the society would be materially helped if people who could afford to pay the full price charged by the institute would take ful' advantage of this means of procuring good wholesome milk at a fair charge. It was an inestimable boon to mothers, no matter in what position of life they were, to be able to obtain undoubtedly good milk for their infants. (Hear, hear.) Surely a penny, or even twopence, more for a quart would be well spent by parents in decent circumstances if it saved children from the great risks they must run from feeding infants on milk supplied under ordinary conditions. (Applause.) Milk guaranteed to be absolutely pure could not be supplied at the same cost as milk not so guaranteed, and the more people there were who understood that pure milk was essential to the life of delicate children, the greater would be the demand for it. (Applause.) Dr. Wood had informed her that in order to help as many children as possible during the hot weather, when there was by far the greatest mortality amongst infants, the institute had stopped the sale of milk during the winter months to conserve its funds for the time when they should most be wanted. In the circumstances this no doubt was a wise arrangement, but perhaps if those who could afford it used the milk more it might not be necessary again to make any break at all in the beneficent operations of the society, which might thus be enabled to carry on its great work all the year round. (Applause.)

Dr. Hooper, hon. treasurer, estimated that £3000 would be required to carry on the work of the institute during the ensuing year. He hoped that this sum would be forthcoming in the interests of the child life of the metropolis. (Hear, hear.)

The Lord Mayor (Cr. Burston) eulogised the efforts of the institute, and promised the co-operation of the City Council in the effort to extend its sphere of influence. In view of a wider and still growing demand for pure milk, it would be well for the institute to consider whether it would not be possible, without incurring loss, to slightly reduce the price to the general consumers who would be prepared to pay an adequate price for a good article. (Applause.)

Cr. Evans (Collingwood) said the great good that had been wrought in his district by the institute had made his council feel that it would be fully warranted in continuing its support. (Applause.) This was probably but the beginning of a purer milk supply throughout the metropolis. (Hear, hear.)

Dr. Norris also spoke and on his motion

RACE SUICIDE.

Argus 30 8 09

SYDNEY CORONER'S OPINIONS.

SYDNEY, Thursday. — The city coroner (Mr. Murphy) has made a number of recommendations with a view to cope with the prevalence of infanticide.

He described infanticide as a very serious disease in the body politic, which calls for some drastic remedy, and advocates an amendment of the law to enable the officials to trace all births and the cause of death.

As an encouragement to a natural increase in the population, Mr. Murphy thinks that a tax on bachelors and a bonus to parents of large families are worthy of serious consideration. The limitation of families, he says, is almost entirely confined to persons living in easy circumstances, the richer the parents the smaller the families.

He adds:—"As a rule the avoidance of the cares of maternity, the excessive desire for social gaiety, and the mode of life generally (including the diet of parents) are, I believe, the chief causes of small families. On the other hand, the poorer classes, living on plainer diet and leading a more natural life in other respects, continue to have large families. It would seem that the humbler the walk in life the more prolific are the parents. If the present practices continue the whole political control of the State must eventually fall into the hands of the working classes. In my opinion no State can be prosperous in the widest acceptance of the term if ruled by one class."

WHERE IS THE BABY?

A REMARKABLE CASE.

HEARD AT COBURG TO-DAY.

Herald 17 8 09

CHARGES AGAINST A NURSE.

At the Coburg Court to-day, before the Mayor of Coburg, Mr H. J. Richards, chairman, and Messrs Cherry, Greenwood, and Waters, J.'s P., a registered nurse under the Infant Life Protection Act, named Priscilla Reed, was charged with "that on or about August 10, 1908, she did unlawfully receive from one Frederick Charles Rowe, a certain payment for the boarding out of an infant, otherwise than in pursuance of the provisions of section 9 of the Infant Life Protection Act.

There was a second charge that on or about August 10, 1908, accused did omit to forward notice, as required by section 12, of the Act, to the Secretary of the Department for Neglected Children within three days of receiving such infant.

A third charge was that Mrs Reed, being a registered nurse within the meaning of the Infant Life Protection Act, did omit to insert in a roll (as required by section 12 of the Act, to be kept by her as such registered person), the name, age, and sex of the child in question.

Sub-inspector Keane conducted the case for the police, and Dr. A. E. Jones appeared for the accused, who denied the charges.

THE CASE OPENED.

Sub-Inspector Keane said, in opening the case, that on or about August 9, 1908, a child was born to a young woman at the house of a nurse named Ruckland, in Geelong. The next day it was taken by the defendant's daughter, it was said, from Geelong to Victoria street, Coburg. Then it was supposed that the child was handed to a Mrs Newman by Mrs Reed. Nothing further would have been known about the child, if it had not been that Constable Malone called on Mrs Reed in May last to see if the child had been vaccinated. He was informed that the child had been given to the care of a Mrs Newman. When he saw Mrs Newman he was told that the child had been given by her to a Mrs Milburne, who had gone away to Tasmania. Subsequently the constable saw Mrs Newman and Mrs Reed together, and they had a child which they said was the one in question. This child was taken to the doctor, and Mrs Newman told the constable that "Mrs Milburne would not come. She would sooner throw herself in the Yarra." The child was vaccinated. It was supposed to be taken back a week later to see if the vaccine had taken effect, but when the constable inquired further he found that the child had disappeared in some mysterious manner. It had never been seen so far as the police could discover since.

Dr. Jones said that the statements made by the sub-inspector regarding the disappearance of the child were not justifiable, as such statements were calculated to prejudice the case in the minds of the bench sitting as a jury.

EVIDENCE TAKEN.

Constable Crawford produced authority from the Secretary of the Department of Neglected Children for the prosecution.

Dr. Jones objected, on the ground that the document produced was of an advisory character, but gave no definite authority.

The bench made a note of the objection, but over-ruled it.

Andrew Regan, head clerk in the Neglected Children's Department, was called to prove the signature of the Secretary of the Department to the document giving authority to prosecute. He also gave evidence that the child in question had not been registered on the roll kept by the defendant.

Continuing, the witness Regan said that there were no records in the department in regard to the child.

Dr. Jones: You are familiar with the Act?

Witness: Yes.

So far as you know and believe, Mrs Reed did not have this child in her care for 24 hours?—She had it from August 10 to August 14, according to the file I have perused. Personally, I know nothing as to when she got the child.

INSPECTRESS IN THE BOX.

Katherine Thom, inspectress under the Infant Life Protection Act said that she saw Mrs Reed last on the 9th inst. She asked Mrs Reed for her roll book, and told her that she had called in connection with the child mentioned in the charge. Mrs Reed said she had never entered the child's name in the book as she had had it for only a few hours in her house. She did not say when she got the child or when it left her place. She said that the child had been adopted by a highly reputable woman. She did not say where this woman resided.

To Dr. Jones: If the child is in a person's possession for less than three days there is no necessity to make any entry in the nurse's roll-book, unless money is taken in connection with the child. Mrs Reed did not seem to conceal anything.

THE MOTHER'S STORY.

The mother of the child said that it was born at Pakington street, Geelong, on August 9, 1908. A Miss Sarah Reed came to the house and took the child away on the following day. Witness had never seen the girl before. She understood that her baby was to be adopted. It was not 24 hours old. Miss Reed was present in the Court.

Sub-inspector Keane: Who was going to adopt your child?

Witness: A Mrs Milburne. It was my intention ——

Dr Jones : Your Worships, it is not a question of intentions. My client is not bound by the witnesses' intentions.

The Chairman : Dr Jones, will you be quiet?

Dr Jones : I'm very sorry

Sup-Inspector Keane : You look it; every inch of it. (Laughter).

The solicitor and the sub-inspector then bandied words across the solicitors' table.

The chairman said at last that unless this sort of thing was stopped the Bench would adjourn the case.

Witness, continuing said that the day before she went home she saw Mrs Reed, the accused, who brought a paper for witness to sign. The document she signed had the name of "Mrs Milburne" on it. Mrs Reed told her that by signing the document witness would have no more to do with the child. As far as witness remembered the document read, "I, Mrs Milburne, of Carlton, agree this day to take over your child, and that you, as the mother, will have no more to do with it." There was nothing special in the agreement about money. She, as the mother, agreed never to see her child again. She knew that her people were going to pay some money to Mrs Reed.

Sub-Inspector Keane : Who is the father of your child?—Frederick Rowe. He is present in the court now.

The case had not concluded when our report closed.

WHERE IS THE BABY?

THE COBURG CASE.

Herald 19 8 09

NEW DEVELOPMENT

A WARRANT ISSUED.

On Tuesday last a remarkable case was opened at the Coburg Court, in which a registered nurse under the Infant Life Protection Act, named Priscilla Reed, of 10 Victoria street, Coburg, was charged with "that on or about August 10, 1908, she did unlawfully receive from one Frederick Charles Rowe a certain payment for the boarding-out of an infant, otherwise than in pursuance of the provisions of section 9 of the Infant Life Protection Act."

There was a second charge that, on or about August 10, 1908, accused did omit to forward notice, as required by section 12 of the Act, to the secretary of the Department of Neglected Children within three days of receiving such infant.

It was stated in the evidence which was fully published in the "Herald," that the baby referred to in the charges could not be discovered by the police. Constable Crawford stated that Mrs Reed had told him that she handed the baby over to the care of a Mrs Isabel Newman, to be given to a "Mrs Milburne," who had agreed to adopt the child.

The bench failed to agree, and adjourned the case till September 7, when a police magistrate will preside.

To-day the Coburg police issued a warrant for the arrest of Mrs Isabel Newman, who was, in the course of the case heard this week, said to be identical with Mrs Isa Bell, a woman runner.

The warrant reads as follows:—

At Coburg, on or about August 11, 1908, she (Mrs Newman) did take over the entire care and charge of one Winifred Oates, a child under five years, from the guardian of such child, and did unlawfully omit within 14 days of so doing to give or send notice to the secretary of the Neglected Children's Department, stating her name and place of residence, occupation, and name and residence of such child.

It is understood that there is likely to be another development in connection with the case shortly.

THE BABY CASE.

Herald 21.8.09

WOMAN ARRESTED.

A REMARKABLE POSITION.

In the City Court to-day before Mr C. Cresswell, P.M., and a bench of honorary magistrates, Grace Milburn, a young woman, was charged with being an unwilling witness.

Mr C. Barnett appeared for the defendant, who denied the charge. He objected to the warrant on the ground that it had not been proved that his client was able to give evidence.

Mr Creswell, P.M., said that the Bench could not review the decision of the Justice who issued the warrant. No doubt he had all the facts before him.

Mr Barnett said that that might be so, but the warrant had been wrongfully issued for all that. For one thing, the defendant had never been subpœnaed to give evidence. The warrant should show jurisdiction on the face of it. No bailiwick was mentioned in it. He, however, had an answer to the charge, and was willing to waive all technical objections.

Constable Crawford, stationed at Coburg, stated that he was the informant in a case against a woman named Reid, who was before the Coburg court on Tuesday last on a charge of a breach of the Infants Life Protection Act. The defendant was a material witness. He had an interview with her at her residence in Wellington Parade, East Melbourne on July 8, and obtained a statement from her. When he went to the house again to serve a subpœna upon her, she had disappeared. He then had a warrant issued for her arrest.

Mr Cresswell, P.M.: What was the conversation about that you had with her?

Witness: It was about a case which was before the Coburg Court on Tuesday last. I had a talk with her about the missing child in the case referred to.

What did you say to her?—I said "I have called about your baby." She replied that she had no baby, and that she did not have any baby vaccinated. I asked her if she had adopted a baby and she replied that she had not.

You are satisfied that she knows nothing about the child?—Yes; I am quite satisfied.

When is the case adjourned to?—Until September 7 next.

Mr Barnett: Why did you not serve the subpoenas on this woman?

Witness: Because I could not find her and she had left no address. I found out that she had sold her furniture and had said that she was going away for three months.

Why, all the police know her address—they could not trace her until yesterday.

Mr Barnett: That's sheer nonsense, and there are constables in court who will prove what I say.

Plainclothes Constable Matthew Campbell gave evidence that he arrested defendant at a quarter-past 11 o'clock last night in Collins street. He had known her for two years, and he did not believe that she was likely to go away.

Mr Barnett: When did you get the warrant for execution?

Witness: Yesterday morning.

Mr Barnett: She was found easily enough. I don't know what the police want her for, as she knows nothing about the case.

Sub-Inspector Farnan: That may be, but the police required her evidence. She is a material witness, as it is alleged that the child was given to her. Constable Crawford, however, does not think that this woman knows anything about the child.

Mr Cresswell said that, taking all the circumstances into consideration, the bench considered that it would be sufficient if defendant were bound over in her own recognisance of L20 to appear at the Coburg Court on September 7.

Defendant, having signed the bond, was allowed to leave the court.

The Herald,

AN

EVENING JOURNAL,

With which is amalgamated the

Evening Standard.

IMPARTIAL—NOT NEUTRAL

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20

The Rare Baby and Other Subjects

Mr Murphy, the Sydney City Coroner, who lately offered some strong comments on the prevalence of infanticide in the Mother State, has furnished the Government with a number of recommendations on the subject of race suicide. He describes infanticide as a "very serious disease in the body politic," and asserts that it calls for some drastic remedy. To this end, he suggests an amendment of the law to enable officials to trace all births and the cause of death. Another of his recommendations deals with a tax on bachelors, and a bonus to parents with large families. Up to a certain point Mr Murphy appears to be moving along sound lines. From the reports to hand, however, he does not seem to have recommended that children born out of wedlock should be saved by resort to the establishment of a Receiving Home or Foundling Institution, where the unwelcome child might be left instead of falling, as it too often does now, into the hands of professional baby murderers. We are inclined to think that the setting up of such an institution is the only practical solution of a serious problem. The objections that may be taken to this course by the diminishing number of persons who hold the view that it would be the means of encouraging immorality, are trivial in comparison with our common detestation of the cold-blooded murder of babies—perhaps the most helpless creatures in the world. By the way, Mr Murphy appears to be an authority on a large number of subjects. Not only has he dealt, in his report, with infanticide, the prevalence of small families and questions of taxation, but he has expressed pronounced views on the question of "class rule" in this community. He is thus reported:—

> If the present practices continue, the whole political control of the State must eventually fall into the hands of the working classes. In my opinion, no State can be prosperous in the widest acceptance of the term if ruled by one class.

It is seldom that one meets with such a universal genius. As a citizen, Mr Murphy has a right to his opinion, but as coroner he is hardly an authority on the science of government. Anyway, what does he mean by a community being "ruled by one class?" How many classes does he imagine there are in a democratic country like this? Even officials permeated with the densest conservatism ought, by this time, to have learned that there is only one class in Australia—the whole people.

A WELL-KNOWN LADY.

MARKET POLLUTION

MISS ROSE SCOTT.

CHAMPION OF HER SEX.

Herald 10.8.09

PIONEER IN REFORMS

Miss Rose Scott belongs to the first line of our women social reformers.

She does for women's movements in New South Wales what Miss Spence—of whom we wrote awhile ago—does in South Australia, she leads them. In Victoria we have many clever women workers in women's causes, but no distinctive non-party leader.

The subject of this sketch was born on the Hunter, was educated and spent ten years of her life in the bush. Her father was a friend of Liechardt, the explorer; her grandfather an intimate of Sir Joseph Banks, some of whose letters describing Australia and his early journeys here she has and treasures, for they are a link between her and the earliest history of the land she loves and has so long served.

Miss Scott is president of the Women's Political and Educational Association of New South Wales. She is also president of the Peace Society of that State.

(T. Humphrey and Co. Photo.)

MISS ROSE SCOTT.

The Uncontrollable Child

Miss Rose Scott's lecture on Law and the Child, given last night at the rooms of the Women's Political Association, was an earnest declaration of her love for little children.

"The uncontrollable child," she said she believed to be a myth, and admitted to herself having a difficulty about "nine times seven" that a nervous and shy little boy in the Children's

Court was once considered naughty for not knowing.

Miss Vida Goldstein, president of the Association, in pointing out some of the differences between the law with regard to children in Victoria and in New South Wales, regretted that we had no State Children's Relief Board, such as exists in New South Wales, nor State Children's Council, such as is established in South Australia, to deal with neglected and delinquent children.

She added that though the jury of two empanelled on this occasion were neither of them mothers, they were in accord in believing that the so-called "uncontrollable child" was only the missmanaged child, and that the teaching of mothers how to look after—to rear and educate their children, would do away altogether with a bogie.

How to Live

Gradually the community is awakening to the fact that the art of how to live is a subject worth as much consideration as the solution of geometrical puzzles and the study of the ancients.

Sir John Madden's stirring speech at the Carlton Refuge meeting opened the subject and the Rev. H. Kelly quickly helped.

Now, the Rev. Dr. Strong comes along with a fine practical scheme of instituting a course of instruction on "The Way to Live" which up till now has been neglected, whilst years have been spent on educational fripperies.

In these busy days when a youth of either sex leaves school to start immediately in the harder school of life there seems to be no time for the old-world home life, when if ethics were not imparted directly, at least one learnt from quiet, simple example.

Now the modern young person has a rather large scorn for matters ethical, so perhaps the right note is being struck in the opening address for Dr. Strong's scheme—a talk by Mrs Edwards, late matron of the Infant Asylum on the "Necessity for Young People Caring for Their Own Health, so that Later on Their Children May Have a Chance to be Well Born."

This strikes a personal human note—something which may be felt and understood.

The very title of the address represents the new outlook, and it promises hopefully for the time when a mother will realise that innocence is but a poor weapon with which her children may fight the battles of the world, and that knowledge cleanly imparted and as cleanly used, is the finest shield her sons and daughters can ever possess.

When the time arrives when the broad outlines of the physiology of sex are learnt unashamedly in the home circle, instead of being picked up in devious ways, by suggested inferences, veiled with the fascination of the not-to-be-known, then will social morality be something nobler than merely an effort to avoid breaking the eleventh commandment—"Thou shalt not be found out."

Subsequent lectures on this, "Entrance on Life" series, will be:—

The present day tendency to overdo physical exercises.

The effects upon our race of such poison as alcohol and cigarettes; the cigarette smoking of prospective mothers as well as of young boys.

The necessity of recognising the importance and sanctity of parentage.

The value of human life and the nurture of children.

GENERAL NOTES.

EVENTS OF THE DAY.

WHAT WOMEN ARE DOING

Herald 17.8.09

The Mother and the Milk

"The Mother and the Milk," Dr. B. S. Cowen declared, in his splendid lecture, "Save the Babies," given under the auspices of the Health Society, at the Collingwood Town Hall, is the key to the whole question of infant mortality—which is a question of national and race importance.

The lecturer said that babies fed at their mother's breasts make the finest citizens, but because mothers were not able always to feed their own children, and resorted to the ordinary milk supply, he urged the municipalisation of the milk as well as the water supply, in order that an abundance of pure milk might be assured them.

But in order that the young of the nation may have the natural food on which they thrive best, should not the care of mothers become the special consideration of the State?

Although the general death rate, he said, fell about 30 per cent. in the latter half of last century, and that from tuberculosis fell more than 50 per cent., yet the infant mortality rate remained practically stationary.

It was encouraging to know that this century has already witnessed a decided improvement in this respect; thus, in Victoria, while the average for the last decade of last century was 3752 yearly, five years ending 1907 show a fall to 2622 yearly.

As each child is estimated to be worth L112 to the State, this yearly saving of infant life represents a sum of L126,560.

Thousands of Australians have "faded timelessly," and the greater part of them might to-day have been working for the welfare of the Commonwealth had the mother's and the milk supply been adequately cared for.

During the same period considerable sums have been spent in immigration schemes.

Might not the deflection of some part of those moneys into the channels of infant life protection have been productive of more real and substantial benefit to the State?

The Saviour of the Chlid

The intimate guardians of the child—the mother and father—are not, in the great number of cases, morally to blame for the immensity of the infant death roll. They are the victims of a thousand human woes—poverty and ill-health beset them. They are what the State makes them. The State is the responsible guardian of the life within its bounds.

The State must be the saviour of the child.

Lately it has been in a half-hearted, charitably-disposed way, done something for infant life protection.

"Save the babies" is the answer to our population difficulties.

As population is essential to our maintenance of a prosperous and sovereign Commonwealth, the question of first and burning importance should be how to preserve its infant life.

Politicians should be impassioned by their very patriotism to remove all the causes that lead to wanton and careless sacrifice of child life.

To hold on their way serenely while the seeds of race are trampled underfoot is to smile at death—to wink at murder.

For each year the fell destroyer ravaging our fields strips the ears of our greatness, which is the child-life of the State.

MRS ALFRED DEAKIN.

PRIME MINISTER'S WIFE

Herald 17.8.09

HER WORK FOR CHILDREN

Mrs Alfred Deakin, wife of the Prime Minister, is as much concerned with children's movements and child-life as any woman in Melbourne.

But she works so quietly, her right hand never knowing what her left hand doeth, that not many people know that she works at all.

An Australian, born within sight and sound of the city, Mrs Deakin has never lived far from it.

She went to Mrs James's school in East Melbourne, and has the pleasantest memories of that gentle lady and the days she passed with her.

MRS DEAKIN.

As a girl, a wife and mother, and now a grandmother to the most imperious, sunny-haired youngster—

who makes, 'tis whispered, a hobby-horse of our Prime Minister — she has watched the city grow; as helpmeet of the most brilliant man Australia has ever had—the man of all others who has made the name Australian, lustrous in the eyes of the world — Mrs Deakin has been herself concerned with its growth.

She is simple in all her ways—a woman of free and generous mind, of warm, great heart.

One knows in speaking to her why George Meredith, when her name was mentioned, letting his thoughts fall into the valley of pleasant memory, said, feelingly, "A sweet, sweet woman."

Mrs Deakin is just one of those women, richly, tenderly, simply, splendidly woman, of whom the master loved to write.

Her Work for Children

Mrs Deakin leads a quiet life. She is a home and country lover, and yet president of the Union of Free Kindergartens and Creches, president of the Parkville Home for Neglected Children, and the Girls' Guild, and one of the committee of the District Nurses' Association.

Fulfilment of the duties of these offices has given her an exhaustive knowledge of child life and child conditions.

Heart and soul Mrs Deakin is in her work for the children. Her outlook is one of broad, deep and tender earnestness. She follows the working of children's movements through every highway and bye-way of the city.

"Though a friend and supporter of the creches as they now exist," Mrs Deakin said, when we called upon her at her home in South Yarra, "I deeply regret the need of the creche system. I think that in a country like ours a poor woman with a child should not be faced with the necessity of earning her own bread. She should not have to appeal to the creche to guard her children for her. It is the duty of the State to support mothers in order that they may train their own children and make good citizens of them. As it is, the mother, who is lazy, careless or a drunkard, commits her children to the State, when she does not want to take care of them herself; while the good mother, who is broken with toil, doing her utmost to fulfil her obligations to her children, gets no assistance or recognition from the State.

"It seems dreadful to me that good citizens should not have help while those who shirk their duties do.

"To make the creche free would seem to pauperise it. I do not like the idea, because I think. the mothers who use the creches would not like it. They are independent, respectable women who would not like to feel themselves subjects of charity."

The Human Young

Mrs Deakin paid a tribute to Dr B. S. Cowen, whose splendid lecture, "Save the Babies," delivered at the Collingwood Town Hall, she attended.

"I think, as Dr Cowen pointed out," said Mrs Deakin, "that until the human young is valued as highly as the young of other animals, we cannot expect to attain a normal infant death rate."

Dr Cowen showed that whereas in 100 children 15 died, in the same number of foals only 8; in the same number of lambs only 4, and in the same number of chickens only 2, did not survive the first year of existence. He quoted Mr John Burns, who, as the result of computations made recently in England, put the value to the State of each babe at £112.

"It seems terrible to think that a price must be put on a wee baby's head to make it universally considered as valuable as a horse or a cow. If it were recognised as a similar commercial asset the falling birth-rate, and, at the same time, the infant death-rate, might be vanquished."

Mrs Deakin went on to speak of the problem represented by the girl-mother.

"So many girls," she said, "err from ignorance, from trusting weakness, not wickedness. I would like them to be taught some of life's lessons more directly in the schools, in order that they may be able to protect themselves."

A Curfew Bell

"If the old-fashioned ringing of a curfew bell were revived to warn girls that they must not be out of their homes after the shadows fall, unless on some special errand or under protection, I think a lot of harm and unhappiness might be averted."

Mrs Deakin thinks highly of the French system of caring for unfortunate mothers and their children. Under it a woman about to become a mother may enter a hopsital. She is asked no questions. Her baby is born. And when the mother is ready to leave the institution she may either take her baby with her or leave it to be cared for by the State, who will provide a foster mother. If she relinquishes her child from fear that she will not be able to provide for it, she is helped from a fund for that purpose, first to regain her strength and then to find employment.

"I do not like the idea of hospitals for foundlings," said Mrs Deakin; "I would much rather the babies were not herded together. We find at the Parkville Home that they do much better boarded-out with foster-mothers.

Praise for Foster Mothers

"The foster-mothers are, for the most part, splendid women and fine citizens. They might very well, I think, be entrusted with the care of the mothers before the children are born. They are kind-hearted women whose sympathy and confidence might be appealed to by girls in distress.

"Miserable young mothers often destroy their babies rather than face the questions that they are required to answer—official and private.

"To remove these difficulties, it is said, will be to encourage immorality. I do not think it would, but would, on the other hand, do away with the incentive—to escape shame—which causes young mothers to destroy their babies.

"The children must be saved.

"I think that women should not sit still till they have done all in their power to accomplish that end."

"One would say that you do not, yourself Mrs Deakin, take much leisure?"

"For the past eighteen months I have been very, very busy," said Mrs Deakin. "More work is done by those concerned in the Parkville Home and District Nurses Association than is realised. When a child is boarded with a registered foster-mother, not only is she visited by the Infant Life Protection Inspectors, but also by members of the Parkville Home Committee. The best work is that which is done individually, quietly. More work is done like this than anybody dreams of.

"I am specially fond of my Girls' Guilds. Do you know there are 5000 members in the suburban Girls' Guilds!

A Meredith Admirerer

Mrs Deakin is a great admirer of Meredith—the man and his books.

She was privileged to know him better than most Australians, and speaks reverently and lovingly of him, and of the pilgrimages of homage that she and Mr Deakin made down into the green Surrey country, to see him, whenever they were in England.

"What a grand old man he was. I know no one whose greatness impressed me so," Mrs Deakin exclaimed.

"How well he knew women; what fine sympathy he had with them; how exquisitely he drew them. I think he knew that Diana of The Crossways is the one of his books that women love most. Yet he himself loved the Egoist best, and I think most men do."

At Point Lonsdale

The Prime Minister and Mrs Deakin are often seen enjoying a Saturday afternoon concert of the Marshall-Hall orchestra of which their eldest daughter, Mrs Brookes, is a distinguished member.

But oftener they are seen at the week end, quietly wending their way baywards. For the retreat that both love is Point Lonsdale.

There Mr Deakin is "hewer of wood and drawer of water," Mrs Deakin brushes and mends her own hearth—puts her household in order.

From the ruffled blue sea, and swirling sea birds, the sweet salt air, and the calm of the lonely shore, they come back to the bee-hive life of the whirling city, rested and strengthened for another week of service to the country which they both so much love.

A Wife's Great Part

A country owes its great men to their wives. They care for, are the companions of the Genius that is the guiding lamp of the Nation. Wives are, as it were, practically the national lighthouse keepers. They must see that the lamps are kept well filled with purest oil; that their wicks are trimmed in order that they may burn brightly.

Of such wives is the woman who is the subject of this sketch. She works energetically, enthusiastically to relieve child distress, but first and last and always she is the wife and guardian of him of whom Australians delight to honor and will write high in their history—the Hon. Alfred Deakin.

GIRL MOTHERS

WHAT THEY HAVE TO FACE.

Herald 19 8 09

THE OFFICIAL QUESTIONS.

"Miserable young mothers often destroy their babies rather than face the questions they are required to answer—official and private," remarked Mrs Alfred Deakin, in the course of an interview with her which was published in the Women's Page of "The Herald" on Tuesday.

The private questions which are, or may be, put to such an unfortunate young mother may perhaps be easily imagined, but what are the official interrogatories she is called upon to answer?

to the alleged Grace Milburn. She, however, promised to make inquiries, and a few days later the officer was informed that the missing baby had been found, and would be duly vaccinated. Mrs. Reed said, if Mrs. Rhuland had sent her the necessary forms which are supplied by the registrar, she had lost them, and Constable Crawford provided new papers. Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Newman then produced a female child about 10 or 12 months old, which they declared was the genuine Winifred Oates, and took it to Dr. Fyffe, of Fitzroy, who innoculated it with lymph. Constable Crawford inquired why the "kind" fosted mother, "Mrs. Mliburn," was not in attendance, and Mrs. Newman explained that the person in question was too nervous to face the ordeal. She had given the child to her (Mrs. Newman) in the street, and said she would rather take

A HEADER IN THE RIVER

than be cross-examined by a John Hop. The doctor told the women (Newman and Reed) to come again with the infant in a week's time in order that he might see if the operation was successful. Neither of them showed up again, and Mrs. Reed declared that she was entirely ignorant of the whereabouts of Mrs. Newman or the baby alleged to be Winifred Oates. At this stage the officer commenced to concentrate his attention upon locating "Grace Milburn." He learned that a woman of ill-repute had been living with a man under that name at 27 Drummond-street, Carlton. He traced her to 125 Page-street, Albert Park, and finally to Wellington-street, Collingwood, where he interviewed her, and was surprised to find that the much-searched-for "Grace Milburn" was in reality a well-known

PROSTITUTE NAMED GRACE DALLY.

She said that, although she had been used as a blind, she had really never had the baby at all; which, of course, may be a lie. Anyhow, the police do not reckon she is worth bothering about, and have put her out of the running. All attempts to re-interview Mrs. Newman were futile, and Crawford started looking around for probabilities and motives for her sudden vanishment. He was informed that she had known Mrs. Reed for at least two years, and that there had been a mysterious baby at Prahran on a previous occasion in which Mrs. Newman and a "Nurse Thomas" were interested. He searched the "Police Gazette," and he found that three infants had been abandoned on or about the date Mrs. Newman had taken delivery of Winifred Oates. He reckoned that it would be possible for unscrupulous women to make heaps of money by adopting

NEW-BORN BABIES

at £30 per head, and then being unable to account for them. His inquiries at the Neglected Children's Department showed that Mrs. Reed's possession of the missing baby had not been recorded, nor did the fact appear on her registered nurse's roll book. On a brief being prepared, detailing the above particulars, the secretary of the department authorised the prosecution of Mrs. Reed under sections 9 and 12 of the Infant Life Protection Act, and that is how the case came before the Coburg Court on Tuesday last. She was charged (1) with having, on or about August 10, 1908, unlawfully received from Frederick Charles Rowe a certain payment for the boarding-out of an infant, to wit, on Winifred Oates; (2) that she did omit to forward notice to the Neglected Children's Departemnt within three days of securing such infant; and (3) that she, being a registered nurse, did omit to insert in a roll, to be kept by her as such registered person, the name, age, and sex of the child in question. Sub-Inspector Keane prosecuted, and Dr. Jones defended.

EVIDENCE WAS GIVEN

in accordance with the facts narrated. Departmental officials added that Mrs. Reed had been a registered nurse for five years, and must have known it was unlawful to accept £30 for the adoption of a child, or its boarding-out, without the knowledge of the department. The girl, Elsie Annie Oates, said she had been visited by Mrs. Reed at Geelong a fortnight after her confinement, and had signed a paper giving her baby away, "for good and all," to a Mrs. Milburn, whom she knew nothing of, and had never seen. She was perfectly content, she said, that her infant should be taken away. She had

NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE IT AGAIN,

or hear of it, and had made no inquiries concerning it from its birth to the present date. Sally Reed, defendant's daughter, deposed to carrying the child from Geelong to Coburg by night after it was born. She had seen Mrs. Newman take it from her mother's house on the following day, but she did not know, nor had she ever seen, Mrs. Milburn. Frederick Charles Rowe, who said he was a draper of 106 Doveton-street, Ballarat, related how he had arranged with Mrs. Reed for the adoption of the child, in consideration of the cash payment of £30, a few weeks prior to its birth. He had never seen either Mrs. Newman or Mrs. Milburn. When the child was taken from the girl Elsie to Mrs. Reed's he had not expected to hear of it or see it again. In May last Mrs. Reed had informed him that, owing to the persistency of Constable Crawford,

THERE WAS TROUBLE BREWING

anent the child's non-vaccination. Nurse Rhuland, of Geelong, said Elsie Oates had come to her house on July 5, 1908, and had been confined on August 9. She had registered the birth and had sent all papers re vaccination to Mrs. Reed. Constable Malone and Constable Crawford related the facts already enumerated. For the defence Dr. Jones raised sundry technical objections, and contended that Mrs. Reed had never really had the care of the infant within the meaning of the Act. It had only been in her house a few hours, and she had merely acted as an agent. The honorary magistrates, who appeared to appreciate the importance of the case and the

FAR-REACHING ISSUES INVOLVED,

retired to deliberate. In about half an hour they returned to the bench, and intimated their inability to come to a decision. They decided to adjourn the case until September 7, when a police magistrate will be asked to adjudicate. The sections under which the charges are laid permit of a penalty of £100 or 12 months' imprisonment being inflicted.

TALBOT MILK INSTITUTE.

Argus 30 9 10

CONDEMNATORY REPORT.

"AN UNNECESSARY INSTITUTION."

As foreshadowed in "The Argus" on Wednesday, the report of Dr. A. S. Joske and Mr. R. M. Welldon, sub-accountant of the State Treasury, on the Lady Talbot Milk Institute, refers to the institution in strong terms, and recommends that the further State support asked for shall not be granted. The inquiry was made at the request of Ministers, following on an application for assistance, and the report, which was submitted some days ago, was yesterday laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly. In the report, Dr. Joske and Mr. Welldon deal at length with the questions of infant mortality, the value of a proper milk supply, and the work of the Lady Talbot institute.

The general conclusions at which they arrive are thus stated: —

"One of the principal causes of infantile mortality is the use of impure and unwholesome milk as food for infants. The necessity for the provision, as far as possible, of a pure and reasonably cheap milk supply for children is apparent. The best and most recent authorities generally agree in the opinion that, in the present condition of milk production, and in order to safeguard against the pathogenic organisms prevalent in milk, the only logical outcome is pasteurisation. [Theobald Smith states (1908):—'It has been found that perhaps half of certain kinds of tuberculosis in children, such as those of the glands of the neck and abdomen, are due to infection from milk.' Ward states (1910):—'Certain it is that pasteurisation offers the only effective measure that may be immediately put in force against the danger from bovine tuberculosis, and that disease is so widely prevalent that the rigid application of measures against the sale of milk from tuberculous cows without the alternative of pasteurisation would cause a milk famine.' "

Their recommendations are:—

"That, in view of the high rate of infant mortality, a suitable supply of milk for infants be provided. The milk should be pasteurised and used as soon as possible after pasteurisation. That the duty of controlling and distributing the supply should be imposed on the various municipalities, who have the best facilities for carrying out this work economically and satisfactorily. That the periodical inspection by skilled nurses be part of the scheme of distribution and under municipal control. The value of the work that can be done in this direction cannot be over-estimated."

The report concludes with the following special recommendation with regard to the Lady Talbot Institute:—

"As the result of the inquiry, we are of opinion that the work of the institute has been unsatisfactory and unduly expensive, and, therefore, does not justify the continuance of Government support. We consider that the institute is unnecessary, and regard it as an example of how this community has charitable institutions foisted upon it to do certain necessary work that can more easily and more effectively be done by existing bodies. We, therefore, recommend that the request for a further grant be not acceded to."

It is shown in the report that the infant mortality of Victoria has fallen from about 11 per cent. in 1891-1900 to about 8 per cent. in1905-9. For the last nine years about 2.5 per cent. infants had died from diarrhœal disease, showing the need of preventive measures. About 30 per cent. of the deaths in 1909 were due to want of breast milk, the use of unsatisfactory milk, and possibly the excessive use of patent foods. Dealing with the work of the institution, the report says, after relating the arrangements made for securing a milk supply:—

"No record was kept of the number of children supplied, nor any particulars concerning them, so that it was impossible to prepare mortality or other statistics, or arrive at the expenditure per head. For the period 1st July, 1909, to 30th June, 1910, all that was kept was the application-forms—very incomplete in many instances—of the respective cases; a cash-book of an elementary character, that appeared to have been written up nearly in globo some little time prior to the end of the period, instead of being kept up-to-date and being regularly balanced, and reconciled at least monthly with the bank balance; a foolscap list of the applicants, giving a few meagre details; and the weekly —sometimes fortnightly or monthly—sheets of the milkmen, which, when compared with the milkmen's own books, showed discrepancies. As the result of this state of affairs, in order to get the information now supplied, a large amount of clerical work had to be done. No proper mortality list was kept, a record one would consider an absolute necessity in the working of an institution such as this. Had a register been kept by the institute on the card system, much of this labour might have been saved, and the statistical information furnished in this report more readily compiled. No ledger of any description was kept, the cash-book being the only book of account. Payments were generally made by crossed cheque, payable to order, and no vouchers obtained from the creditor. No receipts were given to the milkmen for moneys collected from the customers, a practice not consistent with sound judgment."

The practice of the milkmen collecting amounts due, and the methods in which the coupon system was worked, were condemned, and it was recommended that the practice of allowing the milkmen to obtain milk for private sale, got up under the same conditions as Talbot milk, should, it was suggested, be discontinued.

For the summer season, November 1, 1909, to April 30, 1910, there were 546 children who were described as Talbot cases, and the average number was 280 cases. Of the 546 children supplied in the summer season, 57 died, but these included 17 who had ceased taking the milk more than six days before death, and four which had been between 7 and 12 days in receipt of milk, leaving the cases of death in Talbot cases 36. The deaths were nearly all due to bowel complaints. A tabulated comparison of deaths of infants showed that during last summer there were 758 deaths in Greater Melbourne under the age of 12 months, and 36 Talbot cases under the age of two years. The rates per thousand were: —November—Greater Melbourne 6.45, Talbot Institute nil; December—Greater Melbourne 8.35, Talbot Institute nil; January—Greater Melbourne 11.61, Talbot Institute 27.39; February—Greater Melbourne 11.23, Talbot Institute 32.78; March—Greater Melbourne 10.17, Talbot Institute 25.90; April—Greater Melbourne 9.71, Talbot Institute 16.17. Of the 36 deaths of institute-supplied children, 33 were under 12 months old. After it is pointed out in the report that the deaths of the general community include those under a week old, and that 30 per cent. were under a month old, it is stated that too much attention cannot be given to these statistics, as many factors peculiar to one case or the other went to make up the result.

In giving an analysis of transactions from July 1, 1909, to June 30, 1910, that, owing to the absence of proper books of record, such as a ledger, and of other data, it has been found impossible to arrive at mathematical accuracy. The purchase cost of milk supplied—12,756 gallons—is set down as £1.169/0/11¾, nearly 1/10 per gallon. The milk delivered to customers, 11,774 gallons, cost 1/11.8276 per gallon, or 5.95d. per quart. The following table shows the gross and net cost of the milk delivered to customers:—

	Cost per Quart. s.	d.	Total Cost. £	s.	d.
Purchase of milk	0	5.9569	1,169	0	11.75
Delivery of milk	0	2.0118	394	16	6
Collection of accounts	0	0.4643	91	2	8
Supervision	0	0.7235	142	0	0
Bacteriological examination	0	0.2675	52	10	0
Ice and ice-chests	0	1.2191	239	5	0
Nursing	0	1.5201	298	6	6
Administrative expenses	0	1.1540	226	9	6
Gross expenditure	1	1.3172	2,613	11	1.75
Receipts for milk	0	3.5460	695	18	4
Net expenditure	0	9.7712	1,917	12	9.75

The average cost per child from November 1, 1909, to June 30, 1910, was £7/15/2, after deducting £2/7/7 received for milk. The items of cost included:—Milk, £6 17/5; ice and delivery of ice-chests, £1/0/1; nursing, £1/5/8; and administrative expenses, 19/6. From the public institutions some information bearing on the milk supply was received, and is given in the report:—

"The matron of the North Melbourne Creche was most definite in the statement that the unpasteurised Talbot milk, when given to most of the babies, was most unsatisfactory, causing diarrhœa, and that pasteurised milk is now used there with excellent results. The matron of the Collingwood Creche stated that the Talbot milk was used, and that the results obtained were good; there seemed to be some objection to the milk being tainted by the rubbers of the machine. The matron of the Prahran Creche stated her results were good with Talbot milk, but no better than those obtained when she used Woodmason's milk (a local supply). The matrons of the Richmond and Brunswick creches have no experience of the Talbot raw milk. The Talbot pasteurised milk had been used last year, and apparently with good results. The matron of the Foundling Hospital stated that the Talbot milk was as satisfactory as any other milk, but that she procured from a lady member of the committee, fresh milk from Kew when diarrhœal conditions with Talbot milk and other milk were bad, and found the fresh Kew milk was much more satisfactory. Some of the depots from which the milk is delivered were visited. The opinion of the vendors, as a whole, was that the Talbot milk was good milk."

AN APPRECIATION.

Argus 11. 10. 10

By DR. R. R. STAWELL.

As one who has made for the last twenty years a special professional study of the whole subject of the milk supply for infants in this city, I feel not only qualified, but called upon, at this juncture, to make a statement concerning the work and the objects of the Talbot Milk Institute. Except that I was one of a body of medical men who elected the members of the institute, I have not been at any time personally connected with the management of the institute, and I think I may, therefore, be regarded as an impartial, but expert, critic concerning the results of its work. The board appointed by the Premier to make inquiry about the institute has just recently presented to Parliament a report, which seems to me to show such an unjudicial tone, and such an unscientific method of inquiry, that I am forced to distrust its judgment, and find myself in definite disagreement with its conclusions. The narrowness of view which is exhibited in this report has led the board to conclusions which I regard as worse than wrong, and more than most misleading.

It is important to realise that there were two great ideas which actuated the medical profession in founding the Talbot Milk Institute. The first, and most important, object was to obtain milk of the highest standard of purity and healthiness, and to educate and encourage all purveyors of milk to conform to that test standard; until the institute undertook its work, such a standard had not been reached by any purveyors of milk in this city. The second great object of the institute was to distribute pure and healthy milk to the poor, for those infants who needed it most, and to teach the mothers how to deal with and how to use such milk, so that it might be a complete and veritable substitute for the natural breast-milk. The work, then, of the Talbot Institute was, in its scope, philanthropic and educational, and of the most valuable kind; to the great and lasting credit of all who have been concerned in its management and its work, the Talbot Milk Institute has unquestionably succeeded in realising, to a great extent, the two great ideas which led the medical profession to favour its establishment.

No mention whatever is made in the Parliamentary report of this great, this essential success of the institute. Let there be no doubt upon this point; no work of the kind would have been done at all if the Talbot Institute had not begun it, and no further improvement in the standard of the purity of milk would have been made if the institute had not set and worked for a high standard of excellence. Under these circumstances it is difficult to understand how the board appointed by the Premier could have felt justified in describing the institution as "unnecessary," although, further on in the report, it is recommended that this "unnecessary" work should be carried on by the municipalities.

The address which Sir John Madden delivered on Sunday afternoon on the subject of juvenile immorality was marked by even more than his usual earnestness and public spirit. The matter is one of vital importance to the nation, but of so unpleasant a nature that the temptation to avoid an examination of it is not easily overcome. Sir John Madden's experience in the Criminal Court has afforded him special opportunities for observing the irregularities of the youth of both sexes, and in the utterances which he has from time to time made on the subject a note of growing anxiety has been discernible. From his belief in the wide and increasing prevalence of juvenile immorality there is, unfortunately, no reason to dissent; although as regards some of the remedies which he suggested agreement is not so easy.

In his enumeration of the causes which impel young people in Australia to this particular vice, Sir John Madden laid stress on the habit which girls have formed of wandering about the streets, parks, and beaches at night, in the company of youths and undesirable men. To remedy this he would have "some-" thing in the nature of a curfew bell," so that after a certain hour any girl abroad, unless in the company of a responsible member of her own family, would be sent home. To make such a regulation effective it would be necessary to close all the parks and gardens at 7 o'clock, and to appoint officials of some kind to patrol the beaches. But this is surely overlooking what is perhaps the most potent factor of all—the climate and social conditions of Australia. It would be nothing short of cruelty—supposing for a moment that it were possible—to shut boys and girls within the four walls of small, uncomfortable cottages on summer evenings. Life would be insupportable, and the mental and physical restlessness that would be engendered by such restraint would be unwholesome in the extreme, and likely in the long run to aggravate the evil it was meant to cure. Under the influence of a semi-tropical sun boys and girls attain early to physical maturity, and are not amenable to the same degree of home control as the children of colder regions. This want of parental control is really, as Sir John Madden pointed out, one of the principal reasons why so many young people go astray, and is in part perhaps the result of the broad democratic spirit which characterises our people.

If youngsters earning their own living are not allowed practically unlimited freedom many of them are apt to take it, and it is proving almost impossible to prevent them. Sir John Madden thinks the absence of this control should be supplied by legislative restrictions of some kind. But it is not easy to understand how Parliament could exercise any influence on juvenile morality except by way of punishing gross breaches of it. To raise the age limit might easily result in a great many boys and young men getting into gaol who now go free, but the experience of the world is against fixing it unnaturally high. Such an alteration of the law would certainly not act as a very powerful deterrent, and would manufacture criminals. Another suggestion made by Sir John Madden is that in maintenance cases some of the burden of proof should be shifted from the woman to the man; but it must not be forgotten how recklessly unscrupulous many of these girls are in giving evidence, both in the criminal and civil courts. Still, if anything can be done to place a full share of the blame and the penalty on the shoulders most capable of bearing it, and generally principally responsible for it, without the sacrifice of anything required to safeguard innocence, Parliament should not hesitate to do it. In any circumstances it is the girl who must bear the heavier part of the burden, for, besides the moral degradation which she shares with her partner in the offence, she suffers, as Sir John Madden says, "ruin, utter, ab-" solute, and irretrievable."

Sir John Madden felt himself precluded from discussing the political considerations underlying any assumption by the State of the instruction of children in religion, but had no hesitation in declaring "the manifest decay "of the religious sense" to be one of the many causes of the evil. There can be no question that religious instruction and the inculcation of moral principles is too much neglected by parents, with whom the primary responsibility rests. Some good might result from the establishment of suburban clubs, so that young people might find rational amusement without resorting to public places. The experiment has been tried with a fair degree of success in one or two places, and is capable of extension. The young Australian has to be taken as he or she is. Undue restraint will always do more harm than good when applied to such self-reliant, open-air loving people. It is their waywardness and want of self-discipline which are responsible for the enormous dimensions which this phase of the social evil has reached. They must be taken young if their characters are to be moulded on right lines, and how the problem is to be grappled with is a matter which it is urgently necessary to determine.

PITFALLS OF YOUTH.

REFERENCES IN CHURCHES.

SALUTARY EFFECT OF CURFEW.

"The Pitfalls of Youth" was the subject of an address which was delivered by Dr. Carty Salmon, the Speaker of the House of Represntatives, before a crowded congregation at Wesley Church yesterday afternoon.

Dr. Salmon said that the recent address by Sir John Madden was a notable one by reason of its graphic language and the unparalleled courage displayed in it. It had struck a note which he believed would resound throughout the continent. (Applause.) The debt which they owed to Sir John Madden would be only discharged by more complete recognition of their great responsibilities. The country cried aloud for population, and the people were deaf to that cry. The primary blame lay with the manhood and womanhood of the country. He had often wondered what punishment would be meted out to those who practised race suicide. What became of the souls of the little ones who had never been permitted to breathe? He thought they must have something to do with the punishment of their murderers. What an awful punishment it would be! The first danger an infant had to meet was, unfortunately, the deprivation of nature's food. Custom, the claims of society, so-called social engagements, had conspired together to rob the innocent of what nature intended he should have. Patent foods were used to take the place of the mother. Most of the child foods advertised were just as useless to the child as sawdust—in fact, they were worse than sawdust, as they were a positive detriment to his development. Mothers and fathers, if they had any desire for the well-being of their children, would surely endeavour to save them from their birth from being the victims of such a subterfuge as the so-called comforter. (Applause.) The highest mortality among children under one year was in Russia, the rate being 268 per 1,000. The lowest in European countries was in Ireland, with 102. In Western Australia the rate was 143, which was very high compared with the rates for the rest of Australia; but the figures had been reduced in 1906, when these returns were made up, to 110. The average for the whole of the Commonwealth was 101.1, which was reduced in 1906 to 82. The fact that in Western Australia, where more money was distributed amongst the people than in any other State, the death-rate was highest proved that a high death-rate was not the result of poverty. Gambling might be regarded as the principal vice of Australia. The passion for cigarette-smoking was the most harmful form in which tobacco could be used. When the taste for cigarettes was developed, moral and physical degeneration very rapidly followed. The great causes of immorality in Victoria were the almost total absence of home life and the geniality of our climate, two causes which, he considered, might be coupled together. The literature of the day was one of the most potent causes of the falling of so many young people. It had been suggested that there should be a curfew. He had had the opportunity of speaking to a gentleman who had seen the curfew in operation in America, and he said that it had had a very salutary effect upon the young people. He did not approve of the closing of the parks at night, but he agreed that the parks should be illumined with powerful arc lamps. (Applause.) He agreed with the Chief Justice that the onus of proof should be lifted from the shoulders of the unfortunate girl and the responsibility placed on the man. The real remedy was, however, the purification of the homes. Then there would be no need to purify the streets and parks. Environment was the most important factor of all. Better dwellings should be provided for those who were compelled to herd together in the slums. The muni-

cipal powers and responsibilities should be increased by legislation. Above all, domestic virtue should be taught and practised, and the social customs whereby the infant, born and unborn, was deprived of its legitimate rights should be discountenanced.

Herald 7.9.09

Save the Babies.

Amidst much that is unsatisfactory to the humanitarian a most gratifying fact is the great attention now being paid by all sorts and conditions of people to the problem of how to save child life in this community. Happily, we are not content to rest upon the fact that our record in this respect is better than that of other countries. That we have outstripped other communities in the preservation of child life was shown on Sunday in an address given by Dr. Carty Salmon, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, at Wesley Church. Some figures quoted by him are most illuminating. He said:

In different countries the deaths of children under one year per 1000 births for 1905 were:—Russia, 268; Austria, 223; Germany, 199; Italy, 168; Belgium, 153; France, 149; England, 147 (in 1906 they fell to 132); Netherlands, 144; Switzerland, 139; Denmark, 126; Ireland, 102; New South Wales, 105 (in 1906, 75); Victoria 103 (1906, 93); South Australia, 100 (1906, 76); Queensland, 99 (1906, 75); Tasmania, 94 (1906, 91); Western Australia, 143 (1906, 110). If they took the average for the whole Commonwealth, the figures were 100.1, which were reduced in 1906 to 82.

These figures might have the effect of making some people think that we are not doing badly, but that would be a mistake. The loss of child life in Victoria is still enormous, and it can never be said that we are doing our best so long as the life of a single infant which might have been saved has been allowed to go to waste. Neither on moral nor economic grounds can we afford such waste.

Argus 8.9.09

Fairfield, Sept. 4.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir,—For the sake of those organisations that are considering the practical outcome of this agitation, it may be helpful to classify, as far as possible in order of importance, the leading suggestions made by Sir John Madden and others in your columns:—

1. Religious training of the young.
2. School instruction for boys and girls, such as given by R. H. Bligh, the White Cross lecturer.
3. Parental advice. (Books advised amongst others, "Power of Womanhood," Ellice Hopkins, 1/; "Confidential Talks with Young Men and Young Women," Dr. Sperry, each 1/; "Purity and Impurity," Dr. Arthur, for lads, 1d.; obtainable at George Robertson's and elsewhere.)
4. Curfew bell, as in many cities of the United States of America.
5. Corporal punishment for offences against chastity.
6. Amendment of the law concerning maintenance cases.
7. More stringent legislation dealing with noxious drugs, appliances, and immoral literature.
8. Night schools or institutions.
9. Foundling Hospital.
10. Public lectures by competent persons.
11. A better method of separating boys and girls in State schools.

All these suggestions are of a practical and possible kind. Who will be the heroic Josephine Butler to come forward and grapple with them?—Yours, &c.,

Sept. 6. J. J. KITCHEN.

Argus 7.9.09

A grave question in medical ethics received cavalier treatment from the coroner (Dr. Cole) in the sharp comments which he made last week on the action of the Women's Hospital Committee. The dead body of a child had been found; the police imagined that the child might have been born in the hospital, and consequently a detective went to the hospital to make general inquiries. The committee considered the matter, and decided to give no information. In a hospital, even though it be subsidised by the state, a medical man does not discard that duty of reticence which he owes to every patient, nor should the patient lose the protection against slander and malice which the medical man's silence maintains. A criminal charge unlocks the doctor's lips, but it cannot be maintained that a mere visit from a policeman who is on a vague "fishing" search should compel all books to be opened and all secrets to be disclosed. If a medical man in private practice were asked to tell all he knew to every policeman making inquiries, he would scout the proposal indignantly. Similar ethics must be admitted as regards a hospital; and the patients in the Women's Hospital ought especially to be guarded from officious scrutiny. The rule adopted by the hospital committee is that each case shall be determined on its own merits; and it has certainly not been shown that the committee's respect for patients has ever yet prevented the police from tracing an offender or has stood in the way of justice.

Consequently, the coroner seems to have spoken somewhat rashly and inconsiderately. "Many crimes might have "been hidden," he said. He branded the hospital as "possibly a sanctuary for "crime." He showed a laudable faith in the police when he said that it was absurd to suppose that they—"the pro-"tectors of the public"—would do harm or cause inconvenience to patients at the hospital. If the patients themselves were consulted, they would probably show no more eagerness to tell their misfortunes to a policeman than to any prying person. The coroner's wrath was somewhat ill-balanced. Why should his imagination conjure up an awful picture of crimes concealed and murders unpunished, when no such condition of affairs exists in fact? If the police show, first, a reasonable ground for suspecting crime, and, second, a valid reason why the information available in the hospital should be disclosed, the committee is altogether unlikely to stand in the way of detective investigation, while it is impossible for the hospital to refuse obedience to a court. This being so, the general public will, we think, feel thankful that the managers of the Women's Hospital preserve an honourable silence concerning the identity of their patients—a silence too strictly imposed upon them to be carelessly broken in obedience to every request.

Herald 7.9.09

WHERE IS THE BABY?

REMARKABLE CASE

CHARGES AGAINST A NURSE.

EVIDENCE RE-HEARD TO-DAY.

THE COMPLAINTS DISMISSED.

At the Coburg Court, to-day, before Mr H. Morrison, P.M., Mr H. J. Richards (Mayor), and Messrs A. Cherry and W. Waters, J.'sP., the complaints against Priscilla Reed, a nurse registered under the Infant Life Protection Act, were further investigated.

Defendant was charged with (1) That on or about August 10, 1908, she did unlawfully receive from one Frederick Charles Rowe, a certain payment for the boarding out of an infant named Winafred Oates, otherwise than in pursuance of the provisions of Section 9 of the Infant Life Protection Act; (2) that she did omit to forward notice, as required by Section 12 of the Act, to the secretary of the Department for Neglected Children within three days of receiving such infant; (3) that she did omit to insert in a roll (as required by Section 12 of the Act to be kept by her as such registered person) the name, age, and sex of the child in question.

Sub-inspector Keane conducted the case for the police, and Dr. A. E. Jones appeared for the accused, who denied all the charges.

The three charges were heard together.

The charges were previously heard by the Coburg Bench, consisting of Messrs H. J. Richards (Mayor), Cherry, Greenwood, and Waters, J.'sP., on August 17 last, when a decision was not arrived at. The hearing was then adjourned till to-day, to allow of a police magistrate being present.

Thomas Smith, secretary for the Neglected Department, said that he had given authority for the prosecution.

Andrew Henry Regan, clerk in the same department, said that he could find no entry in Mrs Reed's roll book, issued to her by the department, concerning the child Winifred Oates.

Mr Morrison, P.M.: Is an inspection made of this nurse's house?

Witness: Yes; about every fortnight.

Dr. Jones: Is Mrs Reed's record good?

Witness: Yes, as far as our Department is concerned.

MOTHER OF THE CHILD.

Esie Annie Oates, single woman, residing at Ballarat East, said that on August 9 last year, the day after her child was born at Nurse Ruhland's house, in Pakington street, Geelong, a young woman, who gave the name of Sarah Reed, came to the house, and witness handed the child to her to be adopted by a Mrs Millburn. The father of the child was Frederick Charles Rowe. About three weeks later Mrs Reed saw witness, and produced a paper for witness to sign. Witness agreed not to have any further claim on the child. Witness handed the paper back to Mrs Reed after signing it.

Margaret Ruhland, nurse, residing in Pakington street, Geelong, gave evidence as to the birth of the child. Miss Sarah Reed took it away 24 hours after its birth. About three weeks later witness saw Mrs Reed (the accused) and asked if the child was well provided for, and accused said it was going to a good home. Witness did not see Miss Oates sign any paper.

THE ALLEGED AGREEMENT.

Frederick Charles Rowe, draper, residing in Doveton street, Ballarat, said that he was the father of the child. After its birth he saw Mrs Reed at Coburg, and it was arranged that a Mrs Millburn was to adopt the child for L30, to be paid by witness. He paid over the money when he saw the baby at accused's house. This was on August 11, 1908. He received a stamped and signed receipt as follows:—

Melb., Vic., 14th Aug., 1908.

We, Winafred G. Millburn and Alfred Chas. Millburn, do hereby agree to and do adopt and take for life as our own child Winafred Oates for good and all, from child's mother, Elsie Oates. (Signed) WINAFRED G. MILLBURN. Witness: Isabel Newman, Priscilla Reed.

Witness, continuing, said that six weeks prior to August 17 last he again saw Mrs Reed. She told him that she and the police had been searching for Mrs Millburn and a Mrs Newman, but the only person they had found was Mrs Newman. She said she thought there was going to be trouble about the vaccination of the child. At no time had he seen either Mrs Millburn or Mrs Newman.

Dr. Jones: Was there ever anything said as to what amount Mrs Reed was to get out of the L30.

Witness: I gave Mrs Reed L1 and a silk dress.

If she says that she was to get L10 would that be correct?—No.

You wanted to get rid of the child. Did you suggest that Mrs Reed should get someone to adopt the child?—Yes.

She said she would?—Yes.

Were the inquiries you made satisfactory to you?—They were.

You believed Mrs Reed was a fit and proper person?—Yes.

Mr Morrison: What did Mrs Reed say about the L30?

Witness: She said that the whole of the L30 was to go with the child to Mrs Millburn.

Sarah Reed, daughter of defendant, said that she went to Geelong and got the baby, and brought it to her mother's house at Coburg. The next day she saw the baby handed over to a Mrs Newman to take to a Mrs Millburn.

Kathleen Thom, inspectress under the Infant Life Protection Act, said that she had regularly visited defendant's house. She saw Mrs Reed on August 9, 1908, and inspected the roll book. Witness had never on any occasion heard Mrs Reed say anything about the baby, Winafred Oates.

Lindsay Dencher, manager of the Coburg branch of the Commercial Bank, said that Mrs Reed had an account at his bank. The cheque produced for L10 (said to have been part of the L30 paid by the father of the child) was paid into accused's account on Saturday, August 15, 1908, together with L5 in gold. The money was paid in by Mrs Reed herself.

THE AGREEMENT REPUDIATED.

Grace Dalley, domestic servant, residing in Queensberry street, Carlton, said that she was the person referred to as Mrs Millburn. She had never met the defendant in her life. She knew absolutely nothing about the agreement purporting to be signed by her. The signature "Winafred Millburn" was not witness's signature. Witness had never had any baby handed to her by Mrs Reed nor by a Mrs Newnan.

Dr Jones: Where were you last in a position?

Witness: At East Melbourne. I left last Tuesday fortnight.

Did you ever get your living by improper ways?—Yes.

Did you know a Mrs Newman?—Yes.

What was she?—A married woman.

Have you seen Mrs Newman during the last few months?—No.

Were you living at 27 Drummond street, Carlton, with any man?—No.

Mr Morrison, P.M.—Did you ever at any time receive any money from Mrs Reed or a Mrs Newman for adopting a baby?

Witness: No. I don't know Mrs Reed.

Sub-Inspector Keane: Were you ever in Coburg before?

Witness: Never until to-day.

POLICE EVIDENCE.

Constable Alfred Malone said that on May 17 last he visited Mrs Reed's house with reference to the vaccination of a child named Winafred Oates. Mrs Reed said that the child had never been in her care, and she had no idea where it was.

Dr. Jones : Did you tell Mrs Reed that you watched a Mrs Newman go from a house in George street, East Melbourne?

Witness : I did.

Did you say that you saw her return at night with a child in her arms?—Yes.

Constable Crawford repeated the evidence he gave at the previous hearing as to conversations he had had with Mrs Reed. When he asked her on May 22 who had the child she said some people named Millburn, who, she thought, had resided in Carlton, but who, she believed, had gone to Tasmania. She said that she had received letters about the child from a Mrs Newman, and she had promised to try and find her. A few days later (May 23) witness again called at the accused's house and said, "Have you heard anything yet?" Accused said, "Yes, I sent my daughter over this morning, and they are coming over to-morrow." On May 26 he again saw Mrs Reed at her house. He said, "I have just seen Mrs Newman and she informed me that she knows nothing about the child." Mrs Reed said, "She is telling a pack of lies. She came here the morning after the child arrived from Geelong and took the baby away herself, and the following morning I got a letter from Mrs Millburn saying that she had received the baby all right, and if Mrs Newman had not taken the baby away she would have no occasion to write to me." On May 29 witness met accused at Dr. Fyffe's house in Fitzroy, by appointment. There was a Mrs Newman there, and she had a baby. Witness said, "Is this the baby?" Mrs Newman said "Yes." Witness asked where Mrs Millburn was. Mrs Newman said, "I got a letter this morning from her telling me to meet her at the corner of Gore and Smith streets. When I got there she said, 'Take the babyand get it vaccinated.' " Witness asked why Mrs Millburn herself did not come. Mrs Newman said that Mrs Millburn had said, "I will sooner take a header in the river than face him (the constable) about it."

Dr. Jones : Didn't defendant say that she never saw the agreement signed?

Witness : Yes; I put that question to her.

How long have you known Mrs Reed?—For thirteen years.

She bears a good character in the district?—Yes. I think she has told me all she knows about the baby going away.

Grace Dalley, re-called, said that none of the documents produced in the case were in her handwriting.

This completed the case for the police.

Dr. Jones contended that there was no case. It had not been shown that the baby was in the care of Mrs Reed for longer than three days. The Act only applied in cases where babies were retained in a registered nurse's house for longer than three days.

THE COMPLAINTS DISMISSED.

Mr Morrison, P.M., said that after careful consideration the Bench had concluded that the contention of Dr. Jones was a correct one, and under the circumstances the charges would have to be dismissed. Personally, he was very sorry that such was the case, as a set of facts had been placed before them which were of a remarkable nature. If he could, he would most certainly have called upon Mrs Reed for a defence. It might be possible to take proceedings under another charge, but that was not for him to say. All the Bench had to do was to consider the complaints in relation to the sections of the Act relied upon, and therefore the charges could not be sustained.

The three charges were then dismissed.

WHERE IS THE BABY?

Herald 8 9 09

QUESTION OF FURTHER ACTION.

In dismissing yesterday the three charges brought in the Coburg Court against Priscilla Reed, registered nurse, in relation to the reception and transfer of an infant, Mr H. Morrison, P.M., speaking on behalf of the bench, said that it might be possible to take proceedings under some other charge.

The Chief Commissioner of Police (Mr O'Callaghan) was asked to-day whether the police proposed to act on the hint from the bench and institute further proceedings.

Mr O'Callaghan said that the police had taken action at the instance of the Neglected Children's Department, and it would be for that department, after consultation with the Crown Solicitor, if necessary, to decide whether anything further should be done. The administration of the Infant Life Protection Act was not now in the his (the Chief Commissioner's) hands. He had heard of cases in which respectable people wishing to adopt a child and bring it up as their own had taken such steps as they thought would make it difficult for the child to be traced in case the mother might desire to take it back.

LAW ON THE SUBJECT.

SUGGESTIONS FOR AMENDMENT.

The Under Secretary (Mr Callaway) who was also seen in reference to the breakdown of the charges against Priscilla Reed, said that he had not yet heard from the Neglected Children's Department in respect to any further

proceedings.

Asked if he thought that the Infant Life Protection Act required amending in view of the contention of counsel, which impressed the bench, that the present law only placed obligations on a registered nurse when an infant was three days in her custody,

Mr Callaway said that the new Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department (Mr Smith) lately expressed to him the opinion that the Act required amending in several particulars. He had asked Mr Smith to supply him with his suggestions in detail.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

The Chief Secretary (Mr Murray), who was asked whether he would direct that any further proceedings should be taken, said that, being busy to-day with deputations and other matters, he had not time to go into the case. Evidently a technical objection had led to the charges heard yesterday being dismissed. He would give the matter his attention.

SENSATIONAL SEQUEL TO SHOCKING SEDUCTION.

Dapper Draper Rowe, a Miner's Daughter, and a Missing Baby.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION PROSECUTION AT COBURG.

Two Nurses and Madame Isa Bell Implicated—Case Adjourned for Police Magistrate's Attendance.

A remarkable story concerning the secret birth and mysterious disappearance of a baby girl was related to a bench of honorary magistrates at the Coburg Court on Tuesday. In May last the local police received a routine communication from Sergeant Mullens, of Geelong, stating that an illegitimate female child, which had been registered at the seaport, and had since been transferred to the custody of a nurse at Coburg, had not been vaccinated. Constable Malone was deputed to interview the nurse in question, Mrs. Priscilla E. Reed, of 10 Victoria-street. She denied all knowledge of the infant, and alleged that it had not been in her care. Malone reported accordingly to his sergeant, and Constable Crawford, who does plain-clothes duty, was so impressed with the seemingly suspicious evasion that he determined upon an exhaustive investigation. He elicited from Nurse Reed that she had had the child for a few hours in August last year, and had given it to a Mrs. Milburn, whom, she believed, had gone to Tasmania. Her admissions

INCREASED THE CONSTABLE'S SUSPICIONS,

and he started to indulge in deductive reasoning with a view of propounding a logical theory. In view of the fact that numerous dead bodies of newly-born infants were constantly being discovered in streets, parks, vacant spaces, railway carriages, and other places, he realised that it was important to discover the particulars relating to the circumstances surrounding the birth of the baby in question and its subequent destiny. After three months of diligent inquiry, he ascertained the following sensational facts:— During last year a girl, about 20 years of age, named Elsie Annie Oates, the daughter of James Oates, a miner, of Cameron-street, Ballarat East, got into trouble. It was the same old story, but the swain was removed from the ordinary run of indiscreet, impulsive, or designedly dishonorable paramours. He was discovered to be none other than a tall, wowser-built individual with pretty flaxen hair and auburn moustache, named Frederick Charles Rowe, a well-circumstanced married man, residing with

A WIFE AND FAMILY

of small children, and employed at a leading drapery establishment in the Golden City. The constable naturally concluded it would be of paramount importance to such a presumably respectable member of society to carefully cover up his immoralities. It was further ascertained Rowe was not alone in his endeavors in that respect. Singular as it may appear, prima facie, he found an ally in the father of the girl he had ruined, although at the outset they had evidently acted independently of each other. The secret of Elsie's condition, however, went no further so far as the respective families were concerned. A lady named Mrs. Patey, who is now dead, recommended Rowe to consult Mrs. Priscilla Reed, of Coburg, and some other guide, philosopher and friend counselled James Oates to entrust his daughter's confinement to Nurse Rhuland, of Packington-street, Geelong. It thus happened that while Rowe was negotiating with Mrs. Reed at Coburg, Oates was arranging with Mrs. Rhuland at Geelong. The result was that when

ELSIE'S CONDITION BECAME CONSPICUOUS,

she went to the Pivot, which was nearer to her home, to reside until after her trouble was over. Nurse Rhuland, however, did not want the job of providing "a kind lady" to adopt the sweet babe when it arrived in this vale of tears, so Rowe was compelled to again resort to his Coburg accommodator. The latter agreed to get the child adopted. She is a registered nurse, and has one of the alleged "private hospitals," and she also has a 19-year-old daughter, who does the mesenger work, and makes long

TRAIN JOURNEYS WITH NEWLY-BORN BABIES.

It was agreed that a lady named "Grace Milburn" should be the foster mother of Elsie's expected child. The payment to be made to the alleged "Grace Milburn" was £30 in cash "on delivery" to her agent, Mrs. Reed. Details were fixed with businesslike exactitude. So soon as Elsie was confined, Nurse Rhuland was to send telegrams to Rowe, Oates, and Mrs. Reed. The baby was born on August 19, 1908, and the wires were duly despatched. Mrs. Reed sent her daughter Sally to Geelong, where she arrived at 6 o'clock in the evening, and, wrapping the baby in a shawl, started at once on the return journey. She arrived back at Coburg between 11 o'clock and midnight. Next morning Rowe came down from Ballarat, and proceeded to Coburg. Mrs. Reed showed him the baby, and asked him to cash up. He produced a cheque for £10 drawn by Sampson and Fricke, a firm of auctioneers at Ballarat, and made payable to the order of James Oates. The latter had endorsed the cheque, so that it might be paid into a third party's account at a bank and collected. Rowe handed the cheque to Mrs. Reed, together with £20 in gold and silver. He signed an adoption agreement, and departed, leaving his illegitimate infantile daughter to be handed over to

SOME DEAR, KIND LADY

whom he did not know, and didn't want to know. The next step was to despatch Miss Sally Reed to the residence of Mrs. Isabel Newman, of 52 George-street, Fitzroy, who, by the way, is identical with Madame Isa Bell, who recently figured prominently in public as a female pedestrian, and was defeated at Albert Park by a youthful Atalanta named Ivy Evans. The Isa Bell-Newman woman arrived at once, and, after receiving the bogus agreement relative to Mrs. Milburn's adoption of the infant (which was called Winifred Oates) for life, she departed with the scrap of humanity and £15. The other £15 was retained by Mrs. Reed, who had a banking account at the local branch of the Commercial Bank, where she subsequently paid in Simpson and Fricke's cheque, with Oates's endorsement, and £5 in cash. So soon as Mrs. Reed had informed Constable Crawford that

MRS. NEWMAN, ALIAS ISA BELL,

had taken the child away, he hunted that woman up, and found her at the address mentioned. She said she had had no more to do with the infant than handing it over

on this point in the Neglected Children's Act. Section 45 of that Act provides that—

Every parent of any child who is a ward of the department shall be liable to pay for or towards the maintenance of every such child during the period such child remains a ward of the department a periodical sum not exceeding twelve shillings per week.

Every neglected child apparently under the age of seventeen years of age may be committed to the care of the department for a period within the discretion of the justices, that is to say up to the age of twenty-one years if deemed necessary. Therefore, putting the extreme case, a parent may, under this Act, become liable for 12s a week from the time his child is committed until it attains its majority, though it is not likely that the department could induce any magistrates to make such an order or could enforce it if it were obtained.

AN ANOMALY.

One thing, however, is made plain. The parent whose child is committed to a reformatory is worse off so far as liability for maintenance is concerned than the parent whose child is sent to gaol.

Yet the reformatory is merely a substitute for goal designed to obviate the necessity for sending youthful offenders to herd with habitual criminals and probably become habitual criminals themselves. Then again, the parent of any neglected child committed to the care of the department has liability possibly imposed upon him which is greater and extends over a greater period than that of the parent whose child remains free.

PITFALLS OF YOUTH

Argus 30.8.09

EVILS OF STREET AND BEACH.

SIR JOHN MADDEN SPEAKS OUT.

STARTLING STATEMENTS.

"Our Gravest Peril" was the subject of an address delivered by the Chief Justice (Sir John Madden) before a congregation that filled the Australian Church yesterday afternoon. Dr. Strong introduced the speaker.

Sir John Madden said that the subject had been brought under his notice by some information relating to the marked and rapid increase of child-mothers in the Carlton Refuge. He felt warranted in speaking publicly on what was a delicate subject, because, while the evil thrust itself on the observation of everyone with eyes to see and ears to hear, it came more concretely to the minds of judges in the course of their every-day business. Everyone realised the vital importance which the purity, chastity, and honour of a nation's women were to that nation. If women were indisposed to regard virtue and purity as being of great importance, and if they would not impress their importance on their children, then the results were so far reaching and disastrous that war, famine, and pestilence were incomparably milder afflictions. Australians had achieved wonderful things in their country, and surely they could find means to ameliorate the evil, or eradicate it altogether. However inadequate the results of any experiment might be, there was no experiment which could be half so bad as the experiment of doing nothing at all. They heard it said that it would be unjust to apply any restrictions against the male sex, and that females were just as bad as males. That they were as bad or worse w[illegible] that sometimes could not be resolutely controverted; but, assuming that that was so, where did justice come in? If the man chose to abstain, and not to yield to temptation, then the worst could not happen by any possibility. (Applause.) If he did yield, then, apart from the moral stain and its consequences on his character, he suffered no material loss. On the other hand, the girl suffered ruin—ruin, utter, absolute, and irretrievable. Very often it came upon her in the very bud and blossom of her womanhood, at a time when a new impulse, which she did not understand, was commencing to stir within her; when she had no judgment sufficiently developed to realise the vastness of the evil she had done, and no discretion to measure the proportion between present enjoyment and its terrible consequences, which would last for a lifetime. Where could the justice be in leaving things alone? The man could avert it all, and, if he did not, why should he not be the one to suffer? (Applause.)

The subject, Sir John Madden continued, would be dealt with in three divisions:—1. The evil and its extent, as he had seen or understood it. 2. The causes, so far as he could gather.; and 3. Possible remedies which suggested themselves to his mind. In passing to and from the suburbs at night, he, like others, had been struck by the numbers of little girls, attractive, well dressed, but obviously only children, to be seen in the streets, wandering about, sometimes with men, sometimes in search of them. At 10 or 11 o'clock at night they were still about, and still without any guardianship or protection. Irresponsible people said, "Our young people are not like other young people." Personally, he was certain that they were no better than the young people of other countries, full of the same weaknesses, and ready to yield to the same temptations. These young people were to be seen in the streets and in the parks. Along the beach, between Port Melbourne and Sandringham, for three seasons in the year the whole place was covered with girls who should be at home in bed. (Applause.) They were to be seen in the company of men whom no wise parent would permit them to be in company with. Very often they were in the company of boys, who, from their very circumstances, were unfitted to be husbands. What the result to the girl was no one doubted, be the pretences what they might. To the hospitals they could look for some more accurate information. In the Women's Hospital during the year ended June 30 there were 137 cases of the confinement of women, or, rather girls, under the age of 18 years. Of those, 90 were single, which meant that 65¾ per cent, of the whole of the girls were under the age of 18. Nineteen were between the ages of 14 and 16. In the Carlton Refuge during the month before the annual meeting there was a total of 53 inmates. Of these, 34 were under 20 years of age, 13 were under the age of 17, three were only 15, and one was 14½.

Voices.—Shame.

Sir John Madden.—A little while since he had tried a case in which the child mother was barely over 12½ years. If such things did not give wise people cause to pause and think, he did not know what would. He remembered, and they remembered, a time when if any one instance of that kind had occurred the country would have rung with horror. (Applause.) Now the thing was coming to be regarded as something that was inevitable. When a girl sued for the maintenance of her child the man often enough strenuously denied having had anything to do with her, and strove to show that she was a person of no character, as though she were a dissolute, abandoned woman, instead of a child. The girl was very often turned out of court altogether disbelieved and discredited, with added contumely to that which had already befallen her. If the case went on to a higher court, she was subjected to a cross-examination that had of necessity to be keen and searching in the face of a court full of people. In a majority of cases, the jury would acquit, and the final result was that the girl, in addition to the knowledge of her original wrong, would be embittered by the discredit and disgrace of the jury. They could easily imagine the case when that finale was reached. The girl would have several opportunities in respect to the child. She could hand it over to a professional murderess, abandon it having killed it first, abandon it so that exposure would result in its death, or expose it where it could be rescued before it died. Those were inevitable consequences.

What were the causes? proceeded Sir John Madden. He would say, and most people would say, that one reason, and perhaps the greatest, was that the control of those parents had been lessened in respect to their children. (Applause.) One saw evidence of that in the children, in the press, in the evil literature that was a pestilence, and in the preaching of a doctrine of liberty for young people. They heard it asked, Why should the Legislature interfere when the true control was the home? That would be true if the home control were effective, but if it were not, what would supply control if not the Legislature? The State had an interest in the child, and had already imposed restrictions for its protection. (Applause.) When on circuit in the country he had been particularly struck with the depravity of the children giving evidence in these cases. It appeared that the children travelled long distances to and from school, and without any guardianship, and they had those opportunities for wrongdoing. After finding juries of hard-headed, sensible men acquitting the boy concerned, he had made inquiries amongst the people, and had found that a feeling existed that while it was one father's son that day, it might be nearer home the next day. Another serious cause was the manifest decay of the religious sense. (Applause.) The religious sense was a great buttress of the moral character. Many people nowadays were philosophers and students of modern thought. They had decided to their own satisfaction that there was no material hell, but they were not so sure about Heaven. He could not, for obvious reasons, deal with the political difficulties which underlay the question of religious training. He recognised, however, that there was a very great blank between the end of school life at 14, and the time when the boy or girl reached the age when they had to work for themselves. They wanted means whereby children could be trained during this interval, and institutions to which they could be compulsorily sent to receive that training. (Applause.) The cadet system for schoolboys was good, but there should be another system whereby boys who idled about the streets could be physically trained, brought under discipline, and reminded of the responsibilities of their manhood. (Applause.)

Those were causes, with a few suggestions for amendment, said Sir John Madden. There were other remedies. In addition to the training of boys and girls after they left school, there should be something in the nature of a curfew-bell for those children, and particularly girls, who hung about the streets at night. (Applause.) Young girls had no business there, and should only be allowed out with their fathers, mothers, or brothers. It might be urged that after being at school or business all day the children wanted fresh air, but if the loss of fresh air would do the girls mischief, the loss they would sustain in the streets and parks would do them fifty times more evil. It was also important that parks and gardens should be closed, say, at 7 o'clock. (Applause.) The beaches should be patrolled by the police or other officials, who should send the young girls home. (Renewed applause.) Another suggestion that might at first startle people was that the difficulty facing a girl suing for maintenance in the police court should be removed by legislation. At present she was bound to prove that the man proceeded against was the father of the child. He thought, however, that when she had proved that the father of the child had been misconducting himself with her within the necessary period the burden should be changed to him to show that he was not the father of the child. At present the girl was constantly defeated by the man calling a number of other men, who made other allegations against her, but these men would be more careful under the system he had suggested. The idea might seem startling, but the alteration of the onus of proof had been made in other cases. There was another remedy dealing with another aspect of the evil. There were often cases where the mother was hopeless and desperate, and was ready to murder the child herself, or by a professional person, for there were murderesses of great reputa-

tion in that respect—people to whose tender mercies babies were sent from other States. To obviate all that horror, and the destruction of the nation's over-fine sensibilities, a foundling hospital should be established in the city, somewhere easy of access, where a child might be delivered safely and secretly. (Applause.) He had been informed that there were many girls who did not know that institutions did exist. These were the girls who were driven to the desperate straits he had pictured. There was another evil to which he wished to refer, that also resulted in murder—the use of drugs by persons qualified only by their very audacity. Those things could be obtained by a mere child for the asking. Legislation should see that they could not be procured except under a certificate. (Applause.)

One thing, said Sir John Madden, in concluding, that would have a great effect would be the resolute moral resentment of the whole body of the public against those evil things to which he had referred. If they roused themselves to a recognition of what it threatened, if they regarded it for the shocking and desperate evil it was, the effervescence it would cause would bring about, if not by the means he had suggested, then other means by which they would end the evil, and ensure that no blot so foul or desperate should rest upon the face of Australia. (Applause.)

Save the Babies.

One suggestion among many — some of which we think are distinctly of a controversial character — made by Sir John Madden in his important address at the Australian Church yesterday, was that a foundling hospital should be established, as a means of preventing infanticide. This proposal should find ready support in this community from all unprejudiced persons. In this column, on August 20, in refering to the strong remarks made by Mr Murphy, the Sydney Coroner, on the prevalence of the crime of infanticide, it was said that the setting up of a Receiving Home or Foundling Hospital, to which free access could be gained by those who desired the utmost secrecy, appeared to be the only practical solution of the serious problem. The Chief Justice made a very important addition to that suggestion when he stated that the whereabouts of such an institution should be well advertised, so that those desiring to make use of it would not have to go on a journey of exploration. Precisely what Mrs Grundy will say to that proposal we do not know. The objection usually raised to any proposal of this kind is that it tends to make easy the path of vice — in other words, to shield the woman from the punishment which some people think she deserves. While it may be admitted that there is some force in this argument, it has to be kept in view that human life is involved. Infants are being slaughtered because sufficient provision is not made for them, either privately or publicly, and because of a not unnatural desire on the part of the girl-mother to hide her maternity. An incitement to crime is contained in the harsh verdict of society on the unmarried mother. But the State needs the children, and something must be done, and that quickly. For economical, as well as humanitarian, reasons, the babies must be saved from the hands of the professional stranglers and demented mothers, and placed where they will have a good chance of developing into useful citizens. What, then, does the Government say to the suggestion of our great-hearted, experienced and clear-seeing Chief Justice?

Is the world growing wickeder?

And are our boys and girls becoming more and more steeped in immorality? Certainly, the average listener to Sir John Madden in the Australian Church on Sunday last would come to that conclusion, and the average newspaper reader who peruses and studies the report of his sensational, not to say emotional, speech will be confirmed in that opinion. There can be no doubt that Sir John Madden said a good many things that require saying, and which are all the better for repetition. To every nation the chastity and honor of its women are amongst the richest treasures it can possess. In Ireland, amidst many material drawbacks, there shines out the spotless purity of woman as the one jewel that the poorest peasant would not exchange for even national regeneration. There it was said that a woman, alone, might travel from end to end of Erin without danger of molestation, because the sons of the soil, "though they love women and golden store, "still they love honor and virtue more." It may be that in this Australia of ours, as Sir John Madden says, the greater liberties which we permit ourselves are unwisely extended to the promiscuous company keeping of the sexes. We may cordially agree with him that it is not good for the moral tone which should govern society that unprotected girls should walk our streets, loiter in our parks and parade our sea shores at night in company with men who are not their relations. Such practices lead by quite natural steps to the shocking results which the lecturer detailed as having come under his personal observation in the figures of the maternity homes and lying-in hospitals.

But none of the facts which Sir John Madden narrated in the Australian Church, if carefully examined, will sustain any such conclusion as that our tide of either adult or juvenile immorality is rising. We must never forget that a Judge of the Criminal Court, from the mere fact that he has constantly brought under his eyes the seamier side of life, is apt to become pessimistic as to the trend of humanity. He is an actor in a morally tainted atmosphere, and it will be difficult for him to guard against the danger of judging the world from what he sees professionally rather than from the immensely greater and better part which is not so prominently thrust upon him. There was no harm, perhaps, in taking the statistics of the Women's Hospital and the Carlton Refuge for the purpose of painting a startling picture of unmarried maternity in its most terrible form; but there would be a great wrong done to our society if such figures should be by any chance accepted as a common type of daily life. The Chamber of Horrors at a waxworks show is a true picture of the world of murderers, but not of any other world. To say that a child of 12½ years and two others of 14 have become mothers is quite enough to make us shudder. But they are the abnormalities and the monstrosities of life. When we turn to the records of our statists, we are told that for the last twelve years the percentage of illegitimate births has been stationary at 5.62 per 100. The figures for 1907 were slightly lower than those for 1900-1904. When the more scientific course is taken of measuring illegitimacy by the number of women between 15 and 45, we find it stated that the census period ending 1891 gave 14.49 illegitimate children to every 1000 women between the ages mentioned. But the later census period ending 1901 gave only 10.31. The same improvement has gone on in England and Wales. When we turn to the records for the Commonwealth, we are equally at a loss to discover evidence of an increasing immorality. It must be confessed that the tables of illegitimates are but a very fractional part of the sum of sexual wrongdoing, but taking them as our only standard and measure as far as the statists can help us, we find the Commonwealth statistics almost stationary, being 5.99 in 1901 and 6.15 in 1907. If we may take a single year for comparison with other places the result for 1907 comes out thus:—

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH PERCENTAGE.

Queensland	7.31
New South Wales	7.04
Scotland (1905)	6.91
Tasmania	5.86
Victoria	5.62
New Zealand	4.61
South Australia	4.09
England and Wales (1906)	4.00
Western Australia	3.89
Ireland (1905)	2.63

Sir John Madden considers that in this matter of sexual immorality he has put his index on Victoria's "greatest peril." He may be right in this. There are some observers who have reached the same conclusions, that not drink but unchastity will be the moral rock ahead in Australia. But most certainly the figures concerning illegitimacy do not bear out the menace as far as we have gone. We stand midway between the high and low records, with a tendency rather towards improvement than towards degeneracy. What Sir John Madden had to tell his hearers was grave enough to make decent people very uncomfortable; but then it was a picture of only one side, and that the worst. As a people, compared with past times and with other people of the present, while we are no "plaster saints," we are just as certainly no shocking examples of vice.

THE REGISTRATION.

In the first place the birth has to be registered. Ordinarily this may be done within sixty days, but in the case of an unmarried woman, her child has to be registered within three days by the occupier of the house in which the birth takes place. If, however, the mother is herself the occupier she may register the birth within three weeks.

Is the mother of an illegitimate child required to disclose the name of the father when registering?

The Under Secretary (Mr Callaway), in answering this question, said that he could see nothing in the Births, Deaths, and Marriages Act, 1890, or in the schedules thereto that made it compulsory to supply that information.

Mr Drake, Secretary for Public Works, who when Government Statist, had supervision over the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, and who was also seen, said that the mother of an illegitimate child was never asked to supply the father's name. The only instances in which the father's name was taken were those in which the father actually registered the birth. The mother of an illegitimate child need not necessarily register it herself. Her sister or a relative duly appointed by her as an authorised agent, could register the birth.

In cases of children born in wedlock, the Department, Mr Drake mentioned, required them to be registered in the districts in which they were born, but while he was Statist he, acting on legal advice which he had obtained, had made an arrangement whereby illegitimate births might, if the mothers concerned desired, be registered at the Statist's office. In small places such mothers, or near relatives acting on their behalf, did not like to go to the local registrar's office.

So much for the registration of the birth.

BOARD-OUT PROVISIONS.

The other instance in which official questions have to be answered is when an application is made for permission to board out a child.

The young mother desires, perhaps, to go out and make her living at some occupation, and wishes to leave her child in the care of a registered nurse. In that case, she has to make an application under a form prescribed in the Infant Life Protection Act, 1907. The form set out in the second schedule to this Act provides for the supply of the following particulars, among others:—Name of father, his residence, and occupation; name of mother, her residence, and occupation.

"Suppose that the mother of an illegitimate child declines to give the name of the father will permission to board out the child be refused?" the Under-Secretary was asked.

"I should say not," was the reply. "Section 9 of the Act says that the person who desires to board-out an infant shall make the application to the secretary of the Neglected Children's Department in the form of the second schedule, 'or to the like effect.'"

"What instruction is given to the officers immediately concerned as to how to Act in a case where there is a refusal to answer such a question?"

"There is no specific instruction. Each case out of the ordinary is dealt with as it arises. That is where administration comes in. If a mother declined to supply the name of the father, and herself undertook to pay so much a week for the child's maintenance, there could be no compulsion, and permission would, in my opinion, have to be given. I don't think that there need be any dread on that score."

"Do you know of any other official questioning which unfortunate young mothers dread?"

"No," replied Mr Callaway; "but I do think that there is a lot of misapprehension on the subject."

"The birth register is not a private document?"

"Not exactly; any person, by paying a search fee may inspect it."

"Is the register kept by the Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department as to applications to board out children private?"

"Yes. It is only to be inspected by order of the Chief Secretary, or where it is necessary to take proceedings for the recovery of maintenance."

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19.

Save the Children.

It constitutes a national reproach that so beneficent an institution as the Talbot Milk Institute should be hampered in its work by want of funds. The State is spending, or at least is willing to spend, large sums on immigration schemes. But here is an agency that, infinitely more, deserves support. In Melbourne and suburbs over 1200 infants die each year, and the board of the Institute is confident that, if given sufficient support, it can save 300 of those 1200 lives that, under present circumstances, "fade timelessly." In support of its claim, the board quotes a solid and very significant fact. In the report presented to the contributors yesterday, it says:—

During the five months that the institute has been distributing milk 39,594 pints have been supplied to 294 families, at a cost of L659 18s for milk and L74 for ice. About 300 infants have been fed with this milk, and of these only eight have died. This is considered a splendid record, considering that a large majority of the children, when first put upon the milk, are already suffering from diarrhoeal troubles due to defective milk previously supplied to them during the summer months.

A captious critic would perhaps quarrel with the use of the word "only" in reference to the number of deaths, but that may pass. Dr. B. S. Cowen, in his lecture at Collingwood last week, said that each child thus saved was worth L112 to the State. On the lowest grounds, therefore, it must be seen that any expenditure by the State in support of the Talbot Institute or any similar agency is money well spent. It is an investment of the most highly reproductive kind. It is to be deplored that all parents are not able or willing to buy the purest milk because of the high cost. The Institute steps in and supplies, at the ordinary price, this milk which has been shown to make all the difference between life and death. The difference in price has to be found by someone. This is where the Government should take a hand. If satisfied that the experts are right—and there is every reason to believe that they are—then the authorities should without hesitation supply the required funds. Should the Government measure a few pounds, which will be returned tenfold, against the lives of 300 children a year?

SAVE THE INFANTS.

age 29.8.09

HOW NEW ZEALAND SET ABOUT THE TASK.

HOSPITAL FOR BABIES FOUNDED.

The monthly meeting of the National Council of Women took place last night at the Austral Salon. The chair was occupied by Lady Carmichael.

After the despatch of the usual business a paper on the Plunket Nurses of New Zealand was read by Mrs. Chas. Strong. That New Zealand leads the way in the systematic saving of the child was clearly demonstrated. Enormous mortality among infants born in New Zealand is accountable for the present highly satisfactory state of affairs. The fact that in a comparatively small community 16,000 infants died from preventible causes in the course of ten years roused Dr. Kirby King and his wife to institute, on a small scale, the work of training mothers to nurse their babies and teaching them how to care for them afterwards. For two years they carried on this work unaided. Public sympathy was roused, the Society for the Promotion of Women's Health was formed, and to-day there are eight or ten centres at which and from which highly important educational work is carried on. The duty of every mother to nurse her own child is insisted on, and where this is impossible, humanised milk—that is, milk supplemented to come as near as possible to human milk—is provided for the use of infants. The Plunket nurses, who are all fully trained experts, are the most important factors in the society. They take the name of Plunket in recognition of the services rendered by Lady Plunket. These nurses work in the country as well as in the town, and their visits are regarded as of immense use in districts where mothers can learn little except by actual experience. The humanised milk is distributed in the country as well as the towns. There are several factories working exclusively to produce it, and the monthly output of the Dunedin factory alone amounts to 10,000 bottles. The society has established Karibane, a hospital for babies. Infants who are not thriving in licensed houses, as well as other infants sickly enough to be brought under the notice of the society, are cared for in this hospital. Occasionally they are kept there for as long as six months.

Karibane is also a school for nurses. These nurses get six months' training. There is an honorary medical staff, and lectures are given weekly. Lectures and demonstrations are also given regularly to mothers. These lectures and demonstrations are attended by mothers of every class, and have been the means of rousing much recognition of the duties of motherhood. Karibane gets a Government grant of £500 yearly, subscriptions and donations amount to £221. an annual door to door collection brings in £556, and the Hospital Saturday collection £210. There are over 600 annual subscribers. The Hospital for Babies is frequently visited by school girls, demonstrations for their benefit being given.

Mrs. Strong concluded her paper with a plea for the establishment of something similar here. While 110,347 babies were born here in a year, 8945 had died under the age of a year, and Dr. Norris had stated that although the general death rate was declining, the death rate among infants was still unduly high.

Considerable discussion followed the paper, and while the necessity for having an increased supply of guaranteed pure dairy milk was urged by some, the majority of those present were plainly in favor of training women to nurse their own children.

An announcement by Mrs. Kirk, of the W.C.T.U., that a school for mothers was being opened in Cremorne-street, Richmond, was received with applause, sympathy with the movement being very generally expressed.

WARDS OF THE STATE

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Herald 27.8.09

DEPARTMENTAL METHODS.

THE FOOTSCRAY CASE.

INTERESTING PARTICULARS.

A case which came before the Footscray bench yesterday, when the Neglected Children's Department proceeded against the father of a youth who had been committed to the care of the department to obtain an order for the lad's maintenance, presents some unusual features. Apart from that, it also suggests the question of up till what age a father is, under even ordinary circumstances, liable for the maintenance of his children.

THE CASE SET OUT.

In this particular case the lad committed is 16½ years of age, and before his committal he was in employment and earning 15s a week. On August 5 he was charged with an offence before the Footscray Children's Court, and was committed to the reformatory branch of the department until he reaches the age of eighteen years. He is, therefore, now a ward of the State.

During the hearing of the case the methods of the department were put before the bench in a very unfavorable light. It was stated that the boy had been sent to a private reformatory at Harcourt, kept by a general farmer or dairy farmer named M'Mahon, to whom the Department pays 10s a week on account of every boy he has placed in his charge. The evidence was that Mr M'Mahon is entitled to the labor of the boys in addition to the 10s a week for each ,but nothing was said as to his duties towards the lads.

ADDING TO THE FATHER'S LOAD.

The bench ordered the father in the Footscray instance to contribute 5s a week towards the support for his son, though the father stated that he earns only 30s a week, and has five other children, two of whom, however, earn a few shillings a week.

It seems harsh that a father in such poor circumstances should be compelled to pay towards the maintenance of a son 16½ years of age, when he can barely support other children of tender years. Had this youth been sent to gaol as a criminal, no order could have been made against the father while he remained in gaol. The fact, however, that the department pays 10s a week for the support of a youth who is obviously able to earn his own living appeared to be extraordinary and indefensible, if the facts were as stated. Therefore, Mr T. Smith, the secretary to the department, was asked for an explanation.

AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

Mr Smith stated that it was true that the lad had been committed to the reformatory branch of the department until he was eighteen years of age, and that he had been sent to the care of Mr M'Mahon, who was a farmer, and did not keep a private reformatory. He had one other reformatory boy, and the two were boarded out to him under the usual conditions. Mr M'Mahon had to feed and clothe the boys, and was responsible for their good conduct and safe keeping. He was paid 10s a week for each, and was entitled to the proceeds of whatever work they might do, "but," said Mr Smith, "he cannot put these boys to work on the farm without having someone with them."

"The services of a lad of 16½ on a dairy farm would be of considerable value," it was suggested. "Milkers, not much, if any more, than that age are paid 12s 6d or 15s a week with their keep."

"That may be so, but this is a town boy, and at present knows nothing of farm life. His services may be valuable in six or twelve months, but in a little over twelve months he will be out of the control of the department. Besides, at any time he can be removed from Mr M'Mahon's care by the department, and placed elsewhere, where he may earn money, a portion of which will be placed to his credit. Or we may, under a bond, board him out to his father."

"How is it that the lad has not been sent to one or other of the reformatory farms?"

"Some of these will not take reformatory boys. They will take only neglected children who have not committed an offence. Besides, this lad is a Roman Catholic, and we had to board him out to a Roman Catholic. There are only two farmers of that denomination who will take reformatory boys—one at Dandenong, and Mr M'Mahon at Harcourt."

These, then, are all the facts of the particular case so far as the department is concerned. We are still left with the fact before us that the department is paying a farmer a bonus of 10s a week on behalf of a youth who is certainly able to earn his own food and clothing, and is probably worth, or soon will be worth, a substantial wage. And, as a consequence of this arrangement on the part of the department, the unfortunate father is called upon to contribute 5s a week towards the money paid to the farmer for permitting a boy of 16½ years of age, who was up to the time of his lapse earning 15s a week, to work on his farm.

UP TO WHAT AGE.

This brings us to the question of up to what age a father is liable for the support of his children. There is a popular idea that under ordinary circumstances the parent is liable for the necessaries of life for his offspring up to the age of twenty-one years. Like many other popular impressions, that is unfounded.

In the case of Bazeley and Forder, which is referred to in "Simpson on Infants"—the "infants" being, of course, in the legal sense—Lord Justice Cockburn said: "The maintenance of children is a duty of imperfect obligation. There is no legal obligation but those imposed by the criminal laws." The criminal laws referred to are those which make it a crime for a person to fail to provide sufficient food, medical attendance, and other necessaries for those dependent upon them, even though the dependents may be only servants. In the case of children, the question would probably be whether they were old enough or hale enough to earn their own living. In the case of a cripple or a constitutionally or organically weak child the obligation would probably be continued up till the age of twenty-one.

A SPECIAL PROVISION.

This is what the law appears to be in regard to the support of children under ordinary conditions of life, although the Marriage Act does not contain any limit as to the age at which fathers shall be required to maintain their children. There is, however, a special provision

husband would not be able to escape the consequences of his desertion. By reciprocal action on the part of the various Australian States and New Zealand it was possible that an institution could be established in which all wife deserters could be compelled to work for the support of those dependent on them.

The Chairman urged that the paper should receive the serious consideration of the congress. The subject was one of the most important they had to deal with.

Miss Spence heartily approved of the suggestion of the writer of the paper that wife deserters should be compelled to keep up their contributions to their wives and families, although resident in another State.

Mr. Gray said the laws relating to wife desertion and maintenance were not nearly stringent enough, and too little regard was paid to the rights of the wife and child. Some time ago he had drafted a Bill which covered the suggestion made by Mr. Green. Copies had been forwarded to the other States, but neither there nor here had the Legislatures taken the matter into serious consideration. He trusted that some radical reform would be carried out. This State was losing considerably over £1,000 per annum—probably it was nearer to £2,000—through the desertion of wives by their husbands. In addition, the children suffered by being deprived of the food, clothing, and shelter that should rightly be provided by the father and in many instances they became a charge on the State. If husband and wife were separated, and the former had to contribute towards his family's support, the probabilities were that an amicable settlement of differences would sooner or later be arrived at, and the home ties reunited.

As the congress did not feel competent to pass any formal resolution on the subject, it was allowed to remain an open question. Delegates, however, were asked to bring it under the notice of the State institutions they represented.

A Social Question.

Mr. Gray introduced a proposal that Parliament should be asked to pass legislation to make more than one person responsible for the maintenance of an illegitimate child in cases where the evidence justified it. This would prevent young men going into court and perjuring themselves in the interests of a companion who had been accused of the parentage of an illegitimate child. At present a woman who was betrayed could be cheated out of the rights the law allowed her by the collusion of the man responsible and his confederates. Parliament would, doubtless, say that a Bill on the lines he suggested was preposterous, because it was likely to implicate the innocent with the guilty, but there could be no doubt as to the need for it.

The result of a short discussion that followed was that congress decided to pass no formal resolution. The delegates were not agreed, and it was felt that the purposes of congress could be best served if such resolutions only as would commend themselves to the Governments of the various States were carried.

Control of State Wards.

Mr. Gray drew attention to the difficulty which often arose through foster-parents, when removing from one State to another, not being allowed to take State children with them. It would be a good idea, he thought, if reciprocal action were taken in the various States to provide for an exchange of control where foster parents desired to take children from one State to another.

Miss Stirling (South Australia) remarked that adopted children were often as dear to foster parents as were other children to natural parents.

Miss Goldstein was in favor of the suggestion and thought the State Children's Council of South Australia might well be taken as an example for the other States to copy. If each State had a similar body, and they all formed a national council, such questions as the transference of State children could be effectively dealt with.

Care of Neglected Children.

Mr. Hawker moved—"That in the opinion of this congress the reports the fo trates in the mir

be appointed to deal with delinquent and neglected children." That system had been adopted in New South Wales. It was to be highly commended, because the children were kept out of contact with the police, and there was the additional advantage of being able to have action taken on the spot.

Mr. Longmore seconded the motion, and the debate was adjourned until this morning.

To the Editor.

Sir—The delegates of the inter-State Congress concerning Dependent Children, now meeting in Adelaide, are to be congratulated upon the practical speeches delivered and the scientific papers read. Especially does Dr. Mayo deserve the thanks of the community. She places alcoholic transmission first among the causes of degeneracy and mortality of infant life. This is a sign of the times. It is being clearly recognised in public conferences that alcohol is a predisposing agent, if not a wholly direct one, in inducing diseases in the human organism. The effect of transmitted alcoholism upon children has been scientifically traced. Alcohol is scientifically declared to be a protoplasmic poison. Its principal effect upon the very physical source of being—the cell life—is one of the prime causes of endless nervous trouble. Owing to the recuperative functions of the body, its effects are at times difficult to locate. Still, there is sufficient microscopic evidence of this baneful drug upon the young life to put it down as a direct and indirect cause of such irregularities as infantile convulsions, delirium, epilepsy, idiocy, paralysis, and other organic troubles. It has been clearly proved that breast-fed children have ceased to have convulsions where the mother has abstained from alcohol. Alcoholic transmission is not wholly through the mother. Fathers, too, are responsible for drinking children. A very small percentage of the children of alcoholic drinkers are physically and mentally normal. According to Legrain, 17.5 per cent., while Demor puts it at 11.7 per cent., and Demme declares it to be as low as 6.4 per cent. After investigations it was found that among abstainers only 1.8 per cent. had tuberculosis, while among the children of alcoholic drinkers there were 10 per cent. thus affected. Dr. Sullivan, "in a personal investigation carried out some years ago, ascertained that of 660 children born of 120 drunken mothers, 335 died in infancy or were still-born, and that several of the survivors were mentally defective, and as many as 4.1 per cent. were epileptic." The same story of alcoholic taint in children comes from Germany, where "Monkemoller found in the reformatory school of the town of Berlin hereditary taint due to parental alcoholism, in 67.2 per cent. of all his pupils." Feeble-mindedness, insanity, and mental deficiency in school work have resulted from the alcoholic habits of the parents. The metabolism, or the ordinary chemical changes going on in the body, are interfered with by alcohol. No parent can drink to himself, as in part it is handed down to the offspring. Dr. Lunier says—"Hereditary alcoholism is an undesirable fact." "Alcoholism strikes a man not only in his own person, but also in his descendant." The struggle for existence under normal conditions may be said to be a struggle upwards; but struggle with added alcoholism in the child-life is a struggle downwards. One is inclined to reverse the command to children—Obey your parents, and say—Parents, obey the normal constitutional needs of your children by giving up alcohol, and so give them a better chance. The prophet was not wrong when he said—"The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are on edge." As every form of organic life has its enemy, the great enemy of millions of children is an alcoholic taint, handed down from either parental carelessness, thoughtlessness, or selfishness. Innocence and purity are sacrificed by an alcoholic appetite. Is it not a fact that thousands of children of drinking parents are prenatally doomed or damned? In the ever-increasing light of an ever-increasing alcoholic-condemning science the day will come when not only anti-liquor fighters in the pulpit, but even hard-headed scientists and law-framers will look upon parental-drinking as a crime and even murder. There is a right that belongs to the embryonic life, and that right is, the fullest possible chance for normal development. To destroy even in part this right by alcohol will in the future be looked upon as a crime against the State, that will demand legislative enactment to check it, by the abolition of the alcoholic proplasmic poison.—I am, &c.,

HENRY GAINFORD.

THE WAYWARD CHILD.

S.A. advertiser 21.5.09

HOW SHOULD HE BE TREATED?

At the meeting of the Inter-State Congress of Workers Among Dependent Children on Thursday an interesting paper on the above subject was read by Mr. A. W. Green, on behalf of Dr. C. K. McKellar, M.L.C., president of the State Children's Relief Board of New South Wales.

The paper was entitled "Delinquent children and parental control," and in it the writer remarked that the record of early legislation and early industrial history showed that the delinquency of children was the primary and really the only aspect for which people expressed concern. It was recognised that "delinquency," apart from its association with "children," must be punished with a severity proportionate to the offence, irrespective of the fact that the wrongdoer was a child, and, as such, psychologically incompetent and morally irresponsible. But it was wrong to attribute to a child, with his limited experience and his natural non-moral and lawless proclivities, all the habits and characteristics of the finished criminal merely because he had committed an offence similar to that committed by a criminal. For instance, a lad 11 or 12 years of age had been found guilty of stealing. Perhaps he stole from his schoolmates, robbed an orchard or a Chinaman's garden, or, in company with others, broke into houses and stole goods. Such offences with other misdeeds, such as bathing in public places, throwing stones, &c., constituted the largest proportion of offences with which children were charged. Now, it would be conceded that such offences, while they did not differ in substance whether committed by an adult or by a child, yet created a vastly different impression on the public, according to their commital by an adult or by a child. In the case of the child it was recognised that he was irresponsible, that deliberation and reflection had not had time to develop, and that buoyancy and waywardness natural to his years were the forces that impelled him to the committal of misdeeds. Considered as a young, untrained animal, a child was just about as amenable to order and discipline as an unbroken colt, which, indeed, he closely resembled. In the past delinquency in children had been punished with greater or lesser severity just as though the children were as responsible to authority, as were adults. The law recognised merely the fact of the offence, and punished it in the light of the offence. The authorities had no power to distinguish between the crime of the criminal and the transgression of the child. If the punishment accorded to a particular offence were deemed to be too severe, then, in the case of a delinquent child, the offender was not brought before the court at all, but allowed to go free to continue his wayward course until a more serious transgression brought on him the severe penalty imposed by the law. In this way unchecked waywardness was allowed to develop into crime simply because no concession could be made to individual circumstances, and because a child, guilty of an offence which in an adult would be held to be a crime, was adjudged ipse facto to be a criminal.

Under such a system as that described—which happily of recent years was being rapidly superseded—

tor of "parental control" in the development of the child could find ce. He did not hesitate to say that arental control," as representing the authority of the parents over the family group, was not only the fundamental fact in the social organisation of every civilised community, but also the law which applied to and moulded and arranged the family group. Every member of the family was directly responsible to the parental law which should, properly speaking, coincide with the law of the land, but frequently did not. The point was that so far as the child was concerned the parental law was all important, because it was the law that influenced the life and actions of the growing members of the family. The growing child did not know or care to know that the law of the land forbade certain conduct; all he was concerned with was the fact that the parental law forbade it. For his part he had no hesitation in asserting that any principle of reform for juvenile delinquents which depended upon the beneficial results to be obtained from industrial or reformatory schools (apart from parental control) was bound to fail. The substitution of the environment of an institution for that of a private home was, as a principle, entirely wrong, and in practice uptimately unworkable by reason of the infinite complexity of human nature. When, at the beginning institutions for children were established it was on the definite basis of age as indicating the difference between the child and the adult. But, as between child and child, no classification on a psychological or moral basis was practicable. The working rule adopted was that the child must adapt himself to the institution, not the institution to the particular child. This last condition, he was prepared to allow, was impossible, and to that reason was to be attributed the ill-success of the reformative treatment upon children placed in public institutions. In the case of the imprisoned criminal, for instance, it could not be seriously argued that his actual detention in gaol made him any the less a criminal because it restrained him from committing crime. And in the same way, the mere fact of detention in the case of a child could scarcely be said to improve him morally, because he was prevented from following his natural bent.

Were he asked if he believed in the efficacy of institutions, and, if so, to what extent, he would reply, "Yes, to the extent of dealing with children who, beyond all doubt, have proved that they possess inherently vicious or criminal natures, and, as such, are a menace to the community." Such children he would detain in institutions, not because he would expect them to benefit by the imposition of reformative measures, but because, while there, they would be restrained from actual wickedness, whereby the community would benefit. These institutions he would utilise when other means failed in the interests of the general welfare.

Thus it would be seen that his belief was that the functions of institutions established for the reformation of children were largely negative in character, in so far as the treatment of juvenile offenders was concerned. The main function of such institutions was to restrain the individual to the extent of limiting his progress, his views, his ideas, his whole moral outlook, and his equipment for the life he was to lead afterwards in the world to the point of view held by the institution. Certainly there was training of a kind, but it was not specific training of the individual. Thus the risk to which the whole system of institutional control was open was that as soon as the units in a reformatory were set at liberty to act as they pleased each was prone at once to revert to his former habits. The principle underlying all this was true of all institutions. It had been contended that the principle of institutional treatment must be sound because it had been largely availed of in the education of the best classes of the community, such as in the great public schools of Great Britain. But such a contention was futile, because in a public school the individual was merged in the multitude, and the moral outlook of individual was established by a reference to the moral outlook of the whole school, which was probably of a high order. From such an institution a reformatory differed materially, because in its case the moral outlook of the individual and the whole institution was of an extremely low order.

Thus, if the functions of the reformative institutions were admitted to be negative in effect, what treatment should be adopted in the case of juvenile delinquents who were not regarded as "abnormal" and yet had no proper homes? How were they to deal with the large class of vagrant children, living under evil conditions, and drifting beyond all doubt into a career of vice and crime? His reply was—Send the child home; enforce the natural authority-parental control. If they scrutinised the cases of delinquency that came before the courts they found that the primary causes of the child's transgressions were the nature of the home training, evil associations, and deliberate and criminal neglect by the parents. In short, the offences committed by children were the necessary outcome of the conditions under which they lived. Any reform that would be effective must begin with the improvement of the moral atmosphere of the home. The personal responsibility of parents for offences committed by their children was recognised by the English law; and under the Youthful Offenders Act of New South Wales, where a child was charged with an offence and the offence was believed to have been conduced to by the neglect of the parent or guardian, a summons could be issued against the parent or guardian and both charges be heard together. Under the New South Wales Neglected Children and Juvenile Offender Act of 1905 it was provided that State Children's Courts, with special magistrates and probation officers, could be appointed for the trial of children under 16 years of age. He did not say there was no place for the corrective institution. There was a place, and a very important one, but it was transitory. It acted as a salutory temporary safeguard for the child, and operated equally on the neglectful parent, compelling the latter to improve the home conditions; but even here the purpose of the institution was negative rather than positive. Under the New South Wales Act a neglected or uncontrollable child could be released upon probation, committed to the care of persons other than relations, or committed to an institution. Release upon probation meant that the offender was not punished at all. If a period of training was deemed necessary before release the child was sent to the New South Wales farm home at Mittagong, formed three years ago, and there made to work; and it was recognised that labor on the soil was the best corrective of unnatural precocity bred of a life upon the streets. Some hundreds of lads passed through the Mittagong home, where trained in a variety of agricultural and industrial pursuits. The idea was to fit them to earn an honest living, and so that there should be an absence of any feeling of restraint the homes were merely cottages, without bars or bolts, and not surrounded by unscalable walls or fences. No uniforms were worn by those in the homes, and there was nothing to remind the children that they were "doing time." In conclusion, he agreed that the principle which insisted that the reformation of children should be carried out by the parents was one that could be accepted in its entirety, for it was the fundamental basis upon which the whole social structure rested.

THE CHILD AND THE STATE.

D.a advertiser 21.5.09

Which is the better method of dealing with the dependent child, the responsibility for whose care and training has devolved upon the State—institutional treatment or the system of boarding-out in private homes? Practically this question has been resolved in Australia in favor of the latter course. On the whole, experience is decisive that a wise choice was made when the traditional barracks schools were given up. At the State Children's Congress Dean Latham, of Perth, in commenting upon Miss Spence's excellent paper, pointed out that the disparaging term "barracks" is not fairly applicable to training institutions of the modern class, on whose behalf he entered a strong plea. His remarks, with the subsequent discussion, served to show that advantages and disadvantages attach to either plan, but the more the subject is ventilated the more clear it becomes that the maximum of the former, and the minimum of the latter, belong to the system of giving the child the natural environment of a normal home. It is true that the institution, if properly managed, commands the services of experts; true also that moral and industrial training may be systematically imparted and the physical needs of the child scientifically attended to. But the official expert, however clever and interested in his work, is a poor substitute for an affectionate foster-parent, and the atmosphere of the institution is less wholesome than that of family life. The inmates, too, are all of the one type, denied the examples and lessons of a varied human society, and must always feel that they are, as it were, a class apart. Enforced discipline involves a quasi-penal taint which is necessarily to some extent demoralising. It is not under the mechanical conditions of institutional treatment that it is reasonable to look for the development of self-respecting citizenship. The best training for life is the experience of life itself. No doubt much harm would be done if the dependent child were thrown out on the world without precautions for his safety. The success of boarding-out is conditioned by the character of the foster-homes. Obviously, there must be failure if the responsibility of the State is passed on to unsuitable persons, who would treat the children as mere serfs, to be held in subjection, overworked, and denied a proper education. Happily, as Miss Spence remarks, there are so many applications for wards of the State in South Australia that the department is able to select a superior type of homes. Inspection is the indispensable safeguard of this system, and in South Australia it is thoroughly carried out. Not only the departmental inspectors, but the voluntary visitors and the school teachers, render inestimable service in watching the interests of the children. Occasional abuses are probably unavoidable, but, with continuous oversight, they are few indeed. Future development should proceed, as Mr. C. H. Goode suggests, towards the Canadian practice of pure adoption, which is not only cheaper for the State, but a closer approximation to the ideal condition. Australia may, however, fairly congratulate itself upon the fact that in its dealings with dependent children it is travelling along the right road.

is not without precedent. When in 1707 Iceland was almost depopulated by an epidemic, a decree issued by the King of Denmark legitimised all the children of an unmarried woman up to six, but not beyond. Her lapse from virtue, so far as the law was concerned, dated from her seventh child! Severity towards a woman's "misfortune" is generally supposed to be a feminine trait, but singularly enough the contemplated abrogation of illegitimacy in Norway has sprung from a demand of the most conservative of the women's associations, and the chief guarantee for the enactment of the Bill is said to be the operation of women's suffrage for the first time at the elections during the coming summer, and the obligation which this will impose upon legislators of answering for their sins of omission and commission to both sexes, instead of one only.

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

S. a. advertiser 19.5.09

WORKERS AMONG DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

There was no session of the Inter-State Congress of Workers among Dependent Children on Tuesday, as it had been arranged that the delegates should inspect the principal institutions in South Australia where such children are accommodated. His Excellency the Governor and Lady Bosanquet were to have visited the Boys' Reformatory at Magill and the Girls' Probationary School at Beaumont, but owing to his Excellency's slight indisposition he has been unable to carry out his intention. The committees appointed by the congress on Monday to make the inspections of the various institutions carried out their duties on Tuesday, and the following ladies and gentlemen took part in the visits:—Mr. T. Rhodes, Dr. Rogers, and Mrs. McAree (South Australia), Mrs. Gover (Western Australia), and Mr. J. Williams (Queensland)—the Boys' Reformatory, Magill, and the Girls' Probationary School, Beaumont. Lady Bonython and Mr. C. H. Goode (South Australia), Miss Vida Goldstein and Messrs. T. Smith and A. E. Clarke (Victoria), Mr. W. P. Spargo (Queensland), and Miss C. H. Spence (South Australia)—the Boys' Reformatory, Brooklyn Park, and the Industrial School, Edwardstown. Mr. E. W. Hawker and Mrs. Crompton (South Australia), Mrs. J. G. Edwards (Tasmania), and Mr. G. A. Ferguson (Queensland)—the Boys' Probationary School, Mount Barker. Miss Stirling (South Australia), Mr. J. Longmore (Western Australia), and Mr. M. Macmaster (Tasmania)—the Girls' Reformatory, Redruth. The congress, which will last throughout the week, will be resumed this morning, when the first business will be the consideration of the reports of the committees of inspection.

MAKING GOOD CITIZENS

S. a advertiser 20.5.09

RIVAL SYSTEMS.

THE INTER-STATE CONGRESS.

The first Inter-State Congress of Workers among Dependent Children, which was opened at the deputation-room, new Government offices, on Monday, was continued on Wednesday. The president of the State Children's Council of South Australia (Mr. T. Rhodes) presided.

The Family Home or the Institution?

Miss Spence read a paper entitled "The Family Home or the Institution?" She said the natural family home lay at the root of all the various departments which the State Children's Council of South Australia had under its control. The central idea, which Miss C. E. Clark, their honored pioneer, so courageously advocated, was that, what the child thrown on public charity needed most was a home and a mother. That was the sphere in which body, mind, and affections could be best developed. The best substitute for a respectable home with good parents was not an institution, more or less palatial, with regulations more or less strict, and officials more or less wise, but a place in a family with the ordinary duties, trials, and pleasures of childhood, the opportunity of going to school with other children, and to church with the foster-parents. Miss Clark convinced some thoughtful people, of whom she was proud to call herself one, that that was the right thing to aim at. At first it was not a popular demand. It was at a time when a great wave of justice and commonsense was agitating England for the removal of children from workhouses, with their demoralising influences, into large industrial schools, where they could be taught and disciplined till they were old enough to earn their own living. That was so great an improvement that people asked for no more. South Australia, too, sought to have such a school. But Miss Clark and her friends believe that to mass together children generally of low physique and intelligence would perpetuate inferiority. The greatest authority she knew on that subject, Richard Dugdale, author of the much-quoted but little-read book, "The Jukes," said:—"Pauperism is more hereditary than crime, for crime connotes energy, which may by sufficient motive be turned into other and better directions; whereas pauperism, at least in old countries, connotes general inefficiency." The building at Magill, which some of them had seen the day before, was planned to accommodate 230 children, but Miss Clark and her friends went as a deputation offering to find homes and to give voluntary supervision. The request was considered absurd. As they did not offer to bear any of the cost, they were told they could not be entrusted with any share in the management. One hundred and 30 children went into the Magill institution at first, and in two years it was so full that an addition was needed. That was the reformers' opportunity, and they asked leave to be allowed to deal with the overflow. The result was now seen, not only in South Australia, but in all the States of the Commonwealth, more particularly in New South Wales and Victoria. Instead of institutions being the normal home of State children, from which they might be placed out, the subsidised family home was the normal one, and institutions were needed only where discipline was necessary before the child could be placed out. The smaller the proportion in institutions the greater was the reformers' success. It was the practice of Scotland that showed them an example, but they had improved on Scotland. It was the protest of such people as Miss Cobbe and Miss F. Davenport Hill, in England, against institutional life that stirred Australian reformers up. But now English reformers had to point to Australia. What was the position of State children in England now? The State Children's Association's manifesto opposed placing children in workhouses, barrack schools, block buildings, village communities, and grouped cottage homes, where cramping discipline and class isolation necessarily retarded their mental, moral, and physical development. The association recommended boarding out, small certified homes, scattered homes, and for certain children emigration, training ships, and trade training schools, and any other method by which a child could be individually moulded, developed, and controlled. But after nearly 50 years, since the report of Mrs. Nassau, sen., exposed the evil of children in workhouses, what progress had been made! It was asked, "Where are the 66,000 children absolutely dependent on the rates? Are they in somebody's home, sitting by somebody's hearth, finding their way into somebody's heart?" Only between 8,000 and 9,000 had a chance of doing so in family homes; 22,000 were still in workhouses or workhouse infirmaries, the rest in barrack schools or other institutions, where they were treated perhaps justly, but without that individual note of love which the child needed most of all. And besides those thousands dependent on the rates, how many more thousands were in great orphanages and benevolent institutions, which even the new Children's Act passed last year did not propose to inspect, though all certified schools and reformatories must be inspected at least once in the year. Local government, by that Act, was permitted to have its own way as in the past as to boarding out or institutional life for children. The 8,000 or 9,000 children were in family homes by permission of certain boards of guardians. But the great majority preferred institutions as being more easily inspected, and perhaps as giving opportunity for patronage by officials. In each State of Australia there was a branch of a Government department, which was responsible for all the children of the State. Miss Rosa Barrett, writing to the "Times," quoted this Australian example as worthy of imitation in England, where a children's department might secure much better results than the various boards of guardians. Admirable and comprehensive as Mr. Herbert Samuel's Children's Act was, it did not mention boarding out. He wrote to her while the Bill was in preparation that he hoped to include several of the reforms mentioned in her little book, but it was rather Hamlet with the Princely Dane left out, to say nothing about the very foundation and root of them all. The children of the State were a valued national possession in every part of the Commonwealth. That probably could not be said of such children anywhere else in the world. There was no national system in the United States of America, but the juvenile courts had aroused the conscience of the Republic with regard to delinquent children to excellent purpose, and with regard to dependent children there was much said as to the importance of "placing out," as it was called. In other countries there was a need and a demand for children's departments. A feature of the boarding-out system in South Australia was the kindly interest taken in the children by the voluntary visitors. It was the disinterested report of those ladies which won over public opinion in the early seventies. When they saw dull faces brightened, delicate frames strengthened, and intelligence awakened, they testified as

to what they knew, and were believed. They had visitors who had been on duty in the Boarding-out Society for 13 years, and under the State Children's Council more than 22 years. She might specially mention two ladies, one of whom, 73 years of age, not only visited the State children in her own district, beyond the required conditions, but corresponded with six girls in service at a distance. In conjunction with her son, she also corresponded with six lads on country farms. They did not depend entirely on volunteer visitors, but they were a valuable adjunct. It was they who discovered that the council could get good homes and motherly care for 5/ a week, and the children would never be under-fed or overworked. The interest taken in the children by those ladies impressed not only the foster-mothers, but the general public. All through those 35 years there had been a rise of status. The children were no longer called "destitute" or "neglected" in South Australia. They did not use the old term "relief." The children belonged to the State, and were prized by the State. There was also in South Australia, as in New South Wales, an unofficial element in the administration. Twelve unpaid men and women, with the president elected from them, were interested in the welfare and the development of South Australia's 1,300 State children, and they were a great influence for good. The expansion of their sphere of action had been mainly due to suggestions from one or more members of the council. They had a medical woman to give advice and medicine to the babies, and a dentist to care for the teeth of all the State children. Nay, that very congress was due to such a suggestion. Reforms and improvements cost money to the Government and entailed more labor on the staff, and were not likely to be suggested by the head of a department. Whatever they might become, children mostly taken from unfit homes were not angels when they were committed to the council's care, and the good women found it hard to bear with dirt, destructiveness, pilfering, and lying, but the visitor counselled patience to the foster mother and obedience to the child, and in nine cases out of ten she succeeded. Lying was the only weapon a child had against superior strength and intelligence, and truth could only be developed in an atmosphere of justice and confidence. The child's own home, if good, was the best of all, and a foster home was the best substitute. She could look forward with equanimity even to the dissolution of the State Children's Council if society became so educated and so moralised that there would be no need for it. (Applause.)

The Rival System.

The Very Rev. Dean Latham (Perth) said he believed there was another phase of the subject besides that which Miss Spence had admirably presented. He had never met with the horrors of institutional life to which reference had been made. He had no wish to criticise what had stood the test of many years in South Australia, but he desired to plead that there were States where the same conditions did not apply, and where the alternative system of institutions might be at least as successful as that of boarding-out. The latter system certainly stood or fell according to the inspection. There was a possibility not only of male committees but also of lady inspectors being hoodwinked by the foster-parents, and the most terrible cruelty was practised at times. What was done in South Australia when the foster-parents removed from one State to another? One of the chief arguments in favor of institutions was that a better and surer interest could be taken in the bodies and souls of the inmates. There could be more individual and skilled attention, as long as the institutions were not crowded. He had not so far noticed a proper attention to the individual child in Australian homes, even among natural parents, and therefore one could hardly expect to find it among foster-parents. Care of the eyes and teeth of the children was hopelessly neglected in the homes, but in the orphanage he was familiar with in Western Australia they did not overlook that important matter. A similar remark applied to a large extent to the question of teaching young folk the moral dangers to which they were liable. Furthermore, an institution could give them careful industrial and other training for the future. His English experience somewhat differed from that of Miss Spence. Such societies as those for waifs and strays did the greatest part of their work in institutions of one kind and another, while the Dr. Barnardo Homes did institutional work. It was not quite fair to condemn the whole system of institutions by calling them barrack schools, because the latter had practically ceased to exist. The old system was dead or dying, and excellent results were now being achieved. In some respects they were all in favor of institutions for vicious and defective children, and a system which was so good for one class could hardly be specially bad for other children. Everything depended on having the right kind of people to whom they entrusted young life. If they found those persons, he thought it mattered very little which of the rival systems was adopted.

New South Wales Experience.

Mr. H. G. Maxted (secretary of the New South Wales State Children's Relief Board) spoke on the growth of the boarding-out system in New South Wales. He said the main points in connection with the placing of large numbers of children in one institution had not been touched upon by the Rev. Dean Latham, who had practically confined his remarks to the treatment of children individually in institutions. In 1881 the State Children's Relief Act was passed in New South Wales, and since then it had been the practice in the mother State to place children in private homes instead of institutions. The measure was introduced in order to have the dependent children reared under normal conditions, namely, as members of separate families. He submitted that any system for the treatment of children in mass was necessarily bad, because it was opposed to the Christian principle of family life, and there was danger of contamination. Although the New South Wales board had had many changes in its personnel since its inception, one member stood out conspicuously still, namely, Mrs. M. Isham Gowan. She was identified with the work of boarding-out before that principle was formally recognised by law. No cavilling would be occasioned if they placed at the head of the list of women workers in Australia for the boarding-out system the names of Miss Spence and Mrs. Garran. There were now some 4,000 children in New South Wales placed out in private homes. Besides the boarding-out of children with persons other than relations, they adopted the principle of boarding them out with their own mothers, when the latter were widows or deserted wives. The number of children committed to reformatory and industrial institutions was gradually decreasing, while the supervision in the private homes of the State's wards was being continually extended. Under the New South Wales system it was the usual thing to keep the mother and children together whenever possible by paying the mother for the maintenance of her own children.

Mr. A. W. Green (N.S.W.) made a strong appeal in favor of the boarding-out system. There were so many good homes available in New South Wales that they could find accommodation for twice as many children, and they now had at least 8,000 or 9,000 under their control. A careful system of inspection was, of course, essential.

An Interesting Discussion.

Mr. J. Gray (S.A.) said Dean Latham had raised a vital question when he asked what was done in South Australia when foster-parents desired to remove to other States. At present there was no arrangement to permit State children to go with their foster parents to other States, and it was one of the matters upon which it was hoped the Congress would be able to give advice.

Miss Spence pointed out, in reply to Dean Latham's remark concerning the absence of industrial training in the home, that that was a subject which had caused the South Australian Council grave concern. They would like to see employers co-operating with them in the interests of children in that respect. No trouble was experienced in this State in selecting suitable homes for the boarding-out of children. There were twice as many applicants for girls as could be supplied, and the council were able to choose superior homes.

Mr. M. Macmaster (Tas.) thought the crux of the matter was to secure the right people for inspection work in connection with the boarding-out method. There were certainly some arguments to commend the institutional system, such as better facilities for training the inmates and attending to their health generally.

Mr. G. A. Ferguson (Inspector of Orphanages, Queensland) said Queensland had been boarding-out children only since 1893. The nature of the reports was such that he did not think there was any fear that they would go back to the institutional system, so far as the Protestant children were concerned.

Mr. C. H. Goode (of the S.A. State Children's Council) said the system of boarding-out children in South Australia was, in his opinion, superior to the institutional methods of other countries. The children boarded out were better fitted for the battle of life than those brought up in institutions. A deal of good had been wrought by the establishment of Children's Courts. He considered England would ultimately be moved in the direction of the boarding-out system. When in Canada he was surprised to find that the 3,000 State children in that Dominion did not cost so much as the 1,500 children in South Australian institutions, the reason being that the Canadian children were adopted.

The Conference adjourned till this morning.

HOMES OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

S. a advertiser 20 5. 09

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS PRAISED.

The morning session of the Congress of Workers among Dependent Children in Adelaide on Wednesday was devoted to hearing the reports of the committees of delegates who had spent the previous day in visiting the chief institutions where dependent children are cared for under the ægis of the State. In every instance the visitors were enthusiastic in their praises of what had been seen, and only in a few particulars could improvements be suggested.

Magill and Beaumont Institutions.

Mrs. Gover (W.A.) said she had been greatly impressed by the happy and healthy appearance and home-like surroundings of the inmates of the Girls' Probationary School, Beaumont. The Boys' Reformatory at Magill was one of the finest institutions of the kind she had ever seen. She was surprised to see such a good class of boys, who did not seem like a criminal set at all. They appeared to be of a much higher standard than she had ever met with, with the exception of four or five, who, she would say, were born of criminal parents. The superintendent (Mr. J. F. Button) evidently knew his work thoroughly, and was admirably fitted for it. She asked him what he would do if he left his present position, and Mr. Button replied, "I think I would start a private institution of my own, because I love the work and love the boys." That was the kind of man required to take charge of such establishments.

Mrs. J. Williams (Queensland) expressed her delight with the cleanliness and order of the Girls' Home at Beaumont and also with the homelike and religious atmosphere about the place. As to the Magill Reformatory, she could endorse the remarks of Mrs. Gover, but was rather sorry to notice the absence of school lessons there.

Dr. Rogers (South Australia) pointed out that all the inmates were educated up to the age of 13 years, and that there were only three children under that age. The latter were trained by a qualified teacher, but the remainder were occupied through-

linquent we must avoid institutionising the children. Childhood's joys and home endearments are largely unknown by the institutionised child. The British Poor Law report for the current year describes the surroundings of institutions "as dreary and unfit for children." The report recommends that "effective steps should be taken to remove children from such environment, as it is impossible in barrack homes to produce alert, cheerful, and responsive boys and girls." Here, in Australia, such depressing conditions hardly obtain, but it is pretty safe to prophesy, however, that the day is not far distant when improved methods will demand that only as receiving depots or disciplinary media will institutions exist. The management may be exemplary, the discipline perfect, and everything done with machinelike exactness, and yet fail grievously in the output of sterling character and useful lives. There is doubtless a certain fascination about institutional children's homes, and what may be termed professional methods of treatment; but for best results pure, wholesome family life is incomparably to be preferred. (Applause.) It is somewhat remarkable that boarded-out children in England are so little in evidence. The Poor Law report above referred to states that on January 1, 1908, there were only 1,876 children boarded out, while there were 234,792 in the care of the Poor Law Guardians. This fact demonstrates the difficulty of effecting reforms in Conservative England, and shows how tenaciously obsolete methods are adhered to. This remark is made without any desire to minimise the earnest desires of the British authorities to improve matters. There may be difficulty in securing suitable homes or eligible foster parents. When we read, however, that under the present system "many of the children are growing up anæmic, diseased, undisciplined, and unskilled," we feel that, although we cannot disparage preparatory institutional training, the death warrant of institutions as places of permanent residence for children.

Just one word as to the latest progressive steps we have taken in South Australia, and I close. In addition to the probation work we have recently established a "State Children's Advancement Fund," for which we hope to receive assistance from our wealthy fellow-citizens. This in intended to encourage the development of any special talent which our wards may possess, which cannot be provided for in ordinary expenditure. We have also made a new departure by inducing the Government to authorise the employment of a children's dentist for the exclusive benefit of our wards. (Applause.) This appointment will relieve much suffering and in many cases prevent the development of incipient disease. Lastly, we have secured medical attendance for all children in the care of licensed foster mothers, whether connected with the department or otherwise. This is found to be a great safeguard to infant life, and together with the most effective supervision experienced by our officers, has reduced infant mortality to an extent unexampled in all civilised communities. The narration of these facts may appear egotistic. They are intended, however, to be simply suggestive of improved methods—a sentiment we trust which will be the keynote of the congress. The council trust that the visit will be enjoyable and profitable to every member of the congress, and at its conclusion you will realise that the consideration given to the various subjects and the discussions thereon have been such as to lead to practical conclusions and beneficial results. We hope that the interchange of thought will provide inspiration and stimulus to all altruistic workers, and that in some degree the congress may be instrumental in increasing the sum of human happiness. (Applause.)

Infantile Mortality.

Dr. Helen Mayo (S.A.) delivered a valuable address upon "Some contributory causes to the high rate of infantile mortality, including the lack of fitness in young people for parenthood." She said the Registrar-General's tables showed that the infantile-mortality in South Australia had fallen, though not quite regularly, for the last [illegible] years, that for 1907 being the lowest rate so far recorded. She had, therefore, based her remarks on the statistics for 1907, which showed that in spite of comparatively low figures, there was a high percentage of preventible deaths. The mortality had dropped during the years 1897-1907 from a maximum of 139.9 per 1,000 in 1898 to 65.6 in 1907, which was the lowest in Australasia. In the latter year the deaths of infants under 12 months of age numbered 604, as against 626 in 1906. A large proportion of infants died in the first month, the deaths then being due to developmental disease, debility caused by various parental conditions, actual disease inherited, or premature birth, with also a few deaths from violence and from enteritis, but on the whole the influence of the parents was marked. The causes of infantile mortality had been arranged in two chief groups as follows:—(1) Alcoholism of parents, diseases of parents, industrial employment of women, and faulty obstetric practice; and (2) environment. The habit of alcoholism in the mother profoundly influenced the unborn child, but its prevalence in South Australia, she believed, was not very marked. Even more important than the care of milk in the dairy was the protection of the milk in the home, for summer diarrhœa, which carried off so many babies, was due to the specific infection of milk. Some of the patent foods were of great value for babies with delicate digestions, but most of them were injurious before the age of six months, and unnecessary afterwards. Dr. Mayo referred to the excellent work being done by the State Children's Department of South Australia; by the Adelaide Local Board of Health in distributing booklets among mothers on the care and nourishment of both parent and child; by various charitable institutions; and by the Children's Hospital. The practical means that might be suggested to help in bringing about a reduction of infantile mortality might be classified in brief as follows:—1. Education of the parent. 2. Constraint. In South Australia births needed only to be registered within 42 days, and in 1907 (their best year) 242 deaths occurred in the first month of life. Thus the opportunity of instructing the mothers when they were most open to instruction on the care of their babies was lost. Lastly, there should be some check on the marriage of unsuitable people.

Mr. G. A. Ferguson, Inspector of Orphanages, Queensland, dealing with the same subject, said the infant mortality in Queensland in 1907 was greater than that for either South Australia or Victoria, and less than that for any other State of the Commonwealth, and also less than that for New Zealand. The greatest average mortality during 1907 was that for Western Australia (9.77 per cent.), and the least was that for South Australia (6.59 per cent.). One important cause of the high rate of infant mortality was the improper feeding. In sheer ignorance mothers had in some instances killed their little ones. The best nourishment was, of course, the natural food of the mother, and when artificial food had to be resorted to the danger lay in finding out what particular kind of nourishment was best suited to its needs. The preparation of the food was an important factor. Another contributory cause was the neglect of attention to the body of the child. The fact of parents being addicted to the alcoholic habit had a distinct bearing upon the causes of infant mortality, because the daughters of parents given to drink were rendered less capable of becoming good nursing mothers. The experience in Queensland had been that the rate of mortality was very high when infants were congregated in a home, whether they were attended by their mothers or not. The mortality of children appeared lowest when the mothers were between 30 and 35 years of age, and greatest when they were under 20. The influence of the age of the fathers appeared to act in the same direction. Inasmuch, however, as the higher age incidence of marriage was usually found among those having a greater sense of responsibility, it was possible that this factor might have greater influence than that of age. While criminals, inebriates and the feeble-minded continued to propagate, successful efforts in lowering the death-rate among the children of such parents must lead to racial degeneracy.

Mrs. Edwards (Tasmania) pointed out the necessity for the early notification of all births, and for the desirableness of preventing the importation of certain drugs.

Miss Vida Goldstein (Victoria) asked if the milk supply of South Australia was such that people could be confident of getting a pure article. An association had been formed in New Zealand at the instance of Lady Plunket, which looked into the question of the milk supply. It was thought that cows' milk should be specially prepared before being given to infants.

Dr. Mayo said she understood that, although in some dairies absolute cleanliness was assured, there could be no guarantee that the general milk supply was perfectly pure.

Mrs. Williams (Queensland) said in her State a society had been instituted, known as the Lady Chelmsford Pure Milk Supply. She agreed with Mrs. Edwards that the time allowed for the notification of births was too long. She moved—"That in the opinion of this Congress the time allowed for the notification of all births should not exceed seven days in certain districts to be fixed by proclamation."

Miss Spence (South Australia) seconded the motion, and would have preferred to make the limit 48 hours.

An amendment by Mrs. Edwards that the time allowed be 48 hours was negatived, and the motion was carried unanimously.

On the motion of Dr. Mayo it was resolved—"That summer diarrhœa of infants should be a notifiable disease."

Delinquent Children and Their Improvement.

Mr. A. E. Clarke, Chief Probation Officer in Victoria, dealt with "Delinquent children and their improvement under supervision in the homes of their parents." He referred to the success which had been achieved under the State Children's Court Act in Victoria. The ideal of the Children's Court was that the child's first appearance before the bench would be his last. The home conditions went to the root of the problem, and should decide whether the child should be released on probation or not. There were some 230 probation officers, men and women occupying high positions in the business life of the State, who appeared to have made a success of their self-imposed task. The work of supplementing the parental control was one which could not be undertaken lightly, but from the experiences in Victoria they were convinced that the system in vogue enabled influence to be exercised over children for good in a way which could not be accomplished otherwise. They sometimes met with delinquents who were subjects neither for institutions nor for probation, but if a child was brought to recognise that he could make reparation, then good work would have been done. The Children's Court was a colossal undertaking, and no finer legislation had been introduced, because it dealt efficiently with the child, the hope of the nation. Under the old method, when the children were released from the court they were lost sight of, but now the officials knew what happened on the following day.

The Child on Probation.

Miss Goldstein (Victoria) dealt with the question "How to save the child on probation." She said the most efficient probation officer in the world could not accomplish much without the aid of the parents. The father and mother, the probation officer, the Sunday-school teacher, the clergyman, the employer, and even the magistrate, all had important parts to play in making the child a good citizen, and if they did that they could not do a better service to the State. In nine cases out of ten they must begin by correcting the parents. It was surprising how the children responded to the kindly care of the probation officer. It was probably the first time in their lives that they had felt the influence of love. Order was heaven's first law, but in the homes of the delinquent children it was practically an unknown quantity. The Sunday-school teacher came next to the parents in helping to make or

mar them. One serious drawback was the large number of pupils in a single class, for children could not be satisfactorily dealt with in mass. The comparatively few girl delinquents often furnished the probation officers with tough problems, because it was always more difficult to reclaim a woman than a man. Woman's outlook upon life was narrower, and there were fewer points on which one could appeal to her. The results of the operation of the State Children's Court in Victoria showed that love was indeed the greatest thing in the world.

Western Australia's Institutional System.

The Very Rev. Dean Latham (Perth) said while the South Australian State Children's Council pinned its faith to the boarding-out system, the work was done in Western Australia by means of institutions subsidised by the State. His experience was confined to the Church of England Orphanage, where they made religious training the foundation of the lives of the inmates. An experience of 41 years there proved that the chief factor in the success of the work was the personality of those in charge. The religious bodies, as such, had committed the State to a certain line of action, and the great army of philanthropic workers that had been enlisted could not be lightly thrown aside. The vast spaces in Western Australia, and the small but shifting population, would not admit of the boarding-out system. He thought the institutions must be strongly religious and strongly denominational—not for denominational ends, but for the purpose of getting the support required to carry out the task involved.

The South Australian Method.

Mrs. Williams (Queensland) said the delegates understood that the South Australian system was a fine one, and asked Mr. Gray to tell them something about it.

Mr. J. Gray, (secretary of the State Children's Department) said he appreciated the remarks of Dean Latham about the suitableness of religious workers, for he considered them the very people to whom the care of delinquent children should be entrusted. In South Australia they had two lady probationers, who inspected the children in the homes in which they were boarded. The Police Magistrate (Mr. J. Gordon, S.M.) presided usually, but not invariably, at the State Children's Court. On other occasions two justices were procured, and care was exercised in selecting men who were recognised as having suitable qualifications for dealing with delinquent children. The court was not associated with the Police Court. The legal mind was found to make the lawyer technical, and he said:—"Did this boy do this thing? If so, he must be punished accordingly." The State Children's Department had found, however, that far better results could be accomplished by the influence of love. Mr. Gray quoted instances where degraded parents, whose children had been taken away from them, had reformed on the promise of having their children returned to them when they were fit to take care of them. He moved—"That this congress is of opinion that steps should be taken to provide in all the States of the Commonwealth a system of probation for children, and that the supervision of all such children should be entrusted to some special authority, rather than the courts."

Miss Spence (S.A.) seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Messrs. Longmore, Ferguson, Smith, Macmaster, and Gray, and Misses Spence and Goldstein were appointed a committee to revise the resolutions of the congress.

To-day a number of the delegates will visit the various South Australian institutions for the care of children.

THE ILLEGITIMACY LAWS.

S. A. advertiser 1909

"It's his doing; if there's been any crime, it's at his door, not hers. He taught her to deceive. Let 'em put him on his trial—let him stand in court beside her, and I'll tell 'em how he got hold of her heart, and 'ticed her t' evil. Is he to go free, while they lay all the punishment on her?" These words have found an echo in countless hearts since George Eliot put them into the mouth of Adam Bede on the occasion of the trial of Hetty Sorrel for child murder, but the state of things they point to is happily one that society is fast outliving. The unmarried mother who, dazed with despair if not actually stricken with the temporary insanity usual in her condition, lifts her hand against the child at her breast is, alas! still a too familiar figure in our social life, as, too, is the author of her misery, who, leaving her to bear, alone, the whole bitter burden, slips away from the field where his "wild oats" were sown, probably to raise with impunity another harvest of the same kind elsewhere. But the Law, though it may retain some of its castiron traditions, would never think nowadays of exacting from a Hetty Sorrel the penalty of her life, and though the farce of pronouncing a sentence which there is no intention of enforcing is not yet played out, we are not without hopes that we may have the same change in the procedure of our courts as is proposed by the Lord Chief Justice of England in the measure we have already discussed in these columns, and that a judge may be spared the pain of passing and the wretched prisoner the distress of hearing a sentence whose execution would be an impossible outrage on the public sense of justice.

But the duty of society to the unmarried mother does not begin or end with her merciful treatment when, demented by misery, she has stained her hands with the blood of her offspring. In her child's interest, no less than her own, and in the interest of society itself, it is necessary to bring home to the father a sense of his parental obligations. This we have done in South Australia by exacting from him a contribution, not only to the maintenance of his illegitimate infant after birth, but also to the prenatal expenses. By enabling an unmarried woman, on evidence of paternity, to obtain, as long as five months before her confinement, an order on the putative father for a stated sum to supply medical and nursing expenses, and the cost of clothing necessary for the child for a certain period, the law has entrapped conscienceless men who might be disposed (like certain husbands of a decadent type) to escape from impending liabilities by migrating. All this and more it will be interesting to sociologists to observe, is provided also in a Bill now before the Norwegian Storthing, which, if carried—and it has been drafted by no less an authority than the Council of State—will make the land of Ibsen a particularly unwholesome one for the seducer to live in. In most countries an illegitimate child takes its mother's name, but under the Norwegian Bill it will take its father's, and he will be responsible, not merely for the pre-natal expenses, but for the mother's maintenance three months before and nine months after her confinement. The man also will be liable for the child's maintenance till it is 16. In a word, Norway is about to realise the dream of many sociologists by erasing from the Statute-book every distinction of birth and making all children legitimate. Not only will child and mother be safely carried through a critical period in the lives of both, but the child, it is hoped, and intended, will be relieved from the stigma which rests upon it through no fault of its own.

Here, again, the law will be brought into something like conformity with a growing sentiment in all civilised countries. No decent man or woman nowadays thinks the worse of a person to whose birth the "bar-sinister" attaches; and, indeed, the world cannot well afford to speak slightingly of a class who have endowed it with some of its most brilliant intellects—men like Emile de Girardin, most eminent of French journalists; Alexander Hamilton, one of the founders of the American Republic; D'Alembert, one of the keenest of by-gone mathematicians; Boccaccio, father of Italian prose; Leonardo da Vinci, painter of "The Last Supper," and Alexandre Dumas the Younger, all of whom were born out of wedlock. Nor can the sentiment which affixes upon illegitimate motherhood the stigma of irreparable infamy be regarded as other than a declining force. "Is it maternity," asks Dr. Loffingwell, in his classic work on the subject, "that destroys the purity of womanhood, or the lapse which precedes maternity? For one, I refuse to believe that we can ever make virtue seem more lovely by the merciless punishment of that consequence. On the contrary, we create a yet greater evil than the one it is sought to condemn. Between the first child of the young country girl, and those depths of sin to which the painted hetaire of the pavement has fallen, is an almost impassable abyss. Yet it needs but a step to reach that lower level; a step over a precipice. That Christian woman who, deaf to all entreaty, turns her maid into the streets because about to become a mother may fancy she is only upholding the dignity of virtue; but she is also opening to her sister-woman the gates of hell." Whatever may be the duty of the Christian woman towards the unmarried mother, there is no doubt as to the duty of the partner in sin, and the proposed Norwegian law is an attempt to bring it very vividly before him. After all, this contemplated erasure of all distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate children

out the day in the regular duties of the institution. It was felt that after each day's work it was rather too much to expect the inmates to do school work.

The Chairman said the Magill Reformatory contained only a few boys, and the fact that the number of inmates had been greatly reduced in the last few years was the surest test of its efficiency. There was no doubt that so far as boy criminality was concerned they had reason to congratulate themselves. The total returns from the premises in the way of produce and manufactures for the year ended June 30, 1908, amounted to £982 3/11. He was exceedingly pleased with the building improvements which had been carried out at the Beaumont school by the Salvation Army authorities, which would make it an ideal home and enable much better work to be done.

Mr. J. Gray (secretary of the State Children's Department, South Australia) said that unless the inmates of the Magill Reformatory had reached the compulsory education standard they were trained as they would be in an ordinary State school, and, if they desired, those who had passed the standard could have further lessons from the schoolmaster every evening.

Miss C. H. Spence (South Australia) said the building at Magill had been erected as an industrial school for 230 children, and consequently the department were unable to make it as home-like as they would wish.

Brooklyn Park and Edwardstown Schools.

Mr. W. P. Spargo (Queensland) remarked that he was greatly impressed with his visit to the Boys' Reformatory at Brooklyn Park. After giving the lads advice the members of the committee were escorted over the premises by Father Healy. A good deal of interest was manifested in the splendid gardens which surrounded the school. These were attended to by the boys, who spent two hours daily in gardening operations. There were about 25 acres of land attached to the school. The education of the boys was not neglected in any way. The pictures which hung on the walls greatly impressed him, but he was more pleased when he noticed a large temperance pledge hanging there. One of the objects of the school was to introduce total abstinence among the boys. Everything was in splendid order, but he thought that there was one thing that the school lacked, and that was the touch of a woman's hand and the influence of a woman about the place. The strictest discipline was maintained throughout the school. The visit to the Industrial School at Edwardstown made a great impression upon the minds of the visitors. The institution was beautifully situated, and there were three cottages provided for the children. One of these was for the boys, another for the big girls, and the third for the small girls. There were officers or nurses in charge of the cottages, which were entirely separate from each other. The matron of the school informed him that they had practically no trouble with the children. There was also a hospital at the school, which was kept in an exceptionally clean condition. The staff consisted of the matron, sub-matron, a teacher, and four nurses. In addition there was a special gardener engaged, who gave the boys instruction in horticulture. The work at the institution was being conducted in a harmonous manner. There was plenty of work for the children to do. The girls were called upon to do the laundry and housekeeping duties. The fruit and vegetables grown by the boys had resulted in an income of £21 during the past 12 months. The girls certainly did not have the privileges that the boys had, but the cottage system was an admirable one. He had no hesitation in commending it to the approval of the congress.

Mr. A. W. Green (N.S.W.) endorsed Mr. Spargo's remarks, and emphasised the fact that the Brooklyn Park school needed the touch of a woman's hand. In New South Wales they did not send the boys where there were no women. He regretted to state that they had not the cottage system in the mother State, and he intimated that although he had spent 27 years in this work, he had never seen anything that would equal the manner in which the Edwardstown institution was conducted. He was exceptionally pleased with his visits to both of these establishments.

Miss Vida Goldstein (Vic.) expressed the great pleasure she had experienced. She was highly pleased at the manner in which the managers of the Edwardstown school were conducting that institution. The method of keeping the boys and girls together was working excellently.

Girls' Reformatory, Redruth.

Mr. M. Macmaster (Tasmania) reported on the visit to the Girls' Reformatory, Redruth. He congratulated the matron (Mrs. Holden), and the council generally, on the wonderful triumph over the previous influences which had affected the girls. In that institution there were only one or two girls who, given a fair trial, would not prove useful members of society. The work the girls were doing was being carried out very nicely indeed, and the cooking was really admirable. He was also particularly struck with the bright appearance of the dormitories. With Mr. Longmore and Miss Stirling, who accompanied him, he could not help feeling that South Australia was to be highly congratulated on having such a large number of ladies who threw themselves so heartily into the work, and it was somewhat of a pity that they had to triumph over such an undesirable environment as was presented by the uninviting character of the building.

Miss Stirling (S.A.) also reported favorably on the visit to the Redruth institution.

Mr. J. Longmore (W.A.) said the institutions in South Australia compared very favorably with those in other countries. Speaking of the educational side he said in Western Australia they insisted on attending to the scholastic work in the interests of the children. That practice in his opinion should be adopted in all industrial schools under the control of the State. He congratulated the council on having such an institution.

Mount Barker Boys' Home.

Mr. G. A. Ferguson (Qld.), in reporting on the visit to Mount Barker Boys' Probationary School, said he had come to the conclusion that they had visited the best institution in the State. There was no appearance of a prison at all; it was simply a beautiful residence, and when they arrived they were greeted with cheers from the "prisoners," who were enjoying themselves on a "merry-go-round." (Laughter.) Staff-Captain and Mrs. Carless had control of a fine establishment. There was no doubt that there was strict discipline at the home, but the children were bright, cheerful, and very happy. The area of land connected with the school was 136 acres, 50 acres of which were under cultivation, most of the produce grown being for their own consumption. The children were having a good educational training.

Mrs. Crompton, who reported on the same school, complimented Mr. and Mrs. Carless on the success which was attending their work. This was evidenced by the large number of children who were sent there especially to be under the loving care of Mrs. Carless. Everything about the place seemed to be in as good order as possible.

Institutions and Home Life.

Miss Vida Goldstein (Vic.) thought the idea of the receiving depot or institution could be extended so as to make the conditions desirable as a boarding-home for boys who had gone out from the institution and taken up positions elsewhere. It would be of advantage to boys at work if they could live at the industrial home for, say, 2/ a week.

Mr. A. W. Green (N.S.W.) said no difficulty was experienced in Sydney in finding the old guardians, to whom the boys generally liked to return when out of

SAVING CHILD LIFE

S.A. advertiser 21.5.09

THE INTER-STATE CONGRESS.

The Inter-State Congress of Workers Among Dependent Children met again at the deputation room, new Government Offices, on Thursday, the president of the State Children's Council of South Australia (Mr. T. Rhodes) occuping the chair.

Boarding-out versus Institutional Systems.

The debate on the subject "A comparison of the systems of institutions for and the boarding-out of children," which was adjourned from the previous day, was continued at the instance of Mr. J. Gray (secretary of the State Children's Department of South Australia), who moved—"That this Congress heartily approves of the system of providing for children in the care of the State by boarding them out in selected homes."

The motion was seconded by Mr. T. Smith (secretary of the Department for Neglected Children, Victoria), who stated that the boarding-out principle had proved a great success in that State and had entirely superseded the industrial school as a corrective for moral irregularity.

Mr. A. W. Green (boarding-out officer of the Relief Board, New South Wales) supported the motion, but suggested that it should be allowable for the authorities to board the children out with their mothers when the latter were widows or deserted wives and were competent to take care of them.

Mrs. J. G. Edwards (Tasmania), in support, said there were many instances in which a mother should be encouraged to keep her children and her home together. In numerous cases, both in the mother's and the father's interests, it was desirable that the children should be allowed to remain with their mothers, and wherever the mother showed a disposition to form a home she should be encouraged to do so. To keep the children in the home was to assist in the maintenance of home life in the community, which was a most desirable thing and worthy of every encouragement from the national standpoint. In Tasmania they had only 120 boarded-out children. The number seemed small compared with the figures quoted by representatives from other States, but was to be accounted for by the fact that the law in Tasmania dealing with neglected children was not nearly stringent enough.

Miss C. H. Spence (South Australia) referred to the amount of the allowance granted to the guardians of destitute children by the State. She had been a member of the South Australian Destitute Board for the past twelve years, and she had always contended that the relief given to mothers was too small. Yet, on the other hand, it was pointed out that the present system had been in vogue for 60 years, and that in that time thousands of children had been reared and brought up to lead respectable lives. So far as the boarding out of State children was concerned she felt that it was not the intention of the framers of the clause to take the children from their mothers unless it were proved that they were vicious. She was in entire sympathy with the resolution, but in South Australia there was at present no need for it, in view of the facilities provided by the State for the support and control of destitute children.

Mr. E. W. Hawker, M.A. (South Australia), regretted that in this matter some antagonism seemed to exist between the authority wielded by State institutions and the aims of philanthropically-minded pri-

individuals. There was urgent need for the establishment of some central authority that would control the whole of the measures of relief provided for destitute children, and he hoped the various States would follow the example of New South Wales and make the district magistrates responsible for their care.

Mr. J. Longmore, secretary of the State Children's Council, Western Australia, said there was no necessity for antagonism. The department he represented had now made a start in Western Australia to board out children, and to date 31 had been placed under the control of persons living outside the State institutions. In his State there were ten homes for dependent children, containing about 500 inmates, and in addition to these there were 878 children, who, to all intents and purposes, were kept in their homes through the agency of allowances made by the State. The Government allowance for rations was 2/6 per child per week, but as secretary of the State Children's Council he had discretionary powers, and made it a practice to grant rations in proportion to the merits of each case. In some instances they paid the mother 10/ per week to assist her to maintain her family.

Mrs. Gover (Society for the Protection of Children, Western Australia) said the society she represented undertook the care of destitute children not under the control of the State. In all 170 children had been passed through their books, and they were now paying for 40. The controlling body in the West had not the same powers as the State Children's Council of South Australia, and when she returned home she would strongly advocate reform on the lines adopted by this State.

The Chairman thought care should be taken to avoid ultra-liberalism, because it was an easy matter to pauperise people. It was unwise to allow responsibility to be unnecessarily thrown upon the State, and they should help people to help themselves.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Preserving the Family Circle.

Mr. Green moved—"That in the opinion of this Congress the boarding-out of children to mothers, being either deserving widows or deserted wives, should be carried out as a legal right." The experience of New South Wales was that it would be much cheaper than boarding them out separately. After all, those children would become an asset to the State.

Mrs. J. Williams (Qld.) seconded the motion. It would encourage a spirit of independence, and be beneficial to the mother and children and to the State also.

Mr. Glynn said he quite agreed that the best environment for the child was under the mother's wing, but as the power sought by the motion already existed in South Australia he could not support it. It would not be wise to direct the State Children's Council to hand back to the mother children under committal.

Miss Vida Goldstein (Vic.), in supporting the motion, said it was undesirable to have widows and deserted wives appearing before the public as destitute, and going to an institution for the charitable dole.

Mrs. J. G. Edwards (Tas.) agreed with the remark of Miss Goldstein.

Mr. M. Macmaster (Tas.) thought the charitable dole simply manufactured paupers.

Mr. J. Gray (S.A.) felt sure that the Congress did not wish the mothers of convicted or neglected children to have the power to claim them from the State Children's Council. Those children whose near relatives were indigent and unable to support them seldom appeared before the court, but received assistance directly from the council. The question was whether the relief given by the State to indigent parents should be by having their children committed to the care of the council, and then boarded out, or whether the relief should be given directly to the parents without the committal of the children. He fancied it was a matter which came within the province of the Destitute Board.

Mr. G. A. Ferguson (Queensland) suggested that Mr. Green should strike out the words "as a legal right" from the motion.

Mr. Hawker supported the motion with the qualification as to the question of legal right. The spirit of independence should be fostered as far as possible, and any overlapping in the work of the Destitute Board and the State Children's Council should be avoided, because divided authority meant increased expense. The system of the charitable dole might lead to collusion. For instance, the husband might go away and say to his wife, "The State will look after the children." He would rather see such children looked after under the supervision of the State Children's Council than by the Destitute Board.

Mr. Longmore thought the State Children's Act of South Australia, which had been copied in Western Australia, gave full power to do what was desired.

Mr. Green said he had no objection to leaving out of the motion "as a legal right," although there was no danger of the boarding-out of the children with their mothers being carried out without the approval of the authorities.

The Chairman remarked that the experience of Mr. T. Smith's predecessor in Victoria (Mr. Miller) was that the system of giving subsidies to mothers for their children led to much abuse.

The motion was carried in the following form:—"That in the opinion of this congress the boarding-out of children to mothers, being either deserving widows or deserted wives, should be carried out."

Uniform Legislation and Maintenance Fees.

Mr. Glynn initiated a discussion on the question of bringing about uniformity in legislation in each State as far as possible, and of securing some reciprocal action for the collection of maintenance fees in the various States. He said in considering the matter of maintenance and the liability of parents they should touch the source of the trouble, which lay in the home. Lombroso had found in the case of the reformatories of New York that 52 per cent. of the inmates came from homes which were positively bad, while only 7 per cent. hailed from positively good ones. Care of the children and sound social opinion formed the crux of the whole problem. The existing laws and their defects comprised a subject which did not really come within the purview of the congress. In England the law at present was 50 years behind that in South Australia, because when a mother died in England there was no possibility of fixing the liability upon the father. The Federal Parliament had power to bring about uniformity in the legislation, but he would rather see the State Parliaments deal with the matter uniformly. An inter-State committee could be appointed to draw up what was required, and one draftsman could, no doubt, frame a Bill therefrom which would meet the needs of all the States. The measure could be sent to the various States for final approval. As to the collection of maintenance fees, there was provision under the Federal Constitution (clause 51) for the enforcement of State judgments throughout the Commonwealth. He would suggest an amendment of the State Records Act to enable maintenance orders made in one State to be enforced in any other State. He would also suggest an amendment of the Federal Act to enable maintenance orders for the periodical payment of small sums to be cheaply registered in any part of the State, and such registration having been effected small drafts could be made in the State where it was made.

Miss Goldstein said a few figures from New Zealand would show the efficacy of a good system of collecting maintenance fees. In New Zealand there were 1,545 State children, and the amount collected for fees was £5,604, while in Victoria there were 3,609 children, for whom £1,900 was collected, and in South Australia £1,130 was collected for 1,300 children. From 1882 to 1892 the population in New Zealand increased from 540,000 to 672,000, and the commitments were 2,570, or 0.42 per 1,000. From 1898 to 1908 the population in the Dominion advanced from 756,000 to 960,000, whereas the commitments numbered only [illegible]9 per 1,000.

Mr. Longmore said the great trouble was in following up the men who deserted those for whom they were responsible. If some practical solution could be suggested, the Western Australian authorities would, he felt sure, be glad to fall in with it. He moved—"That this Congress strongly recommend the various States to make legislative provision for the collection in any State of the Commonwealth of maintenance for dependent persons from those liable, irrespective of the fact that the dependent persons may be in some other State, whether due by agreement or under an order of court, and to provide the necessary machinery; and that the assistance of Mr. Glynn be invited in the matter."

The motion was seconded by Mr. E. W. Hawker, and carried.

Wife Desertion.

Mr. Green read a paper dealing with the question of collecting maintenance contributions from defaulting parents. After referring to the subject of wife and child desertion was a despicable offence against the social order, and fraught with serious economic consequences to the State, the writer remarked on the curious state of public opinion that contemplated and tolerated the regular committal of the offence with a kind of philosophic acquiescence. He said the law was so filled with limitations that it greatly favored the deserter. They should no longer view the offence of desertion wit hsuch equanimity, but, as a community, should be fired with indignation, and resolve to put a stop to it. In New South Wales the Act provided that a man must be absent from his family for 30 days before his wife could move the State to interfere. The result was that a man who had determined to desert had 30 clear days in which to perfect his plans, while, in addition, when the wife took action, she had first to satisfy the police as to the bona fides of her claim. The usual result was that the husband got clear away. The wife was often blamed as a contributing factor to the domestic disagreement, but incompatibility of temperament could not be accepted as an entire explanation of the husband's failure to recognise the claims of home and family. The mothers left in a state of destitution were often compelled to seek other men to assist them in the maintenance of their children. In other words, they were driven to an immoral life. In New South Wales, as the result of legislation passed in 1896, mothers who were widows or deserted wives with children under 12 years of age, were entitled to a State monetary allowance for each child. This had had the effect of preserving hundreds of family groups which otherwise must eventually have become scattered. Under clause 16 of the State Children's Relief Act in New South Wales the authorities had power to board-out children under 12 years to their own mothers when the latter had shown themselves to be deserving. These mothers were either widows or deserted wives, the latter being liberally construed to mean women whose husbands were in gaol and Government asylums as well as those really deserted. A large amount of public money was disbursed in affording maintenance under this head, while if they took into account the whole of the deserted children that had to be supported by the State they found that it amounted to about £6,000 per annum. He suggested that the law should be amended so as to abolish the 30 day limit, and allow the wife to take immediate action against her husband if she thought he was about to desert her. Further, if the husband deserted, and was afterwards found in a neighboring State, and in a position to contribute towards the support of his family, provision should be made whereby he could be compelled to do so upon the wife proving her case. In the event of the man refusing to pay he should be committed to prison. If the absconding husband were still disposed to support his wife and family, he could do so without relinquishing his employment in the State to which he had fled, whereas if he threw up his work simply through perverseness, and because he did not wish to support them, a severe penalty could be imposed. Further, if the husband were committed to gaol, he could be given such employment as would enable him to earn sufficient to support his family. So that, even though in gaol, the

equally misjudged. The enquiries made in Tasmania give us the significant fact that truancy is specially prevalent among the children suffering from unsuspected physical defects. The injury done to these children by the ignorance of their teachers—an ignorance the outcome of their training—is almost incalculable. Year after year the luckless girls and boys chafed under a fierce sense of injustice. And the irony of the position was that the more conscientious the teacher the more determined he or she was that the pupil should do the thing which unsuspected physical defects made impossible. That form of unconscious cruelty has been minimised, if not ended, by medical inspection. Ended in the home as well as the school, for the defects of the children have been revealed to the parents as well as to the teachers.

—A Quiet Revolution.—

This revelation has not only minimised cruelty, it has led to such treatment of many defects as has gone far to remove them. And it is quietly revolutionizing our school buildings and our school methods. In the old days, when the Treasury was full and the Treasurer was amiable, money was spent on turrets and other architectural peculiarities, more or less decorative. Now what money there is to spend in school construction is being expended in securing the best hygienic conditions. Unfortunately this latter sort of expenditure may be lost, and is lost unless the teachers are deeply impressed with the importance of health. Medical inspection of schools has in a great variety of ways quickened the interest of the better sort of teacher in the study of hygiene. That because the importance of an elementary knowledge of elementary physiology has been forced on their attention as it never was before.

—Mentally Feeble Children.—

Another important and practical outcome of the medical examination is that those mentally defective children, who are not imbecile, are about to be specially provided for. A considerable number of children have been found in the schools of the two cities whose school life is a misery to themselves, and in some cases a menace to those about them. Occasionally the dull boy or girl is goaded by brighter schoolfellows till in a moment of passion the sufferer strikes a dangerous blow. In others a lack of moral sense leads to shocking exhibitions. Dr. Gertrude Halley has so strongly impressed this upon the Minister of Education that he is about to establish a special school for children mentally feeble but not imbecile. They will be brought to the school, if necessary, gratuitously by train or tram. In the classroom they will be under the control of lady teachers selected as possessing the highest emotional and intellectual qualities. These ladies will be in constant touch with the officers by whom the medical inspection of schools is carried out. It is clear that our most highly gifted teacher will undertake this work only inspired by a deep religious feeling. I use the word "religious" in its widest sense, without reference to the dogma or the ritual of any church. The vital thing is that those who undertake the training of the abnormal child should hold a spiritual as opposed to the vulgarly materialistic view of the child and of the universe in which it finds itself. Granted that, it matters nothing as regards our present purpose, whether those who start a school for defective children are Protestant or Catholic, orthodox or unorthodox, whether with Paley they accept the Thirty-nine Articles, and sigh for yet another, or whether with Huxley they stand bareheaded in the presence of the great mystery. There must be infinite tenderness in the treatment of the abnormal child if it is to develop the faint spark of the divine which lies latent. There must be infinite patience, ungrudging efforts for results which seem small, which would be far too small to justify the sacrifice involved were the child's brief span of earthly life all. But it is a sacrifice which may be cheerfully made by the man or woman of any creed, who holds that death is indeed the gate of life.

Dr. R. S. Rogers (S.A.) said he felt some curiosity as to how Mr. MacMaster would deal with the subject of his paper, and he was pleased to find that he had related the experiences of his own State. They all agreed with him when he said that if the defects, mental and physical, were to be corrected in the community they must endeavour to do it wisely through training in the schools. Some of the results that had been found on medical inspection of schools in Tasmania were rather remarkable; and, so far as his own experience had gone, it would not altogether agree with them. He began his duties in the Observation School in Currie street, which was supposed to have the lowest type of children in the schools, and he was prepared to find a great amount of dirt in the school. So far as he had gone, however, he had rarely come across a dirty child. In fact, the dirty child had been conspicuous by his absence rather than by his presence. He was told by the schoolmaster that when the school opened a great many dirty children attended, but the problem was dealt with by the teachers themselves, who took the children and tubbed them in the presence of each other. (Laughter.) There had been a fallacy in the work of the school induced by the necessity for obtaining the permission of the parents for the examination of their children. Parents had to a certain extent attended to the clothing and condition of the child before it was examined. They ought to be pleased to think that the sense of shame was so well present among the people of the lower classes in Adelaide. The question of fresh air in houses had no doubt a great deal to do with bad defects among children. Some 20 odd years ago, when he first entered into practice, it was really a case of running the gauntlet in entering a sick-room. Now, even among the low classes, that had been almost abolished. Public opinion had been educated, and the people understood the necessity for fresh air and ventilation. It showed clearly that the efforts in that direction had not been unavailing. (Hear, hear.) Curvature of the spine was a defect which he scarcely came across in the children. He did not think that was due to better lighting in the schools, because the schools were very defective in that matter, even to the present day. In one of the newest schools in the city which he visited the other day he found the light in the face of the teacher and the children sitting in their own light. A more defectively lighted school for children he could scarcely imagine. Throat defects were extremely numerous. Probably between 60 and 70 per cent. of the children were suffering from adenoid growths and enlarged tonsils. Eyesight was also defective in Adelaide, but not to the same extent as had been found in other countries. Comparatively few children would be found to have normal eyesight, but grave defects of vision were not very numerous. He was pleased to hear from Mr. MacMaster that some attempt was to be made to provide for the mentally defective children of Tasmania. It seemed to be apparent, however, that that was to be done through the Education Department; but their visitor also informed them that Victoria was going to move in the same direction, but through the Lunacy Department. The problem ought not to be attacked from the Education Department. Education Departments might be qualified to deal with normal children, but he doubted whether they were qualified to deal with abnormal children. That was a class which should be dealt with by itself. A great commission had recently concluded its report in England. That commission sat for four years, and considered the care which should be bestowed upon the feeble minded. That commission was of the opinion that the question should be dealt with from the Lunacy Department of each State. The other day he was asked to give evidence before the Lunacy Commission which sat in Adelaide, and he advised that the South Australian system of official visitors should be discontinued, and that a small board of commissioners should be appointed to deal with mental questions. That would probably provide the necessary machinery for South Australia. A board of that sort could have its powers extended to deal with cases not only sheltered in an asylum, but also mentally afflicted children and persons throughout the State. The English commission thought that, in addition to a central authority, the local governing bodies could act as local committees. Notification of some sort should be made one of the conditions, and all persons should be compelled to notify those supposed to be mentally defective. The police also should be made to notify all who were mentally defective, and in that way the central authority with the local committees could deal with the question in a satisfactory way. That was apparently what they were about to give effect to in Victoria. Although the scheme might seem costly in the beginning, it would in the end greatly benefit the State, and large financial savings would be made in other ways. It would be wise for the congress to pass a resolution on the subject. It was a matter which was now claiming the active attention of many countries, and they should not be behindhand in making their recommendations on the subject. (Applause.)

Mr. C. H. Goode thought it was the duty of the Government to see to the welldoing of the mentally afflicted children. Much of the work could and should be carried out by private individuals, because it was better done that way than if left to the Government; but the community should help. The public took a greater personal interest in the private institutions when they subscribed direct than if the whole burden were left to the Government. They had had for some years an excellent institution for dealing with the feeble minded, and he believed the Government would give them assistance in developing that work.

Dr. Rogers moved—"That the various States endeavour to give effect to the main recommendations of the British Royal Commission for the Care and Protection of the Feeble Minded, 1904-1908."

Mr. Goode seconded.

Miss Spence said there was a little ambiguity about the term "feeble minded." There were children who were dull and slow but they could not be considered imbecile or feeble minded, and there should be a recommendation that the schools should make provision for the education of the backward children. It would be difficult for private charity to deal with the feeble-minded children. Certainly it could be active and was active throughout the Commonwealth, but they should be a charge on the whole community. There was a danger to the community, and that danger should be lessened by the proper training and education of those children. It was a national matter, as with the neglected and delinquent children.

The Chairman said it had always been a problem to him why the Government should take all sorts of care to educate and train the normal child, whereas the children who were most in need of care were left without education. Some years ago he proposed to the Education Department that there should be a special regulation with regard to those children, but it was not entertained.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Herald 3609

The Runaway Fathers.

The delegates who met in Adelaide to consider how their several States could best serve the neglected child, took a sane view of the treatment to be dealt out to the deserting father. As our special correspondent pointed out in an article published yesterday, they put aside what they called "mere sentiment"—a term often applied to the highest emotions of humanity—and came down to hard fact. They admitted frankly that the faulty husband is often mated to a woman every whit as bad as he. An unformed youth marries a girl quite unskilled in domestic matters. She has been accustomed to earn a little money and to waste it on tawdry finery. She has not been taught to cook, to sew, to make a small wage work wonders. If she essays the task she fails; but the brightly-lit footpaths have a charm for her, and often enough she

does not try. If the unformed youth had the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon he could transform his untaught wife. He has neither. Things go from bad to worse; children are born, are dragged up, and his spasmodic efforts seem useless. He takes himself off, and finds work in another State. He leaves the woman or the taxpayer to support his children. That is, clearly, hopelessly wrong. But to take him from his work, to drag him back, to imprison him, and then to turn him adrift with empty pockets and workless, is worse than useless. As the delegates decided, it should be possible to take action against him in the State from which he goes and to collect the sum he is ordered to pay in the State where he finds work. But sometimes the father is unwilling to pay, not because he is heartless, but because the mother is drunken or immoral. In such cases it should be possible for him to state his case, even from a distance. If he urges that his wife is impossible and that money paid to her goes not to the children but in debauchery, there is a clear issue which skilled officers could easily determine. Make the father pay, but if the mother is bad, let him have the satisfaction of knowing that the money he forwards does benefit his little ones. If possessed of that knowledge he still shirks his responsibility he deserves no mercy. Neither does he in any effective measures taken against him in the interest of a wife whose own case is meritorious.

WIFE DESERTION.

Argus 20 809

SUGGESTED INTERSTATE ACTION.

One of the items in the list of subjects for consideration by the Premiers' Conference is "Prosecution of Deserting Husbands—Interstate Action." There will be a general hope that time may be found for dealing with a question of such primary importance to a large section of the community—a section which is ill able to make itself heard. An enormous amount of suffering is caused to wives and families by unprincipled husbands and fathers who, tiring of their home obligations, leave the locality in which they usually live (often on the pretence of looking for work), and then either disappear in a remote part of Victoria or cross the border into another State. The Chief Justice has for years past, when sitting in the divorce jurisdiction, on occasion after occasion, uttered indignant protests against the present ineffective condition of the law, calling pointed attention to the need for reform; and Mr. Justice A'Beckett has also given to Parliament a similar emphatic lead whilst presiding in the same court. It is, indeed, only when the maltreated wife seeks the final relief of divorce that the extent of the evil of desertion is brought to public notice. The opinion of both these judges is that wilful desertion of wife or child should be made a criminal offence, and no one who realises how closely the honest fulfilment of the marriage bargain affects the stability of our social system can come to any other conclusion. By one of those legislative efforts which prove how superficially important subjects are handled, the Victorian Parliament in 1901, by act No. 1,737, provided that where a husband, without lawful or reasonable cause or excuse, deserts his wife and leaves her without adequate means of support, or where a father under like conditions deserts his legitimate children who are not beyond 14, and where the husband or father, as the case may be, goes to reside or is resident temporarily or permanently beyond Victoria, he shall be liable to imprisonment with hard labour for a year.

This enactment, one observes, makes it an offence to leave Victoria, but provides no punishment for the deserter who stays here. All that can be done where the territorial limits are not passed is to issue a warrant, and, if money for the purpose can be found, bring the offender up to show reason why a maintenance order should not be made against him. Then he may be ordered to find sureties for due payment or go to gaol, but this sort of procedure is in practice a mere trifling with the actual mischief. More drastic means are imperative for dealing effectively with a class of men against whom the Chief Justice has launched the strongest epithets in a pretty fluent vocabulary. A prolonged term in gaol, with the accompaniment of hard labour, in a genuine form, is the redress really called for.

In New South Wales, as long ago as 1858, it was enacted, as regards children, that any parent shall be guilty of a misdemeanour who wilfully, and without reasonable cause or excuse, deserts any of his children—whether legitimate or not—under the age of 16 years, and leaves them without means of support, he being able to maintain. Under the same statute, the milder provisions as to wives, which now prevail within Victoria, were introduced, but in 1900 the Sydney Legislature, in section 45 of Act No. 40, brought the law into accord with modern opinion by providing:—"Whosoever, being legally liable to maintain his wife or child, wilfully, and without lawful excuse, deserts such wife or any such child, and remains absent from his home for the space of thirty days, leaving such wife or child without the means of support, shall be liable to imprisonment for three years." It was shown by a recent case before Mr. Justice A'Beckett, in which a warrant had been issued in New South Wales for the arrest of a husband, and had been "backed" in Victoria by a police magistrate, under the Federal act of 1901, that the desertion in question must be real. A wife who has voluntarily separated from her husband, or who has given him cause to part company with her, is not within the New South Wales enactment. Absence from "home" in the statute connotes the leaving of a settled and customary place of abode, with the unlawful and inexcusable intention of evading the social obligations of the marriage compact.

There can be no fair question that the law on the subject ought to be made uniform in all the States, and should afterwards be extended by reciprocity arrangements to New Zealand—the present haven of refuge for many a cold-hearted deserter. The Premiers can readily set on foot the accomplishment of the first and main step. The form of the amendment required stands ready to hand in the statutes of New South Wales and Victoria, all that is needed being a matter of combination. The Premiers could readily agree upon the principle, and let the details of mere draughtsmanship be undertaken by the permanent officials of one of the States.

In the same connection, consideration should be given to the enforcement of warrants for the arrest of deserting husbands and fathers. The cost of executing warrants of this kind should be a State charge, to be borne by the province in which the wife or child is domiciled. Deserters rely upon the very fact that the wife or children have no means of following or bringing them back; and no change of the law will be of practical service unless this aspect is efficiently dealt with.

Mr. Justice a'Beckett made a very rational suggestion in the Divorce Court yesterday when he urged Parliament to amend the law of wife desertion. As it stands at present a man who deserts his wife and goes out of the State commits a criminal offence, for which he may be brought back and severely punished. If, however, the wife deserter remains within the State he escapes scot free from any criminal penalty, although the measure of his moral guilt is exactly identical in both cases. Here we have a typical illustration of the law's proverbial asininity. B., a Victorian, living in Wodonga, deserts his wife and, strolling across the Murraybridge, takes employment in Albury, half a mile away. By that act he is rendered liable, and very rightly, to be arrested, extradited, sent back to Wodonga and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labor. But it is very different with his friend C., who deserts his wife with equal callousness, but who takes advantage of the law. Instead of merely stepping from Wodonga to Albury, thus departing from Victoria, he travels by rail to the furthest Gippsland terminus, and thereby puts hundreds of miles between himself and his duty. But as he has astutely remained within the State he is quite safe. He may have left his wife sick, starving and absolutely destitute, but that matters nothing. The criminal law cannot touch him, and his wife has none but a civil remedy against him. Mr. Justice a'Beckett did well to inveigh against an anomaly so essentially absurd and senseless. He tells us that such cases as that of the hypothetical instance we have cited occur again and again, and have led other judges to lament the failure of the Legislature to bring all forms of wife desertion within the purview of the criminal jurisdiction.

It is much to be desired that Parliament should wake to its evident duty in this matter. Unfortunately our law, as if in secret league with one of our most barbarous social conventions, the survival of an age of barbarism, makes the path of the brutal husband all too easy—enunciating the ancient savage creed, Woe to the woman. Every community contains scores of selfish, hard-fibred males who are women's natural enemies. They marry, tire of their wives, treat them cruelly and end by wilfully deserting them. The law is a kind father to these mean spirited natures, always provided that they do not emigrate. It certainly enables those of the deserted wives who have money enough to set the law's machinery in motion to sue their husbands for maintenance, but the game is seldom worth the candle. The husbands invariably plead poverty or unemployment, and very rarely is one ever ordered to pay more than a trifling pittance—payment whereof, as experience has demonstrated, is more often than not evaded. There is of course the Divorce Court for these unhappy women to appeal to. But, as Mr. Justice a'Beckett has pointed out, this cannot always be considered a

Adelaide Register

DEALING WITH WAYWARD CHILDREN.

08.8.09

Miss Spence, in a capital paper which favoured the boarding-out system of dealing with State Children as against the institutional method, had a good word for the volunteer visitors—those ladies who had been the salvation of the system in its early days. "But," she said, "the attitude of the volunteer visitor should not be that of the superior person—of the lady ...ome interest ...f the foster- ...th any diffi- ... But she State child How much ...nove! How ...ble to close ...dvice, espe- ...r months of ...ild may be ...er they may ... from unfit ...ey are first ...he good wo- ...ith dirt and ...nd lying. But ...o the foster- ...child, and in ...eeds. Lying ...has against ...igence, and ...in an atmo- ...ce."

Mentally feeble children

STATE

... States who ...s concerning ...n much im- ... South Aus- ...e State are cared for. All, excepting one, were visited on Tuesday, and the various committees of inspection presented their reports verbally to the congress on Wednesday. One after another delegate spoke in high terms of praise of what they had seen, and in some cases the institutions were ahead of anything previously inspected. The afternoon session was devoted to a discussion on the boarding-out system. It was initiated by Miss Spence, who put clearly and forcibly the arguments for the South Australian methods against the institutional system. Dean Latham, of Western Australia, took the opposite ground, but unless the debate to-day reveals a supporter he will probably stand alone as an advocate for the system, which in his own experience in Perth has served best to deal with orphaned or deserted children. When the subject is finished this morning the congress will deal with the question of uniformity of legislation in all the States.

TH...ADELAIDE LIVE STOCK

STATE CHILDREN'S CONGRESS.

—o—

CONCLUDING DAY.

Adelaide Register 24/5/09

A VICEREGAL VISITOR.

The last session of the Interstate Congress on State Children was held at the deputation room, Victoria square, on Saturday morning, under the presidency of Mr. T. Rhodes.

—Medical Inspection of Schools.—

Mr. M. MacMaster (T.) read a paper on "Medical inspection of schools in relation to defective children." The paper, together with an important speech by Dr. R. S. Rogers on the subject, is dealt with in another column.

—Age of Consent.—

Dr. Helen Mayo (S.A.) moved—"That this congress is of opinion that the age of consent should be the same in every State, and that it should be 17 years, as in South Australia."

Mrs. Williams (Q.) seconded. As coming from a State where the age was as low as 14 years, she felt that the congress should express itself on the point.

Carried unanimously.

—Mr. T. S. Reed.—

The Chairman suggested that they should send a message of congratulat on to Mr. T. S. Reed, who had attained that day to the advanced age of 91 years. Mr. Reed was one of the earliest workers for the children of the State.

Miss Spence moved—"That this congress is not unmindful of the great services rendered by Mr. T. S. Reed in the cause of boarding out State children in South Australia, and desires to convey to him a message of congratulation on this the ninety-first anniversary of his birth." She had worked for 14 years with Mr. Reed in the same cause when he was secretary to the voluntary society. He travelled through the length and breadth of the land finding homes for the children, and threw himself into the whole work with zeal.

Mr. C. H. Goode (S.A.), in seconding, said Mr. Reed had never got the recognition for the work he had performed for the good of the community to which he was entitled.

The motion was carried unanimously.

—Licensed Homes and Foster Mothers.—

Miss Spence moved—"That this congress is of opinion that all infants placed out by their own mothers should be in charge of licensed women only, and subject to inspection by a duly qualified woman." Infant mortality had been much checked in South Australia, she said, by the admirable regulations of the Destitute Board that a mother who went to the Destitute to be confined should be compelled to stay there for six months and give the natural food to the infant, and that when she left she was to keep it or put it in a place which was supervised by the board. That regulation was inspired by the late Mr. James Smith. Some years ago that department was handed over to the State Children's Department, and the results of Miss Moule's inspection, first of the home and then of the foster mother, had resulted in the most remarkable reduction of infant mortality, perhaps, in the world. When the matter was in the hands of the police the foster mother could hoodwink them; but they could not hoodwink a kindly, thoughtful, sensible woman. It was important that they should have no baby farming in Australia.

Mrs. Gover (W.A.) was glad to second the motion. They had such a provision in Western Australia, and the homes as well as the women were licensed. Since the lady inspectors had been appointed the death rate among infants had dropped remarkably. Western Australia had had some unenviable experiences in baby farming, but such a thing was not now possible.

Carried unanimously.

—Welcome to Distinguished Visitors.—

Lady Bosanquet (wife of the Governor of the State) and His Honor the Chief Justice (Sir Samuel Way, Bart.), who during the previous discussion had entered the room, were warmly welcomed.

The Chairman said the congress was honoured by the presence of Her Excellency. The State Children's Council had been much favoured by viceregal sympathy with its work, and it was a happy augury for the department that Lady Bosanquet had so graciously come among them. (Applause.) They knew they had also the sympathy of His Excellency the Governor, who had been unfortunately unable to attend. He wished also to express their thanks to the Chief Justice for being present. They had a warm place in their hearts for the great work performed by His Honor in connection with the dependent children in South Australia. (Applause.)

The Chief Justice thanked the congress for the generous reception which had been given him. He wished to thank them for their kind recognition of the small services he was able to render to the boarding-out system many years ago. Though the congress ended its sittings that day, the work that had been performed and the recommendations made would be the common property of the States, and for many years the State children would feel the beneficial effect of their deliberations. He had not now the time to devote to the cause which they had so much at heart. But there were others. There was Miss Spence. (Applause.) Her name was a household word in Australia, in England, and in America. It seemed to him that success attended nearly every cause to which she devoted her great energies, and not the least was the cause of the boarding-out system. He regretted that a lady who was even senior to Miss Spence in the movement had been unable to attend the congress. That lady was Miss Clark. (Applause.) She had radiated the whole movement with the beauty of her sympathies. It was impossible to resist the persuasiveness of her manner and her spirit. They should not forget another old friend. Although at the time he differed with him on certain points of administration of the boarding-out system, they ought not to forget the name of Mr. T. S. Reed.

The Chairman—We have just formulated a message to him.

The Chief Justice was glad to add his humble tribute to Mr. Reed's services. He must also mention Mr. C. H. Goode. That gentleman, with the gift of perpetual youth, did his work for the State Children's Department as vigorously as he worked half a century ago, and he looked upon Mr. Goode and Miss Spence as the two youngest souls in the congress. (Applause.) He expressed his gratification of seeing the representatives of the other States. He had a keen recollection of the experience which he gathered from visiting Victoria and New South Wales. In the latter State he met the late Dr. Renwick, who gave his great ability and energy for the services of this cause as President of the society there, and whose work he had an opportunity of inspecting around Sydney and suburbs. There was a lady of New South Wales, who was formerly connected with South Australia, and he wanted to remind his New South Wales friends that, although they had a fine harbour, many good men and women had been grown in the farinaceous village. (Applause and laughter.) Mrs. Garran—(applause)—hailed from South Australia, and he had the pleasure and pride of seeing the great work she was doing for the State children of New South Wales at the time of his visit. They must have had mention during the sittings of the work of Mr. Williams, who after he retired from an important public office became the first secretary of the Victorian State Children's Department. He had never seen greater enthusiasm displayed by any one than that by Mr. Williams in the cause of the State children of Victoria. (Applause.) It was done with so much boldness. In Victoria they abandoned the industrial schools and boldly adopted the boarding-out system. The Misses Hill were so much struck with Mr. Williams's reports that they asked him (the speaker) if there was not too much of the coleur de rose, but he was able to assure them that Mr. Williams was speaking from authenticated facts. He wished

Adelaide Register

DEALING WITH WAYWARD CHILDREN.

23-8-09

Miss Spence, in a capital paper which favoured the boarding-out system of dealing with State Children as against the institutional method, had a good word for the volunteer visitors—those ladies who had been the salvation of the system in its early days. "But," she said, "the attitude of the volunteer visitor should not be that of the superior person—of the lady patroness. She should take some interest in the family and the affairs of the foster-mother, and show sympathy with any difficulty she has with her wards. But she must let it be felt that the State child is the paramount interest. How much friction she may be able to remove! How many little rifts she may be able to close up by kindly and sensible advice, especially during the first weeks or months of the connection, when the child may be wayward and trying. Whatever they may become, children mostly taken from unfit homes are not angels when they are first committed to our care, and the good woman finds it hard to bear with dirt and destructiveness and pilfering and lying. But the visitor counsels patience to the foster-mother, and obedience to the child, and in nine cases out of ten she succeeds. Lying is the only weapon a child has against superior strength and intelligence, and truth can be developed only in an atmosphere of justice and confidence."

SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S STATE CHILDREN.

The visitors from the other States who are taking part in the congress concerning dependent children have been much impressed with the institutions in South Australia where the wards of the State are cared for. All, excepting one, were visited on Tuesday, and the various committees of inspection presented their reports verbally to the congress on Wednesday. One after another delegate spoke in high terms of praise of what they had seen, and in some cases the institutions were ahead of anything previously inspected. The afternoon session was devoted to a discussion on the boarding-out system. It was initiated by Miss Spence, who put clearly and forcibly the arguments for the South Australian methods against the institutional system. Dean Latham, of Western Australia, took the opposite ground, but unless the debate to-day reveals a supporter he will probably stand alone as an advocate for the system, which in his own experience in Perth has served best to deal with orphaned or deserted children. When the subject is finished this morning the congress will deal with the question of uniformity of legislation in all the States.

22.8.09

TH[illegible]ADE[illegible]IDE LIVE STOCK

STATE CHILDREN'S CONGRESS.

—o—

CONCLUDING DAY.

Adelaide Register 24/8/09

A VICEREGAL VISITOR.

The last session of the Interstate Congress on State Children was held at the deputation room, Victoria square, on Saturday morning, under the presidency of Mr. T. Rhodes.

—Medical Inspection of Schools.—

Mr. M. MacMaster (T.) read a paper on "Medical inspection of schools in relation to defective children." The paper, together with an important speech by Dr. R. S. Rogers on the subject, is dealt with in another column.

—Age of Consent.—

Dr. Helen Mayo (S.A.) moved—"That this congress is of opinion that the age of consent should be the same in every State, and that it should be 17 years, as in South Australia."

Mrs. Williams (Q.) seconded. As coming from a State where the age was as low as 14 years, she felt that the congress should express itself on the point.

Carried unanimously.

—Mr. T. S. Reed.—

The Chairman suggested that they should send a message of congratulat on to Mr. T. S. Reed, who had attained that day to the advanced age of 91 years. Mr. Reed was one of the earliest workers for the children of the State.

Miss Spence moved—"That this congress is not unmindful of the great services rendered by Mr. T. S. Reed in the cause of boarding out State children in South Australia, and desires to convey to him a message of congratulation on this the ninety-first anniversary of his birth." She had worked for 14 years with Mr. Reed in the same cause when he was secretary to the voluntary society. He travelled through the length and breadth of the land finding homes for the children, and threw himself into the whole work with zeal.

Mr. C. H. Goode (S.A.), in seconding, said Mr. Reed had never got the recognition for the work he had performed for the good of the community to which he was entitled.

The motion was carried unanimously.

—Licensed Homes and Foster Mothers.—

Miss Spence moved—"That this congress is of opinion that all infants placed out by their own mothers should be in charge of licensed women only, and subject to inspection by a duly qualified woman." Infant mortality had been much checked in South Australia, she said, by the admirable regulations of the Destitute Board that a mother who went to the Destitute to be confined should be compelled to stay there for six months and give the natural food to the infant, and that when she left she was to keep it or put it in a place which was supervised by the board. That regulation was inspired by the late Mr. James Smith. Some years ago that department was handed over to the State Children's Department, and the results of Miss Moule's inspection, first of the home and then of the foster mother, had resulted in the most remarkable reduction of infant mortality, perhaps, in the world. When the matter was in the hands of the police the foster mother could hoodwink them; but they could not hoodwink a kindly, thoughtful, sensible woman. It was important that they should have no baby farming in Australia.

Mrs. Gover (W.A.) was glad to second the motion. They had such a provision in Western Australia, and the homes as well as the women were licensed. Since the lady inspectors had been appointed the death rate among infants had dropped remarkably. Western Australia had had some unenviable experiences in baby farming, but such a thing was not now possible.

Carried unanimously.

—Welcome to Distinguished Visitors.—

Lady Bosanquet (wife of the Governor of the State) and His Honor the Chief Justice (Sir Samuel Way, Bart.), who during the previous discussion had entered the room, were warmly welcomed.

The Chairman said the congress was honoured by the presence of Her Excellency. The State Children's Council had been much favoured by viceregal sympathy with its work, and it was a happy augury for the department that Lady Bosanquet had so graciously come among them. (Applause.) They knew they had also the sympathy of His Excellency the Governor, who had been unfortunately unable to attend. He wished also to express their thanks to the Chief Justice for being present. They had a warm place in their hearts for the great work performed by His Honor in connection with the dependent children in South Australia. (Applause.)

The Chief Justice thanked the congress for the generous reception which had been given him. He wished to thank them for their kind recognition of the small services he was able to render to the boarding-out system many years ago. Though the congress ended its sittings that day, the work that had been performed and the recommendations made would be the common property of the States, and for many years the State children would feel the beneficial effect of their deliberations. He had not now the time to devote to the cause which they had so much at heart. But there were others. There was Miss Spence. (Applause.) Her name was a household word in Australia, in England, and in America. It seemed to him that success attended nearly every cause to which she devoted her great energies, and not the least was the cause of the boarding-out system. He regretted that a lady who was even senior to Miss Spence in the movement had been unable to attend the congress. That lady was Miss Clark. (Applause.) She had radiated the whole movement with the beauty of her sympathies. It was impossible to resist the persuasiveness of her manner and her spirit. They should not forget another old friend. Although at the time he differed with him on certain points of administration of the boarding-out system, they ought not to forget the name of Mr. T. S. Reed.

The Chairman—We have just formulated a message to him.

The Chief Justice was glad to add his humble tribute to Mr. Reed's services. He must also mention Mr. C. H. Goode. That gentleman, with the gift of perpetual youth, did his work for the State Children's Department as vigorously as he worked half a century ago, and he looked upon Mr. Goode and Miss Spence as the two youngest souls in the congress. (Applause.) He expressed his gratification of seeing the representatives of the other States. He had a keen recollection of the experience which he gathered from visiting Victoria and New South Wales. In the latter State he met the late Dr. Renwick, who gave his great ability and energy for the services of this cause as President of the society there, and whose work he had an opportunity of inspecting around Sydney and suburbs. There was a lady of New South Wales, who was formerly connected with South Australia, and he wanted to remind his New South Wales friends that, although they had a fine harbour, many good men and women had been grown in the farinaceous village. (Applause and laughter.) Mrs. Garran—(applause)—hailed from South Australia, and he had the pleasure and pride of seeing the great work she was doing for the State children of New South Wales at the time of his visit. They must have had mention during the sittings of the work of Mr. Williams, who after he retired from an important public office became the first secretary of the Victorian State Children's Department. He had never seen greater enthusiasm displayed by any one than that by Mr. Williams in the cause of the State children of Victoria. (Applause.) It was done with so much boldness. In Victoria they abandoned the industrial schools and boldly adopted the boarding-out system. The Misses Hill were so much struck with Mr. Williams's reports that they asked him (the speaker) if there was not too much of the coleur de rose, but he was able to assure them that Mr. Williams was speaking from authenticated facts. He wished

to mention also Mr. Williams's lieutenant and successor, Mr. Miller, who had gone over to the great majority. He desired also to express his thanks to the President for the compliment in asking him to deliver the inaugural address. Even if he had had time he should have declined, because Mr. Rhodes, as his admirable address had shown, had been able to speak from a closer acquaintance with the latest phases of the work in South Australia than it would have been possible for him to have done. (Applause.)

—Concluding Resolutions.—

Mr. MacMaster (T.) moved—"That the members of this congress undertake to press the motions carried during the various sessions on the attention of the Ministers of the Crown and members of Parliament in their respective States." If they wanted the congress to have a practical effect they must peg away at their public men. What they achieved would depend also on the way the women used their votes. He was a bit disappointed at the way the women of Tasmania at the recent elections had listened to the party drum call, with the result that they had got merely a duplication of the male vote. The women especially should favour that party which would do everything in its power to promote the welfare of the children in the community.

Miss Goldstein (V.) seconded, and undertook to make the lives of the Ministers in Victoria fairly unhappy until they got something.

Carried unanimously.

Mr. Smeaton, M.P. (S.A.), moved a vote of thanks to the press, as an expression of sincere gratitude for the sympathetic treatment accorded to the proceedings of the congress.

Mr. Spargo (Q.) second the motion heartily.

Miss Goldstein (V.) supported. She had been struck with the fairness and length of the reports given to their proceedings by the South Australian newspapers. In Victoria they received scarcely any support for their great social and industrial movements.

Mr. Gray (S.A.) also supported, because the entire sympathy of the press in Adelaide with their work. He believed that the proprietors and editors of both the dailies in Adelaide had at heart the work of the State Children's Department, and of all those who were engaged in uplifting children.

Carried with acclamation.

Miss Goldstein moved—"That the visiting delegates to this congress cordially thank the State Children's Congress of South Australia for the valuable opportunity it has provided for interchange of thought and action in regard to social problems that are exercising the minds of all workers among dependent and delinquent children; and, further, the delegates thank the authorities in South Australia and in their respective States for providing railway and shipping transportation to enable them to attend the congress."

Mrs. Gover (W.A.) and Mrs. Williams (Q.) spoke to the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Mrs. Edwards (T.) wished to say a word of appreciation for the opportunity afforded of visiting the refuge at Fullarton. Excellent work was being carried out there. The appearance of the inmates and the babies spoke volumes for the treatment extended to them, and she advised all the delegates who could to see that institution before they went back home.

Lady Bonython invited as many members as could make the trip to visit her at Mount Lofty on Monday afternoon.

On the motion of Mr. Longmore (W.A.), seconded by Mrs. Edwards, a vote of thanks was accorded to the Chairman (Mr. T. Rhodes), who suitably replied. A similar compliment to the hosts and hostesses who had extended hospitality to members was recorded, on the motion of Mr. Ferguson (Q.), seconded by Mr. Spargo (Q.).

This concluded the congress, and the afternoon was spent at the beautiful residence and gardens of Dr. E. C. Stirling at Mount Lofty, the visit to which had been arranged by Miss Stirling, a member of the State Children's Council of South Australia.

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.

TASMANIA'S EXPERIENCE.

Adelaide Register 11 5.09

DR. ROGERS ON SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS.

The last paper at the Interstate Congress on State Children was presented at the session on Saturday morning by Mr. M. MacMaster, of Tasmania. It was entitled "Medical inspection of schools in relation to defective children." The author is a recognised expert educationist in the island State, and he took the place in the congress of the Director of Education in Tasmania (Mr. W. L. Neale), who was unable to attend and read a paper on "The duty of the State to children who are physically or mentally defective."

—Education the True Elevator.—

Mr. MacMaster said:—Like most men who have devoted attention to the social problem, I hold that our civilization is on a far lower plane than it should be. The great mass of the people may live, and should live, a life incomparably freer than they do. It seems to me, as it seems to many others, that the ideal State, of which men have dreamed so long, can be reached only through the wiser training of the child. Any social system is a rough expression of national character. As that character is elevated the system improves. If the character degenerates the system sinks lower and lower. And it is mainly, on the larger scale, one is tempted to say wholly by true education of the child that we can elevate national character. Following the dictum of our leading physiologists, we accept the child's mind as a blank page, for generally the one serious evil resulting from bad heredity is a bad environment. But though the page is blank, we cannot write on it exactly what we please. Our possibilities in that direction are limited, because it is our character which guides the pen. We cannot write better than we are, but we can endeavour as individuals and as a community to write our best and not our worst.

—Medical Inspection Started.—

Some time ago Dr. Elkington (Medical Officer of Tasmania) was much impressed with unpleasant facts, such as the waste of infant life, the loss of efficiency resulting from maternal ignorance, and consequent wrong training of the infant before it goes to school, and the enormous loss of teaching power resulting from the average schoolmaster's total ignorance of the very elements of hygiene. He persuaded Ministers to allow him and Dr. Clarke to make a medical examination of the children attending the Hobart State Schools. Such an examination lies at the very root of the problem to which our attention is called to-day. Before you deal with the physically and mentally defective you must ascertain just who they are, and you must ascertain, therefore, to what extent those who appear to be mentally defective are suffering from imperfect vision, imperfect hearing, or from other troubles, such as adenoid growths, which make even the naturally bright child seem either densely stupid or hopelessly careless and indolent. The examination of 1906 was carried out, and the results were so startling as to convince even the average politician that regular medical inspection of school pupils was essential in the interest of the State. Such regular inspection began early in 1907, and the report of 15 months' work was drawn up in July, 1908. I propose briefly to summarise the results of the two inspections, the preliminary and the regular.

—Results of Inspection.—

During the period referred to about 11,287 children were examined. Of these 4,153 were found to be defective "to an extent which was either actively interfering with their educational progress or would in all probability interfere with it in the near future." Going a little into detail, it was found that 16 per cent. of the girls, and a trifle over 2 per cent. of the boys, were suffering from lateral curvature of the spine. Of the sets of teeth examined in the course of the first inspection only 6.5 per cent. were free from decay, and over 30 per cent. of the mouths were in a dangerously foul condition. One of the unsatisfactory features of the Tasmanian examination, especially of the early one, was that it revealed a large amount of dirtiness. Some 5 per cent of the children were found to be dirty in clothing, and 6 per cent. were found to be dirty in body. A curious point in this connection is that at 13 years of age, when the average child is answerable for the care of its own person, one girl in 10, and only one boy in 20 was found to be dirty in body. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in the poorer sort of home there is no bathroom, and that for Hobart lads the River Derwent affords a delightful bathing place. Passing on to the important question of eyesight, there is a somewhat striking difference between the results of 1906 and of the 1907-8 examination. In the former 55.8 per cent. of the children were reported as having good eyesight, 35.4 as having fair, and 7.8 as having distinctly bad. In the 1907-8 report 10.68 of the city children and 9.28 of the country were reported as having sight so defective that it must interfere with their development. When Dr. Kerr, of the London School Board, made his examination of over a thousand children, he found that among those who were under six years of age only five in a hundred had defective sight, while among those who had reached the standards the percentage was just double. As to the hearing of Tasmanian children the 1906 report set it down as defective in 12.17 per cent; the 1908 gave the percentage among city children as 10.94. That is a comparatively satisfactory state of things, for researches in Edinburgh and Dundee gave percentage of 40 and 44. At least one-fourth of the children examined were suffering from adenoid growths. The earlier examination showed that 4.8 per cent. of those inspected were suffering from heart disease. A considerable number of children were set down as being so mentally defective that they could not derive any advantage from an attendance at schools conducted on the ordinary lines.

—Bad School Buildings.—

Another outstanding cause of physical deficiency is bad construction of school buildings, and the ignorant conduct of school work. For example, reference has been made to the alarming prevalence of curvature of the spine, especially among girls. Dr. Elkington says:—"I have no hesitation in stating my positive opinion that the greater part of the serious conditions of affairs as regards lateral curvature of the spine, particularly in girls, is due to defective lighting and desking. Passing on to the matter of defective eyesight, we find Dr. Elkington telling us that in Tasmania short-sightedness is a by-product of the ill-conducted infant school. And the ill-conducted infant school, be it understood, is, in this regard, the ordinary infant school all the world over.

—The Case for Inspection.—

The medical inspection of schools makes a number of vitally important reforms inevitable. Already in Tasmania it has well nigh vanquished the dirty child from the school. Even the delinquent mother of these latter days can be reached through her vanity, and, if in some few cases, she has lost the sense of shame, her children fear the merciless criticism of boys and girls in whom a corporate regard for cleanliness has been inspired. Again, the disclosures made by the medical officers who have carried out the work of inspection have done much to reduce unconscious cruelty to children. Scores of children who were written down as deliberately indolent by the teachers were found by the doctors to be merely physically defective. Children who were deaf, who were suffering from adenoid growths, and other physical defects, were by the teachers

decide. In Huddersfield it is sugge
that girls should receive such instru
in the schools. In this way the aut
ties design to reach the prospective mo
of the nation. 4. The careful distrib
of literature on the subject of the m
and the child. This as at present
taken by the State Children's Depar
and the Local Board of Health has
of undoubted benefit.

—Conclusion.—

Finally it must be remembered th
wholesome method of reform is e
avail. Minute investigation and
study are necessarily involved. Th
cation of public opinion and an incr
the number of expert workers are b
tors that ultimately count for m
national progress. But those men
the community that do not or will
their proper place in the general
must be controlled. The unfit,
this civilization means always those
unfit, must be eliminated. This i
plished sooner or later by na
rational means; education for th
young enough to learn, death to
those for whom that time is pas
those who have no desire to live
must be constrained; the others
the elements of this goodwill app
be helped to gain the knowledg
still required before they can bec
citizens.

HOME OR INS
TUTION?

—o—

BOARDING OUT OF STATE CHILDREN.

Adelaide Register 20.5.09

IMPORTANT DISCUSSION.

Miss Spence initiated a discussion at the Interstate Congress of Workers among Dependent Children on Wednesday with a paper which she entitled, "The Family Home or the Institution." She said the natural family home lay at the root of all the various departments which the State Children's Department of South Australia had now under its control. It was the central idea which Miss Clark, their honoured pioneer, advocated so courageously. Having shown how the movement grew in favour of boarding out in South Australia, and referred to the trend of the movement in Great Britain, America, and other countries, she said that when the time came for going out into the world the child had a far more affectionate remembrance of the little cottage where a natural life was led than of the most palatial of institutions. Another feature of the boarding-out system was the kindly interest taken in the children by the voluntary visitors. They were a valuable adjunct to the department, and in the day of small things they were the salvation of the system. The 12 unpaid men and women, with a President elected from them, were deeply interested in the welfare and the development of the 1,300 State children, and that she held to be a great influence for good. One great advantage of natural home life for ordinary children was that they met with the temptations to do wrong which were absent from institutional life. Obedience to regulations and submission to authority were all that were needed in a workhouse school or an orphanage. In the natural home character was best built up, and the shielding from temptation which was aimed at in the institutions was mistaken kindness. From the depths of human compassion had issued the innumerable charitable institutions for orphans and worse than orphaned children, and with the best intentions in the world for their growth and development rules had been made and officials set over them to enforce those rules always, and without variation. The children who were docile and submissive, who gave the least trouble, were the favourites with the superintendent and

nd were mentioned
overning committee.
e virtues in ordinary
ence, and diligence—
ine. All originality
ecked and sat upon
ority. There were
in boarding out—1.
e and a mother, and
d as good before the
2. To keep the chil-
ess it was unsuitable.
igh but kindly super-
in Australia was due
those rules. The
arded-out children in
one of the strongest
of the system. No-
ng life gave her more
work which had been
g done, and which
better in the future
e State in South Aus-

onal Work.—

A.), in speaking in fa-
l work, said all were
ural home was the best
There were States in
on a large scale would
arding out stood or fell
where inspection failed
, and the most terrible
He did not suggest that
often, but the danger
great problem to him in
boarding out was the
homes of the foster
mothers. There was certainly a feeling in Western Australia in favour of placing children with the orphanage rather than with foster parents. His great idea was that in institutions they got better individual interest shown in the care of body and soul of the inmates than in foster homes. The children were known and treated individually by the matron and the staff, and the religious training was especially attended to. They got also a thorough industrial training, which made them useful and able to earn their living when they went into the world. The value of an institution did not end when the child left it. The children were always well placed, and one of the best testimonies to the value of the training was that they were sought after, and the demand was always greater than the supply. One great advantage was that the institution could guard and watch over them, even after they had left and had been placed out. His experience in England did not altogether agree with Miss Spence's, and it was not quite fair to hurl against England the old barrack school system, which was dying out of existence. Excellent work was being done by the Poor Law Guardians. They were all in favour of the institutional system in some form or other, especially with imbecile or weak-minded children, deaf and dumb, and other affected little ones. If the system was so good in those cases surely it could not be entirely bad when it was applied to children so soon as they were well. The whole work depended upon personality. It was a question of finding the right people with whom to entrust the young ones, and if they did that it did not much matter what system they adopted.

—Boarding Out in New South Wales.—

Mr. H. G. Maxted (secretary to the State Children's Relief Board of New South Wales) read a paper on the boarding-out system in his State. He said boarding out had been attended with great success. There were a few failures, but the proportion was not so large as might be believed from the talk that was heard. The fact was that the successes were not heard of at all, and it was only the complaints that were voiced. The system had been in force since 1881, and there were now about 4,000 children in private homes. It was only when the natural or foster home failed that they should resort to institutions.

—The Discussion.—

In reply to a question Dean Latham said he was in favour of small institutions of manageable size, and that was the trend of legislation in England.

Mr. Gray, in reply to Dean Latham regarding nomadic foster parents, said that at present they had either to take the child back or allow it go to the other State with the foster parents. That was one of the things he was hoping the congress would deal with. They were hopeful that steps would be taken to bring about the possibility of transferring such a child from the authority of one State to a similar authority in another State.

Miss Spence said they had not so complete a training in industrial matters as the institutions, but they asked the employers to work with the council in that respect, and assist in the training of the child. In many cases the employers had generously responded.

Mr. A. W. Green (New South Wales) agreed with Dean Latham that there should be inspection. That was the great factor in the boarding out work, and they endeavoured to get the very best local inspection. It was impossible to think of one woman mothering a number of children up to 100. They would not think of institutions in New South Wales, and they would not look at any cottage in their own plan with more than 20 children. They had altogether about 8,000 children under their care, including the 4,000 who were boarded out. The average cost was £10 a year, including the allowances to mothers and for those boarded out. How was the character of a child to be built up in an institution where they knew nothing of the world? To rub shoulders with the world was the best discipline. In New South Wales they never thought of separating brothers and sisters, and if there were 10 in a family left to them they contrived to get them all in the one cottage.

Mr. M. McMaster (T.) said there were no large institutions in his State. The great point against the institutional system was that boys were trained to do certain things in routine, but not for the battle of life. While he was in favour of the boarding out, there was danger that they were apt to attach too much importance to the system. It was the men and women who mattered. Where they did not get the right men and women the boarding-out system might be a ghastly failure. They must have people who threw their whole heart and soul in the work.

Mr. G. A. Ferguson (Q.) said he dealt with the orphanage side of the work in Queensland. They were working under an Act 30 years old, and one of his reasons for coming to the congress was to try and get material for a fresh Bill. In 1893 they abolished the Protestant Orphanage and boarded out the children. There were boarded out 378 children with foster mothers, and 614 with their own mothers. They had also in residence 710 children. The Roman Catholic children were kept in their own institutions. There was a departmental institution at Townsville which contained about 120 children. The difficulty in the scattered population in the north was to find suitable people to take charge of the little ones. As to the removal of the foster parents from Queensland, when that happened the children had to be left behind. They were assets which the State would not allow to go away, and they were given to other foster parents. They had no difficulty in securing homes. Although they had 600 children boarded out with their own mothers the results were not so satisfactory as with the foster mothers. The mother was not always the fit and proper person to take charge of the child. They also had power to refuse a mother access to her child, and though it might seem hard it was the best thing for the child. They had over 2,200 children under State control, and with 16 years' experience they had found that with the reports of head teachers of schools and visiting lady inspectors the boarding-out system had proved satisfactory.

Mr. C. H. Goode (S.A.) said his experience of institutions in England and South Australia had shown that boarding out was the better system. It was superior to the methods adopted by Dr. Barnardo, and at the Bristol Orphanage. He looked for the time when boarding out would be the universal system throughout Australia.

On the motion of Mr. Gray the debate was adjourned until next day.

decide. In Huddersfield it is suggested that girls should receive such instruction in the schools. In this way the authorities design to reach the prospective mothers of the nation. 4. The careful distribution of literature on the subject of the mother and the child. This as at present undertaken by the State Children's Department and the Local Board of Health has proved of undoubted benefit.

—Conclusion.—

Finally it must be remembered that no wholesome method of reform is ever of avail. Minute investigation and careful study are necessarily involved. The education of public opinion and an increase in the number of expert workers are both factors that ultimately count for much in national progress. But those members of the community that do not or will not take their proper place in the general scheme must be controlled. The unfit, and by this civilization means always those morally unfit, must be eliminated. This is accomplished sooner or later by natural or rational means; education for those still young enough to learn, death to remove those for whom that time is past. But those who have no desire to live decently must be constrained; the others in whom the elements of this goodwill appear must be helped to gain the knowledge that is still required before they can become good citizens.

HOME OR INSTITUTION?

—o—

BOARDING OUT OF STATE CHILDREN.

Adelaide Register 20.5.09

IMPORTANT DISCUSSION.

Miss Spence initiated a discussion at the Interstate Congress of Workers among Dependent Children on Wednesday with a paper which she entitled, "The Family Home or the Institution." She said the natural family home lay at the root of all the various departments which the State Children's Department of South Australia had now under its control. It was the central idea which Miss Clark, their honoured pioneer, advocated so courageously. Having shown how the movement grew in favour of boarding out in South Australia, and referred to the trend of the movement in Great Britain, America, and other countries, she said that when the time came for going out into the world the child had a far more affectionate remembrance of the little cottage where a natural life was led than of the most palatial of institutions. Another feature of the boarding-out system was the kindly interest taken in the children by the voluntary visitors. They were a valuable adjunct to the department, and in the day of small things they were the salvation of the system. The 12 unpaid men and women, with a President elected from them, were deeply interested in the welfare and the development of the 1,300 State children, and that she held to be a great influence for good. One great advantage of natural home life for ordinary children was that they met with the temptations to do wrong which were absent from institutional life. Obedience to regulations and submission to authority were all that were needed in a workhouse school or an orphanage. In the natural home character was best built up, and the shielding from temptation which was aimed at in the institutions was mistaken kindness. From the depths of human compassion had issued the innumerable charitable institutions for orphans and worse than orphaned children, and with the best intentions in the world for their growth and development rules had been made and officials set over them to enforce those rules always, and without variation. The children who were docile and submissive, who gave the least trouble, were the favourites with the superintendent and nurses and teachers, and were mentioned with favour to the governing committee. The virtues which were virtues in ordinary life—punctuality, obedience, and diligence—were matters of routine. All originality and initiative were checked and sat upon by elephantine authority. There were three main principles in boarding out—1. To find a suitable home and a mother, and have the home certified as good before the child was placed in it. 2. To keep the children in the home unless it was unsuitable. 3. To maintain thorough but kindly supervision. The success in Australia was due to the observance of those rules. The splendid health of boarded-out children in South Australia was one of the strongest arguments in favour of the system. Nothing in her whole long life gave her more satisfaction than the work which had been done, which was being done, and which would be done even better in the future for the children of the State in South Australia. (Applause.)

—Institutional Work.—

Dean Latham (W.A.), in speaking in favour of institutional work, said all were agreed that the natural home was the best for the children. There were States in which boarding out on a large scale would be a failure. Boarding out stood or fell by inspection, and where inspection failed there were abuses, and the most terrible cruelty followed. He did not suggest that the cases occurred often, but the danger was there. The great problem to him in connection with boarding out was the changing of the homes of the foster mothers. There was certainly a feeling in Western Australia in favour of placing children with the orphanage rather than with foster parents. His great idea was that in institutions they got better individual interest shown in the care of body and soul of the inmates than in foster homes. The children were known and treated individually by the matron and the staff, and the religious training was especially attended to. They got also a thorough industrial training, which made them useful and able to earn their living when they went into the world. The value of an institution did not end when the child left it. The children were always well placed, and one of the best testimonies to the value of the training was that they were sought after, and the demand was always greater than the supply. One great advantage was that the institution could guard and watch over them, even after they had left and had been placed out. His experience in England did not altogether agree with Miss Spence's, and it was not quite fair to hurl against England the old barrack school system, which was dying out of existence. Excellent work was being done by the Poor Law Guardians. They were all in favour of the institutional system in some form or other, especially with imbecile or weak-minded children, deaf and dumb, and other affected little ones. If the system was so good in those cases surely it could not be entirely bad when it was applied to children so soon as they were well. The whole work depended upon personality. It was a question of finding the right people with whom to entrust the young ones, and if they did that it did not much matter what system they adopted.

—Boarding Out in New South Wales.—

Mr. H. G. Maxted (secretary to the State Children's Relief Board of New South Wales) read a paper on the boarding-out system in his State. He said boarding out had been attended with great success. There were a few failures, but the proportion was not so large as might be believed from the talk that was heard. The fact was that the successes were not heard of at all, and it was only the complaints that were voiced. The system had been in force since 1881, and there were now about 4,000 children in private homes. It was only when the natural or foster home failed that they should resort to institutions.

—The Discussion.—

In reply to a question Dean Latham said he was in favour of small institutions of manageable size, and that was the trend of legislation in England.

Mr. Gray, in reply to Dean Latham regarding nomadic foster parents, said that at present they had either to take the child back or allow it go to the other State with the foster parents. That was one of the things he was hoping the congress would deal with. They were hopeful that steps would be taken to bring about the possibility of transferring such a child from the authority of one State to a similar authority in another State.

Miss Spence said they had not so complete a training in industrial matters as the institutions, but they asked the employers to work with the council in that respect, and assist in the training of the child. In many cases the employers had generously responded.

Mr. A. W. Green (New South Wales) agreed with Dean Latham that there should be inspection. That was the great factor in the boarding out work, and they endeavoured to get the very best local inspection. It was impossible to think of one woman mothering a number of children up to 100. They would not think of institutions in New South Wales, and they would not look at any cottage in their own plan with more than 20 children. They had altogether about 8,000 children under their care, including the 4,000 who were boarded out. The average cost was £10 a year, including the allowances to mothers and for those boarded out. How was the character of a child to be built up in an institution where they knew nothing of the world? To rub shoulders with the world was the best discipline. In New South Wales they never thought of separating brothers and sisters, and if there were 10 in a family left to them they contrived to get them all in the one cottage.

Mr. M. McMaster (T.) said there were no large institutions in his State. The great point against the institutional system was that boys were trained to do certain things in routine, but not for the battle of life. While he was in favour of the boarding out, there was danger that they were apt to attach too much importance to the system. It was the men and women who mattered. Where they did not get the right men and women the boarding-out system might be a ghastly failure. They must have people who threw their whole heart and soul in the work.

Mr. G. A. Ferguson (Q.) said he dealt with the orphanage side of the work in Queensland. They were working under an Act 30 years old, and one of his reasons for coming to the congress was to try and get material for a fresh Bill. In 1893 they abolished the Protestant Orphanage and boarded out the children. There were boarded out 378 children with foster mothers, and 614 with their own mothers. They had also in residence 710 children. The Roman Catholic children were kept in their own institutions. There was a departmental institution at Townsville which contained about 120 children. The difficulty in the scattered population in the north was to find suitable people to take charge of the little ones. As to the removal of the foster parents from Queensland, when that happened the children had to be left behind. They were assets which the State would not allow to go away, and they were given to other foster parents. They had no difficulty in securing homes. Although they had 600 children boarded out with their own mothers the results were not so satisfactory as with the foster mothers. The mother was not always the fit and proper person to take charge of the child. They also had power to refuse a mother access to her child, and though it might seem hard it was the best thing for the child. They had over 2,200 children under State control, and with 16 years' experience they had found that with the reports of head teachers of schools and visiting lady inspectors the boarding-out system had proved satisfactory.

Mr. C. H. Goode (S.A.) said his experience of institutions in England and South Australia had shown that boarding out was the better system. It was superior to the methods adopted by Dr. Barnardo, and at the Bristol Orphanage. He looked for the time when boarding out would be the universal system throughout Australia.

On the motion of Mr. Gray the debate was adjourned until next day.

STATE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS.

PRAISE FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CONDITIONS.

Adelaide Register 20/5/09

INTERSTATE VISITORS MUCH IMPRESSED

One of the phases of work in connection with the Interstate Congress of workers among dependent children, which is holding its sittings in Adelaide this week, was the visiting of institutions connected with the State Children's Council of South Australia. For this purpose several committees, consisting of local and interstate delegates, were appointed to go through the various establishments on Tuesday. These committees reported to the congress on Wednesday morning.

—Beaumont and Magill.—

Mrs. Gover (W.A.) said she had been much impressed by her visit. The Girls' Home at Beaumont was in a splendid position, and was splendidly kept, and the type of girl was much above that she had met in other institutions. In appearance it was more of a home than an institution, and the absence of special garb was worthy of note. The Magill Reformatory for Boys was one of the finest institutions she had ever seen. The boys were of a high grade. The superintendent (Mr. Button) was an admirable man, who evidently knew his work, and thoroughly understood human nature and the dealing with boys.

Mrs. Williams (Q.) was delighted with her visit. At the Girls' Home they paid a surprise visit, and they found everything clean and in order. Nothing pleased her more than the home life and the relious atmosphere, which was necessary in dealing with young people. The matron was absent; but she was evidently the right sort of woman. The happiness and contentment of the girls impressed her, and while there was discipline there was an enjoyable amount of freedom. With regard to Magill, the building impressed her as being too prisonlike. Even with naughty children they should have the influence and atmosphere of home life as much as possible. One thing that struck her was that education was not a part of the day's duty for the boys.. The State should not neglect that important part of their lives. She asked the question, and was informed that lessons were given to those willing to take them. Her experience of boys and girls was that they were not willing because they did not realize how much it meant to them by and by. She expressed her appreciation of the opportunity to visit those institutions, and felt that the President of the State Children's Council was the right man in the position.

Dr. R. S. Rogers (S.A.) pointed out that the boys were educated until they got to the compulsory age of 13 years. At the reformatory there were only three children who were not that age. It was thought by the superintendent that it would be unfair to impose lessons on boys after they had done their day's work outside.

Miss Spence, in referring to the prisonlike appearance of the building, said it was built to hold 230 children as an industrial school, but that use had practicaly gone. It was built foolishly with four floors instead of on the cottage plan, and they could not get over that first error.

The Chairman (Mr. T. Rhodes) said they used to have about 120 children there, but now they had only about 20. The Roman Catholic boys were at Brooklyn Park, and a few were at the Probation School at Mount Barker. There was a qualified teacher at Magill. They had a splendid revenue from the institution. In the last annual report the cash sales were shown as £382; the allowance for fodder, fruit, vegetables, firewood, milk, honey, meat, &c., consumed on the premises, £501; carpenter's work done, £9; boxes made for children's outfits, £74 12/; and other items

Mr. J. Gray (S.A.) said one afternoon was spent in drill and singing, and one half-day in the reception of religious teaching. In regard to education, if a boy passed the compulsory standard and desired to go further, he could have lessons from the school master in the evenings if he wished.

The Chairman said he was exceedingly pleased with the changes that had been effected at the Beaumont institution. The Salvation Army had spent much money in doing away with the shanties and erecting fine places at the back of the premises, which now made it an ideal place.

—Brooklyn Park and Edwardstown.—

Mr. Spargo (Q.) said he was deputed to speak for the committee that visited the Boys' Reformatory at Brooklyn Park and the Receiving Depot at Edwardstown. At the former place they were received by Father Healy, and as they entered they heard the strains of the National Anthem sung in admirable tone. With pardonable pride Father Healy showed them through the establishment, and especially the garden and grounds, which covered 25 acres. There was no failure to impart education to the boys, either on week days or Sundays, and during the inspection he saw nothing better than the large pledge hung on the wall. Father Healy explained that drink was the cause of those institutions, and he was trying to inculcate in the minds of the boys the lessons of temperance. On the whole it was an admirable place, exceedingly well kept, but he could not help noting the absence of the loving touches of a womanly hand in the arrangements. At Edwardstown the contrast in this respect was remarkable. That institution was beautifully situated, and the cottage plan was excellently carried out. The boys and girls did well, and there was no trouble, for so soon as a lad was inclined to be rude he was drafted elsewhere. The homelike appearance of the place was most gratifying. There was plenty of work for the children, as well as plenty of education. One point to be commended was that boys who had been through the school, and had got work, were allowed to stay on at a charge of 2/ a week if they were earning 6/, and more on a gradual scale. The idea that the school should be a home for them was excellent.

Mr. Green (N.S.W.) said there was no place under the Relief Board in New South Wales that did not have a woman in charge. Generally a man and his wife had the conduct of one of their cottages, which was the plan that had been adopted. The Brooklyn institution was admirably managed, and it was a really good institution as an institution, but the principle, to his mind, was wrong. The Edwardstown institution was ideal. The government was just as it should be. They saw the woman's hand at Edwardstown as they missed it at Brooklyn. He congratulated them on the girls' school. It was one of the best places he had seen in his life, and he had had 27 years in the work.

Miss Vida Goldstein (V.) was simply delighted with the Edwardstown institution. Everything about the place was in perfect order, and the lunch prepared by the girls was thoroughly enjoyed. The domestic training appealed to her as a most important feature, because it fitted the girls for the future. She would like to see the system of domestic training extended to all the schools, as it had such a splendid influence on the home life.

Mr. Smith (Victoria) endorsed everything that had been said.

—Girls' Reformatory, Redruth.—

Mr. MacMaster (T.)) said his committee had had a most enjoyable trip to Burra. The outside appearance of the building gave the impression that it was a veritable gaol, but once inside they were warmly welcomed by Mrs. Holden, the matron, and in every room there was the touch of a woman's hand. He congratulated the council and Mrs. Holden upon the wonderful triumph over many disadvantages. He was much struck with the bright faces of the girls and their general bearing. One of the best testimonies to the matron was the fact that the highest wish of the girls was to become Mrs. Holden's personal maid. The luncheon prepared by the girls was admirable. Mr. Longmore, who with Miss Stirling accompanied him, made a rash promise to sample everything on the table, and he could congratulate Western Australia upon having a most conscientious officer. (Laughter.) The dormitories were as clean and neat as was possible, but the building had not been erected with modern ideas of hygiene, and he recognised that the council was not responsible for that. He knew what unconscionable fellows State Treasurers were, and how difficult it was to loose the purse strings. South Australia had been so fortunate in securing first-rate officers for carrying out the work that it seemed a pity that they should have to triumph over such difficulties as they had seen. In such environments it was more than ever important that the education of the girls should be attended to.

Mr. Longmore (W.A.) had had experience of institutions in England and Western Australia, and without desiring to draw comparisons he could say that the institutions of South Australia compared more than favourably with any institutions in any other part of the world. As to education, it should not stop at the compulsory age of 13. The children they dealt with had an exceedingly bad start because of their home surroundings, and they could not give too much attention to their education.

—Probation School, Mount Barker.—

Mr. Ferguson (Q.) reported on the probation school, Mount Barker, in charge of the Salvation Army. Staff-Capt. and Mrs. Carless were ideal managers of such a home, and they had a splendid institution, where the principle of home life and motherly love ruled. There were other than State children there, and it said volumes for the management that people were content to allow their little ones to be reared there. It was a capital institution, and the situation was ideal.

Mrs. Crompton (S.A.) said the improvement in Eden Park since her last visit two years ago was most marked. It was a real pleasure to have to do with such a splendid woman as Mrs. Carless.

—Extending the Home System.—

Miss Goldstein said she desired to deal with the young children who had not got into trouble, and who were only earning a few shillings, and she suggested that the idea of the receiving depot should be extended, and the youths could be informed when they applied where suitable cheap lodgings could be secured.

Mr. A. W. Green thought the receiving depot would extend the institution system, of which he was not in favour. They had no difficulty in New South Wales in placing the boys and girls in situations. He was strong about the question of family life, and no matter how poor the home it was better for the children than any institution.

Miss Spence thought the idea of the State Children's Council giving advice to youths where to go for lodgings was a valuable suggestion.

Mr. Gray was glad to hear that the children in the institutions had left a favourable impression; but it was not correct to think that they were a superior class. They had come to the institutions as rough as they found anywhere, and if there was an improvement he was grateful. He would be glad to have the gaol-like appearance of the Redruth School swept away, but there had been escapes from there in the past. There had not been any lately, because he believed the Matron had succeeded in getting more hold of the children's hearts.

Mr. E. W. Hawker said there were a number of societies which could give the information to the young people about board and lodging. He did not believe in going to the State for everything. There was a certain amount of stigma attached to State children. It would be a good thing to decentralize the work, and get people all over the country to take an interest in children.

Mr. Longmore said around no other institutions were large walls erected, and he had never heard of escapes before.

—Vote of Thanks.—

A vote of thanks was accorded to the Public Works Department for the use of the room for holding the meetings.

their mothers, and a lump sum paid for their adoption, so called, the mothers being over-anxious to get rid of their children at any price. Those children had been practically murdered by the deliberate feeding with improper food in order to induce infantile complaints. The experience in Queensland had been that the rate of mortality was very high when infants were congregated in a home. That applied whether they were attended by their mothers or not. In the State Infants' Home during 1907, when 68 children were dealt with, there were 25 deaths, all of infants under two years of age (being 36.7 per cent.). Since the abolition of the Infants' Home as a permanent residence for the children and the conversion of the institution into a recognised depot from which the children were boarded out with foster mothers under the orphanages' regulations, there had only been one death in the last 12 months out of 24 children passing through the institution, being only 4.16 per cent. At the State Infants' Home mothers were not admitted. The only other institution dealing with infants under two years of age that came under the control of the department was one in which children were admitted only when accompanied by their mothers. The death rate there for 1908 was 10.63 per cent., the previous year being 17.64 per cent. This high death rate in homes did not apply to Queensland alone.

—The Discussion.—

Mrs. Edwards (Tasmania) initiated the discussion. She said it was generally agreed that the time allowed in all the States for the notification of birth—42 days—was too long. She believed also that there should be proper training of nurses and visitors in connection with the State department, and lectures to children in the schools. In Tasmania they preferred lady doctors for the inspection of children in the schools. The training of the mothers in their own homes by properly trained nurses was the most important factor in reducing infantile mortality. Infantile diarrhoea should be a notifiable disease. The boarding-out system of the State children was proving the most satisfactory in Tasmania. She wished to bring before the congress the advisableness of legislation to prevent the importation and sale of certain drugs.

Miss Goldstein (Victoria) asked for information regarding the milk supply. The Society for the Protection of Women and Children in New Zealand had gone to the root of the problem by instructing the mothers how to feed their children. The society also provided milk, and had a staff of trained nurses. There was no idea of charity in the system, and every class of people availed themselves of it.

Dr. Mayo said there was not an entirely satisfactory milk supply in Adelaide, though, so far as she knew, real precautions were taken, and sterilization adopted. But there was still room for much improvement.

Mrs. Williams (Queensland) said that the time limit for notification of births in her State was 60 days. She moved—"That it is the sense of this congress that the time for notification of births should not exceed seven days."

Miss Spence (S.A.) seconded. She had noted that where there was a high rate of infant mortality it meant a diminished vitality among those who did not die.

Mrs. Edwards moved as an amendment—"That this congress urges upon the Governments of the States of the Commonwealth the necessity for the introduction of legislation to provide for the notification of births within 36 hours to be compulsory when proclaimed in defined districts."

Miss Stirling (S.A.) seconded.

Mr. Ferguson (Q.) pointed out that in some of the outlying districts it would be impossible to notify the births within 36 hours.

The resolution in favour of seven days' notification, with the addition that it be compulsory in proclaimed districts, was carried unanimously.

Dr. Mayo moved—"That in the opinion of this conference it is desirable that infantile summer diarrhoea should be a notifiable disease."

Mrs. Williams seconded. Carried.

—Delinquent Children.—

Mr. A. E. Clarke, Chief Probation Officer, Victoria, delivered an address on "Delinquent children and their improvement under supervision in the homes of their parents." He said that they had 233 Children's Courts in Victoria, with voluntary probation officers, who were men and women in business. Probation had come to stay, and the Act was forcing itself on those who were responsible for the administration. The home conditions provided the crux of the trouble, and they should guide the justice in deciding whether the child should be released or not. He related many instances in the history of the Courts which showed the advantage of the probationary officers and the Court's system. Some of those officers took the keenest interest in their work, and they were providing the State with many valuable citizens who might otherwise be lost. The supervision was carried out without complaint, and so far he had no reason to believe that there had been any laxity in that direction. The Children's Courts Act was a colossal undertaking. They had to staff the Courts by finding probation officers. From his experience there was no finer legislation introduced into Victoria than that Act, and it would stand for all time. (Applause.)

—Saving the Child.—

Miss Vida Goldstein spoke on "How to save the child on probation." She pointed out that the seeds of criminality were sown in early youth, and when a child went to the Court he often came from a preparatory school of crime. A woman's sphere was her home, but to protect that home she had to go outside. She had to protect it against vice, gambling, and drink, and she needed to protect her children against impure water and milk supplies, against bad sanitation, and against a bad educational system. The probation officer could not accomplish much without the aid of the parent, nor was the aid of the parent sufficient; but in dealing with the child who had started to go wrong, they wanted the aid of the parent, the probation officer, the school teacher, the employer, the clergyman, and even the Magistrate. The child needed to be trained in habits of order, punctuality, method, respect for elders, neatness, and cleanliness of mind and body. One defect of the education system was the grouping of large numbers of children in each class. Each child was like a delicate plant that required careful tending and nurturing. Recently in New York there had been correspondence on the question of whether women could train boys, and Miss Julia Richmond (superintendent of some of the biggest schools) quoted instances where little delinquents had been quite reformed by kindly words of commendation. Judge Lindsey (the guardian angel of the Children's Court in America) had spent 20 hours in getting to know a child. To learn at the outset the serious defects that needed to be met might save a child from criminality, and no one could do a better service than to give the State a good citizen. The comparatively few delinquent girls furnished the probation officers with exceedingly tough problems. Women, because of their circumscribed life, had fewer resources to fall back upon when they went wrong. The world was full of discords and unrest, but those who had ears could hear the cry for justice between men and men, women and women, class and class, and, above all, justice for little children. Justice in its highest significance was duty—another name for love. The old vindictive method of dealing with lawbreakers had proved a failure. The gospel of hate had had its day, and the Children's Courts and reformatories for adults went to prove that love was the greatest thing in the world. (Applause.)

—Experience in Western Australia.—

The Very Rev. Dean Latham (Western Australia) detailed the method of the system in vogue in the western State, which was institutional and denominational. They had had 41 years' experience of that system, which was started in connection with the Anglican communion by Archdeacon Brown in 1868, and it had grown up from the care of a few girls in a small cottage. Two strong principles were laid down. One was that the orphanage should be strongly religious and strongly denominational. But although the work was undertaken by the Anglican community there was a strong conscience clause under which he, as manager, enquired from the parents of the children of other denominations whether they objected to have the little ones taught with the others. Other institutions conducted by the Roman Catholics and the Salvation Army were also strongly religious and denominational. The second great principle laid down was close co-operation with the State. To a man who had lived in England it was amazing to see how much the State came into the life of the ordinary citizen in Australia. He explained the ways in which the State aided the institutions. There were separate missions for the blacks and half-castes. The State provided maintenance of about 1/ a day for each child, and the Church provided buildings, workers, and everything else. State children were committed to the institutions, and the little children were taught there until the schoolgoing age was reached, when they were sent to the State schools. Other children were also received, such as those of a man left a widower in a distant part of the country with nowhere to put his family and no one to take care of them. They had had long enough experience of institutional life to come to the conclusion that everything depended on the personality of its workers, especially the manager and the resident matron. The results had been good, as the great majority of the children were made useful citizens, and the institution was invaluable to those former inmates who might be temporarily in need of a home or haven of refuge. The fact that the religious bodies undertook the care of destitute children in Western Australia before any one else took any notice of the question had committed the State to a certain condition of things. If that condition was bad it would have to be changed or be abolished, but the experience was that the results had justified its existence. The fact that Western Australia was a country of vast distances and moving population militated against the successful introduction of the boarding-out and adoption system. Institutions to be successful must be strongly religious, and must be denominational for the reason that they depended absolutely on the workers, and only the strongest religious impulses would give the best workers and produce the best work. Only keen membership in a religious body would give a supply of the best workers or secure adequate support. (Applause.)

—The Discussion.—

Mrs. Edwards explained what was done in Tasmania. The work of the Children's Court there was to a great extent nullified because there were no probation officers.

In answer to a question Mr. J. Gray (S.A.) explained the methods of the probation work in South Australia. He did not know that so much was to be said for the system as for the two officers upon whom he relied for its administration. (Applause.) He agreed with Dean Latham that for the work they wanted religious people. But, while those workers must have an enthusiastic regard for some particular denomination, in the second place they must have an entire regard for religion as a personal matter between themselves and their Maker. That made them "the" people to whom the work must be entrusted. In that respect the State Children's Council had been particularly fortunate in its choice of officers. The experience of the department was that if the probation officer saw the child before its trial at the Court, saw the home, interviewed the parents, and acted as their friend right through, she got hold of the family, won their confidence and affection at the start, and her influence in that home was much increased. He had two motions to submit. One was—"That in the opinion of this congress steps should be taken to provide in all the States of the Commonwealth a system of probation for children;" and "That the supervision of such children should be entrusted to some special authority other than the Courts."

Miss Spence seconded both motions, which were carried.

—Resolutions and Committees.—

It was decided to appoint a resolution committee to take all resolutions and draft a series of recommendations, to be reported

to the conference at the end of the sessions.

The secretary (Mr. J. Gray) announced that he had arranged for the following committees to visit the institutions connected with the State Children's Department of South Australia as follows:—Boys' Reformatory, Magill, and Girls' Probationary School, Beaumont, Mr. T. Rhodes, Dr. Rogers, and Mesdames McAree, Gover, and Williams. Boys' Reformatory, Brooklyn Park, and Industrial School, Edwardstown,-Lady Bonython, Miss Goldstein, and Messrs. Goode, Spargo, Smith, and Clarke; Boys' Probationary School, Mount Barker, Mesdames Edwards and Crompton and Messrs. Hawker and Ferguson; Girls' Reformatory, Redruth, Miss Stirling and Messrs. Longmore and MacMasters.

The visits to the institutions will be made to-day, and the congress will resume on Wednesday morning.

INFANT MORTALITY.

CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES.

Adelaide Register 18/3/09

VALUABLE ADDRESS BY DR. HELEN MAYO.

The first paper delivered at the Interstate Congress of Workers Among Dependent Children, which opened its sittings at the deputation room, Victoria square, on Monday, was written and read by Dr. Helen Mayo, of Adelaide. She had for her subject—"Some contributory causes to the high rate of infantile mortality, including the lack of fitness in young people for parenthood."

Dr. Mayo introduced her paper by saying that, while there was little to be said which had not been said before, reiteration of the causes of the waste of infant life should lead to their gradual elimination. In 1907, the latest year for which complete statistics were available, the infantile mortality rate per thousand in South Australia was 65.6, the lowest for more than 20 years. Other rates for the same year were:—Western Australia, 97.7; New Zealand, 88.9; New South Wales, 88.6; Queensland, 77.2; Tasmania, 83; Victoria, 72.6. Causes of death, such as alcoholism and diseases in parents, neglect and ignorance, and industrial employment of married women, were referred to, and Dr. Mayo went on:—

—Ignorance of Parents.—

There is in our educational system, as Herbert Spencer points out, no provision for teaching the duties of parenthood. Children growing up to become parents learn at school a good deal of necessary knowledge, and some that is educative in the sense of laying a broad foundation for the future; but the duties of parenthood and the teaching of the simple principles of hygiene are entirely omitted. Presumably the assumption is made that mothers will teach their own children. So far as my experience goes this is exceptional. One reason is that the parents, having been similarly brought up, have no systematic knowledge themselves, and consequently they can only give erroneous teaching or none at all. If parents realized the importance of giving the baby its natural food only for the first six to nine months of life; if, moreover, they realized that regularity in feeding, abundance of clean, fresh air, and such factors as cleanliness and warmth are the first essentials to an infant's wellbeing, surely we should find a greater number of them acting on their knowledge, and hence a lower rate of infantile mortality.

—Milk and Patent Foods.—

But the ignorance of the mothers or nurses comes into action more especially when the infant cannot have its mother's milk. There are real difficulties to contend with, and even when willing to do all they can they do not know what is best. One of the first essentials is to obtain a milk as free as possible from bacteria and from the effects of bacterial action. This is not always easy. In the cold weather, if reasonable precautions are taken, the milk will probably conform to the required standard. In summer, however, more care is necessary, as the growth of bacteria is then far more rapid, and the milk, if not guarded from contamination and kept cool, may quickly become unfit for consumption. Even more important than the care of milk in the dairy is the protection of milk in the home. For the summer diarrhoea, which carries off so many babies, is due to the specific infection of milk. This infection is much more likely to occur in the home than in a dairy, and the fact that this disease spreads with alarming rapidity, not among those supplied from any one dairy, but from one child to another in a house, and from house to house in a thickly populated neighbourhood, points to the agency of flies, the incomplete disinfection of infected discharges, and the inadequate protection of the milk supply. These three factors acting together produce the most alarming death rate among infants (131 deaths in 1907), and this alone does not indicate all the damage, as the children who manage to survive often do so with seriously enfeebled constitutions. This is one of the reasons why patent foods are in such demand. The lack of care is not so potent when one is dealing with a sterile dry powder, and the ease of preparation appeals to mothers whose work is often already far more than they can manage. Some of these foods are of great value in treating babies with delicate digestions, but most of them are injurious before the age of six months, and unnecessary afterwards. In their train follow scurvy, rickets, and other troubles, while, at any rate, the absence of fresh food tends to depress the vitality of the infant, even when actual illness does not supervene.

—Wrong Foods and Other Causes.—

Promiscuous feeding of infants is only too common. Cabbages, grapes, bread, apples, bacon, and other indigestibles are all given them by their loving parents. One of the habits that leads to this is the presence of the infant at the parents' meals. They give it anything they are eating, and rejoice to see how it takes it, never realizing the mischief they are doing. The surprising thing is not that so many should die, but that any of these infants should survive. In yet another way the parents unknowingly cause the death of their offspring. The need for abundant fresh air is often ignored, and houses which may be already difficult to ventilate are kept closed and the rooms rendered intolerably stuffy. In the homes of the poor this evil is enhanced by that of overcrowding, the minimum air space required for two people often being shared by five or more, and—the possibility of changing the air being prevented by every means at command—the air is breathed over and over again until it becomes absolutely poisonous. The conditions under which these infants live predispose them to disease, and the change from such an atmosphere as has been described to keen cold air and vice versa is responsible for many attacks of respiratory troubles. Each year a number of deaths due to violence are recorded. This is frequently due to overlying, and is possible only when the infant is put to sleep in its parents' bed. The fact that it has been repeatedly found to occur on Saturday nights throws considerable light on the cause at work.

—The Huddersfield System.—

The central idea of the Huddersfield system is "Help the mother to nurse her infant in her own home." 1. Notifications of birth reach the medical officer within 48 hours. 2. Two lady assistant medical officers of health visit the homes, enquire, advise, and help. 3. The notifications are sent every Monday to voluntary workers—ladies who supervise, visit at intervals, and help in the homes. 4. If the baby does not thrive, and is not under medical care, the case is referred to the medical officer of health, and appropriate action is taken.

—Death Rate Far Too High.—

Reverting finally to the general problem this paper has so briefly investigated, one cannot fail to be struck by the enormous number of infant deaths that are, or should be, preventible. In spite of the excellent service rendered by State and charitable institutions, the infant death rate throughout the civilized world is admittedly still far too high. A proportional reduction has undoubtedly been effected, a further reduction is our continual aim. What means may best serve this end must be considered. Now it has been shown that a child may suffer from two species of ills—those due to faulty inheritance and those due to defective care after birth. And, in answering the question as to remedies for these, our investigations prove them to be capable of solution not singly but together, for both evils arise from a defect in the personality of the parents—that is, a moral fault. External circumstance may indeed at times be too much for the best and the most learned of us; but, in spite of this, the problem is obviously almost entirely to be solved by an improvement in the individual attitude of parents towards their responsibilities, and a co-ordinate improvement in the national attitude towards the duties involved in parenthood. The practical means then that may be suggested to help forward our progress in this direction may be classified in brief as follows:—

1. Education of parent.
2. Constraint.

If constraint be considered first, as more germane to the discussion of a present evil, we are able to indicate immediately certain directions in which legislation would be of undoubted service.

—Notification of Births.—

In South Australia births need only be registered within 42 days, and in 1907 (our best year) 242 deaths occurred in the first month of life. When one considers this, it is seen that here is a factor which militates against the possibility of affording instruction to the mother when in a number of instances it would undoubtedly prove efficacious. But what is more important still is that the opportunity of instructing the mother at a time when she is most open to instruction on the care of her baby is lost. For in many cases, the baby itself is unlikely, from the first, to survive. In Huddersfield the compulsory registration of births within 48 hours has been in operation since 1906, and has been found most satisfactory.

—Summer Diarrhoea.—

Another case in which legislation might prove beneficial is concerned with the summer diarrhoea of infants. This is, as we have seen, of an epidemic character, and the cause of a vast amount of illness and death among those under two years of age. If it were added to the list of diseases reportable under the Health Act, the visits of the sanitary inspector to enforce necessary precautions would be a valuable educative factor as well as an actual preventive of the spread of the disease.

—Unsuitable People.—

And lastly with regard to developmental and inherited disease, one feels that there should be some check on the marriage of unsuitable people. The difficulty here is that the natural operation of any opposition to marriage is apt to cause an increase in the illegitimate birth rate. It is, however, a matter for concern that there should be no possibility of preventing the propagation of those manifestly diseased or imbecile. This perhaps hardly comes within the scope of this discussion, but is yet so cognate with the question of infantile mortality that no such paper would be complete were it omitted.

—Educating the Parents.—

The other means of improving the personal factor in the problem was stated broadly as education of the parents. The point here is that they should learn themselves intelligently to direct their actions. The following lines of development, though to some degree in practice, it is well at all time to emphasize:—1. Teach those who are going to be parents the duty they owe to themselves, some of the simple rules of health, and above all the duties of self-respect and self-control. 2. Instruct parents how best to care for themselves, so that their children may be born healthy, and being properly looked after may continue physically fit. 3. General instruction in the laws that govern hygiene. How best to put this into practice is not easy

this connection the system indicates, as Mr. Clarke argued, a colossal undertaking.

With a low birth rate, a special effort is demanded to conserve life; and, though South Australia has one of the lowest death rates, the further preservation of infants is desirable, particularly as associated with a minimum infantile mortality is unusual vigour in the children who live. Here, again, the matter is largely one of parental affection and duty. Dr. Helen Mayo and other speakers, however, raised the question whether the State should not offer educational and other facilities needed in the performance of that duty. The problem of child saving, both physically and morally, is acute in connection with congestion of population in cities, and, unless it can be now effectively dealt with, it will become intense with the growth of time. Apart from measures of relief which medical science recommends relative to hygiene, pure milk supply, and training of mothers, the case suggests the practical bent which should be given to education generally; but on this point one must tread warily, for an expert aptly observes:—

> Many reformers, more enthusiastic than wise, more noisy than discreet, in their haste to cleanse the world and to revolutionize its habits, strenuously advocate the inclusion of all manner of instruction in the primary school curriculum. Cookery, laundry, household management, the duties of mothers, the care of babies, hygienic—all are forced one after the other on the young primary school girl or boy. It matters not that the young girl will in all probability spend the next few years in a factory, shop, or office, and that the young boy will be thrown into the world, where custom and tradition will be a thousandfold stronger than the weak bonds forged by instruction. There are, indeed, grave doubts whether pupils from 10 to 14 years of age will benefit much by instruction in the subjects mentioned above, and the doubts become almost certainties when the time from 14 to 20 years of age is a period of educational neglect.

One lady speaker remarked that a training was provided for every profession save that of marriage; but surely she overlooked the fact that the home life should provide the example and instruction essential for the founding of another home in continuation. If, as seems to be the inference from the addresses yesterday, there are an unusually large number of incompetent parents, what sort of fathers and mothers did they have? And yet, we are told, these incompetent parents are eager to learn. Certainly they should be taught; and taught, too, that it is their privilege and duty to pass on the instruction in due season to the next generation. The home should not cease to be a centre of higher education because a State teacher imparts a few primary formalities.

WORKERS AMONG DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

In the first day's sitting of the interstate congress of workers among dependent children much good ground was covered. By 10 o'clock on Monday morning most of the delegates had assembled in the deputation room, Victoria square, and in the space reserved for visitors there were few vacancies. The President of the State Children's Council of South Australia (Mr. T. Rhodes) was elected Chairman, and he opened the proceedings by an address, in which he voiced the hopes and aspirations of the council concerning the good which was expected to flow from the congress discussions. The two topics of the day were infant mortality and probationary work, and the necessity for education was the dominant note sounded in each. Dr. Helen Mayo's paper on the first subject was of special value, and several extracts have been made and published in another column. The advantages of early notification of birth in order that mothers could be instructed in the rearing of their babies were pointed out, and the oponion was unanimously expressed that a limit of seven days should be imposed within which the birth of a child should be notified to the authorities. On the subject of probation the South Australian system of boarding out was commended, and resolutions were come to in favour of a uniform system throughout the Commonwealth for probation for children, with supervision by a special authority other than the Courts. To-day members of the congress, who have been divided into committees, will inspect the various institutions connected with the State Children's Department, and the sessions will be resumed on Wednesday morning.

EDUCATING MOTHERS.

Under the Health Act of 1898 the Boards of Health in different parts of the State have accomplished much valuable work in hygiene. Naturally the greatest scope for action lies within the metropolitan area, and it has been long recognised that the Adelaide Board is fully alive to the duties which come within its sphere of action. One phase of the work is of educational character, and the medical staff has had the question of infant mortality prominently before it in the methods which have been adopted. Dr. Helen Mayo referred to the work of the Adelaide Local Board in her paper read at the State Children's Congress on Monday. "The board,' she said, "sends every mother situated within its jurisdiction a small book on the care and nourishment of the baby and mother so soon as possible after the birth of the child. In South Australia the Act provides that the birth of an infant shall be registered within 42 days. This allows time to elapse in which much may happen to the infant. So far as possible this has been remedied by the health officer, who has the books sent to all mothers on seeing notice of birth in the newspapers. To those who have not so received a copy it is sent on registration. The pamphlet has been carefully selected, and the Local Board of Health has kindly placed a few copies at the disposal of this congress."

STATE CHILDREN'S CONGRESS.

THE OPENING DAY.

Adelaide Register 18/5/09

The interstate congress of workers among dependent children was opened in the deputation room, Victoria square, on Monday morning. Mr. Thomas Rhodes (President of the South Australian State Children's Council) was elected Chairman, and there were present delegates from every State in the Commonwealth. Mr. J. Longmore (W.A.) was elected Deputy Chairman.

His Excellency the Governor, who was slightly indisposed, was unable to carry out his intention of being present, and was represented by Mr. W. S. Baillie-Hamilton (Private Secretary). The latter said His Excellency desired him to state that he was not very well, and would have to spend the day quietly. His Excellency was extremely sorry that he was unable to be present, nor did he expect to be able to participate in a visit to any of the various institutions on the following day; but he hoped to be in attendance at the meeting of the congress on Thursday. He was deeply interested in the work being done among dependent children throughout all the States. (Applause.)

—Opening Address.—

The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, delivered the following address.—On behalf of the State Children's Council it is my pleasing duty to offer a very cordial welcome to you ladies and gentlemen, who have travelled long distances in order to be present and take part in what I believe will be an important congress. This remark is justified by the consideration that you represent the interests of thousands of neglected, dependent, and delinquent children all over the Commonwealth. The importance of our work is accentuated by the fact that the section of the community whose interests we meet to consider frequently is drawn from a social stratum that demands the most careful and sympathetic treatment. They may merge into the community as useful members of the body politic, or they may become a burden and menace to society. The proper discipline, treatment, and training of these young people are your particular responsibility, and your presence here is sufficient evidence of the profound interest you take in this important matter.

—Uniformity Wanted.—

When these facts are taken into consideration we can arrive at a fairly correct estimate of the scope and influence of this congress. Australian history, I believe, supplies no instance where the States have combined to obtain some degree of uniformity of enactment and administration, and also to discuss questions relative to methods of work to secure the best results in the vital matters of conduct and character in all dependent children, whether they be illegitimate, delinquent, half-caste, or mentally defective. The ideals to keep before us, I venture to think, are well expressed in the description of the trend of Ontario child legislation, which is to secure a just recognition of the right of every child to a happy and well-trained youth; to punish cruelty and neglect of children and encourage a deep sense of parental responsibility; to provide family homes rather than institutions for homeless children by urging upon good people the Christian duty and privilege of taking into their hearts and homes a forlorn child, and training him or her for a life of respectability and usefulness. With the addition of two other topics, viz., to fairly and squarely look at the question of infant mortality and the contrivance of drastic machinery for compelling unworthy parents to contribute maintenance, the above epitome is idealistic.

—A National Responsibility.—

While the subjects to be considered at this congress may appeal to those more par-

larly engaged in the ministry of the children, we have ample evidence that leaders of thought everywhere have the deepest interest in the subjects we propose to discuss. We regret exceedingly that through slight indisposition His Excellency the Governor is not with us to-day, but we are glad to have his representative, (Mr. Baillie-Hamilton). (Applause.) We shall look forward with great interest to His Excellency being with us later on. The fact of the Ministry being represented is distinctly encouraging, and is ample evidence of the practical sympathy and interest felt in the work. We may also congratulate ourselves that generally we have the sympathy of the press, the police, and the Court officials in some phases at least of our duty. The present day is said to be "an age of child worship." Perhaps the dawn of a more intelligent and thoughtful appreciation of the potentialities of the rising generation or the fact that we have fallen upon an age of declining birth rate, may have led to fears of a child famine. Whatever the contributing reasons may be, all patriots will rejoice at the truer estimate of the value of a child, whether born in the purple or the unwelcome offspring that first sees the light in the rags and poverty of the slums. Every child is a national responsibility, as well as a national asset, and he or she should be moulded into an element of national strength.

—Probation Work Required.—

The philanthropic side of our work, however, will not monopolize our thought. There are some matters of business which necessarily will engage our earnest attention. There is the matter of attempting to reach some degree of uniformity of practice and co-operation among the various States. South Australians are not disposed to hide their light under a bushel in reference to their system of dealing with neglected and dependent children. Their methods have been ably and lucidly explained by Miss Spence in her valuable work on the "State Child in Australia." (Applause.) One result of this publication has been a series of enquiries from the other States, and also from philanthropists in England and Europe. It may be therefore pertinently asked why seek abroad for counsel and advice, if so well informed? We reply, we do not claim to have reached perfection, and shall, therefore, be glad to sit at the feet of any whose wisdom and experience can aid us to further improvement. Without doubt there is a splendid freemasonry in our aims and efforts, which no mere geographical lines can effect. In this connection if we can in some degree unify our work tangible benefit will accrue. Co-operation in the matter of collecting maintenance from defaulting parents will relieve the Government of some of its burdens, and will go far to provide a barred door to the nomadic wife and children deserters. Action of this kind to be effective in Australia must be essentially reciprocal. It is perhaps difficult to dissociate the official or professional idea when continuously immersed in the duties of an office. We would fain hope, however, that one result of our congress will be the development of the full-orbed humanitarian instinct which will command personal service in dealing with our wards. Our objective should be distinctly preventive effort. The probation work will be a powerful factor in this agency. It was with the greatest pleasure that I heard of the successful and enthusiastic recent Conference of Probation Officers in Melbourne. Probation work has come to stay. As far as our limited experience goes, we are more than satisfied that splendid work has been done locally for our young people. Conduct and character have been improved, and the public purse saved. This comparatively new adjunct to child-saving work is worthy of consideration by the congress, with a view to its still further development.

—Boarding Out.—

It is unnecessary to say one word in advocacy of the splendid boarding-out system. It is a proved success, with which Miss Clark's name will ever be honourably associated. Even in this matter, however, we have not reached the Canadian standard. It is impossible to read the admirable Ontario reports without coming to this conclusion. The success in securing homes of pure adoption therein recorded is simply marvellous. Even some of our subsidized homes are not free from the suspicion that children are taken simply to enable the foster parents to eke out a living. In some of these cases there is danger, however systematically they may be visited, that the child's surroundings are but little better than those from which they have been rescued at least as far as dietary is concerned. Of course, the ideal conditions are wholesome family life with good moral and religious training. Why should we be content with a lower standard than the Canadian? Surely in these broad lands of sunny Australia there is as ample scope for young life as there is in the land of our "Lady of the Snows." In New York the editor of The Delineator started a campaign to secure homes for dependent children, and the result was remarkable. Hundreds of eager hands were extended for the children, some men and women journeying for 1,000 miles to secure a little one for their childless homes. Can we preach a children's crusade that will have the effect of opening closed doors for the free admission and adoption of dependent little ones? If we can enrich homes by so doing a social and national blessing will be conferred.

—Value of Family Life.—

While we must have receiving depots for the neglected and reformatories for the delinquent we must avoid institutionizing the children. Childhood's joys and home endearments are largely unknown by the institutionized child. The British Poor Law report for the current year describes the surroundings of institutions "as dreary and unfit for children." The report recommends that "effective steps should be taken to remove children from such environment, as it is impossible in barrack homes to produce alert, cheerful, and responsive boys and girls." Here, in Australia, such depressing conditions hardly obtain, but it is pretty safe to prophesy, however, that the day is not far distant when improved methods will demand that only as receiving depots or disciplinary media will institutions exist. The management may be exemplary, the discipline perfect, and everything done with machinelike exactness, and yet fail grievously in the output of sterling character and useful lives. There is doubtless a certain fascination about institutional children's homes, and what may be termed professional methods of treatment; but for best results pure, wholesome family life is incomparably to be preferred. (Applause.) It is somewhat remarkable that boarded-out children in England are so little in evidence. The Poor Law report above referred to states that on January 1, 1908, there were only 1,876 children boarded out, while there were 234,792 in the care of the Poor Law Guardians. This fact demonstrates the difficulty of effecting reforms in conservative England, and shows how tenaciously obsolete methods are adhered to. This remark is made without any desire to minimise the earnest desires of the British authorities to improve matters. There may be difficulty in securing suitable homes or eligible foster parents. When we read, however, that under the present system "many of the children are growing up anaemic, diseased, undisciplined, and unskilled," we feel that although we cannot disparage preparatory institutional training, the death warrant of institutions, as places of permanent residence for children, is already signed.

—The Latest Developments.—

Just one word as to the latest progressive steps we have taken in South Australia, and I close. In addition to the probation work we have recently established a "State Children's Advancement Fund," for which we hope to receive assistance from our wealthy fellow-citizens. This is intended to encourage the development of any special talent which our wards may possess, which cannot be provided for in ordinary expenditure. We have also made a new departure by inducing the Government to authorize the employment of a children's dentist for the exclusive benefit of our wards. (Applause.) This appointment will relieve much suffering, and in many cases prevent the development of incipient disease. Lastly we have secured medical attendance for all children in the care of licensed foster mothers, whether connected with the department or otherwise. This is found to be a great safeguard to infant life, and together with the most effective supervision exercised by our officers it has reduced infant mortality to an extent unexampled in all civilized communities. The narration of these facts may appear egotistic. They are intended, however, to be simply suggestive of improved methods—a sentiment we trust which will be the keynote of the congress. The council trust that the visit will be enjoyable and profitable to every member of the congress, and at its conclusion you will realize that the consideration given to the various subjects and the discussions thereon have been such as to lead to practical conclusions and beneficial results. We hope that the interchange of thought will provide inspiration and stimulus to all altruistic workers, and that in some degree the congress may be instrumental in increasing the sum of human happiness. (Applause.)

—Ministerial Welcome.—

The Chief Secretary (Hon. F. S. Wallis) expressed his pleasure at being present to extend a welcome to those who had come from the other States to take part in the congress. The work in the State Children's Department in this State and the corresponding departments in other States had been recognised by Governments as an extremely important one. If there was one question that the Government required to consider in connection with the interests of the State it was what should be done with the children who had no parents and homes in which they could be brought up properly. Those children some day became men and women, and what kind of men and women they were depended upon the sort of childhood they passed. If there was no one to look after them they could not be other than a burden on the State and a menace in some instances to its interests. What was wanted was that everything should be done during the plastic time of childhood to bring out what was good in them, and to give their minds the right direction. So far as the present Government could assist the congress in carrying out any of the decisions arrived at it would do so. (Applause.) During the short time he had had the honour of occupying the position of Chief Secretary—the State Children's Department being under his control—he had had brought home to him how very expensive the present system was in regard to the following up of men who deserted their wives and families. If only that question was dealt with and settled, and something like uniformity of action agreed upon between the States, and the system introduced, by which an enormous, and in some cases fruitless, expense that had to be incurred would be saved, and which would assist in the tracing of the man, and the insistence upon him paying something toward the support of those for whom he was responsible, the congress would have accomplished a great work. He wished the congress every success. (Applause.)

—Infant Mortality.—

Dr. Helen Mayo read a paper on "Some contributory causes of the high rate of infant mortality, including the lack in young people of fitness for parenthood." Special reference is made to the paper elsewhere.

Mr. G. A. Ferguson (Inspector of Orphanages, Queensland) read a short discourse on the same subject. He said there had been a gradual decline in true infant mortality in his State during the last 20 to 25 years, and in 1907 the percentage of deaths of children in their first year was 7.72. Bad motherhood was the first great cause of infant mortality, and important factors were improper feeding and neglect of attention to the body of the child. He showed by figures that alcoholism in parents most seriously affected the rate of infant mortality. Under the Infant Life Protection Act of 1905 in Queensland police investigation was provided for in the case of every legitimate child born. As a percentage only of illegitimate children found their way into registered homes police inspection could not be closely carried out in those cases where the parents or relatives took charge of the child or in cases of adoption. Prior to the introduction of the Infant Life Protection Act cases had been heard of in Queensland of children being placed with baby farmers b

CAUSES OF INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Addressing the inter-State Congress of Workers among Dependent Children on Thursday, the Hon. P. McM. Glynn, M.H.R., one of the South Australian delegates, incidentally referred to the subject of infantile mortality. He remarked that he had recently come across a report which showed that in her excellent paper, delivered before the congress on Monday on "Some contributing causes to the high rate of infantile mortality," Dr. Helen Mayo, of Adelaide, was backed up by American experience. In a publication entitled "Child labor and social progress," giving a report of the proceedings of the fourth annual meeting of the National Child Labor Committee of the United States, the following appeared:—"Milk poisoning, ignorance of others as to how to feed and care for their children, inability to nurse them either for physical or for economic reasons, lack of necessary facilities for surgical and medical treatment, and lack of knowledge in the rank and file of the medical profession c oncerning the diagnosis and treatment of infantile disorders, are among the causes for this high mortality among infants."

DELINQUENT CHILDREN.

The relative merits of properly exercised parental control in the case of delinquent children and the methods of the Reformatory formed the subject of an interesting paper read on Thursday before the inter-State Congress of Workers among Dependent Children. The writer was Dr. C. K. McKellar, M.L.C., president of the State Children's Relief Board of New South Wales, but in his absence the contribution was read by Mr. A. W. Green, the boarding-out officer of that institution. Dr. McKellar accepted as beyond question the fact that the petty delinquencies of childhood, such as throwing stones and stealing fruit, must be punished if the whole future of the child was not to be warped to a career of evil. The question to be settled was whether the corrective measures should be directed by the parents or foster parents in the home or administered by the officials of an institution founded for that purpose. As a general principle, Dr. McKellar held that the substitution of the environment of an institution for that of a home was entirely wrong, and, in practice, unworkable by reason of the complexity of human nature. In an institution it was impossible to classify each child in accordance with his psychological and moral need, and consequently what was done was to make the child adapt himself to the institution instead of ascertaining the good in the child and cultivating that to his ultimate betterment. The stigma under which institutions, as institutions, lay was that their moral tone was extremely low. In view of this the writer was disposed to favor a system of reformation enforced through the home, and to commit children to institutions only when there was clear proof that their natures were vicious or criminal.

THE CARE OF CHILDREN.

To the Editor.

Sir—"Every child is a national responsibility as well as a national asset, and he or she should be moulded into an element of national strength." Vide the chairman's address at the State Children's Congress. Noble words, noble sentiments, appealing as they do to the best qualities in the human breast. Let us, however, consider how society as at present constituted recognises its obligation in this direction and permit Dr. Helen Mayo to reply. In her excellent contribution to the congress the talented lady states:—"The surprising thing is not that so many should die, but that any of those infants should survive." This is surely a terrible indictment against a professedly Christian community, and unfortunately is but too true. The conventional rules of society doubtless suggested to the lady the desirableness of displaying some hesitancy in publicly dealing in an address with some aspects of the great social question, but she might have gone further and truthfully have asserted that fully 50 per cent. of the infants are undesirable arrivals to the majority of parents, thanks to our social conditions. She might also have stated that the same conditions unfit 75 per cent. of the parents, either physically, mentally, or morally, for properly undertaking the hallowed functions of parentage; and she might have added, and emphasised the addition, that any attempt to improve the condition of what are generally known as "State children," and to leave the larger proportion of other children to the tender mercies of incompetent, careless, morally depraved, and perhaps what is equally bad, if not worse, the over-indulgent parents, is but tinkering with a reform, a recognition of the importance of which surely cannot be much longer delayed. Unless the human race is to become extinct in the course of measurable generations society must insist on a reformation in its treatment of children. The present responsibility of parents in rearing families must be considerably lessened, if not entirely removed, and to accomplish this end it will be necessary for the State to step in and undertake the duty of scientifically rearing and educating children. This contention will doubtless be regarded as savoring of an Utopian relish, but let the average individual calmly and dispassionately think the matter over, and he must recognise the necessity of some such action to improve the present lamentable method of rearing and training children. The noble work undertaken by the congress is to be highly commended as being a step—but only a step—in the right direction.—I am, &c.,

PARENT.

STATE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT PRAISED.

At the Inter-State Congress of Workers among Dependent Children on Friday a high compliment was paid to the South Australian system of dealing with dependent children by the State Children's Council voluntarily co-operating with the State Children's Department. The visiting delegates unanimously expressed admiration of the courtesy and devotion to duty of the officers of the South Australian department, the up-to-date methods adopted, and the special fitness of the staff for the delicate work entrusted to them. It was resolved—"That it is desirable that a State Children's Council on the lines of the long-established and successful South Australian Council should be formed in each State, so that the methods of dealing with dependent and delinquent children should be, so far as possible, uniform throughout the Commonwealth."

SAVING CHILD LIFE

S. A. Advertiser 22/5/09

THE INTER-STATE CONGRESS.

The Inter-State Congress of Workers among Dependent Children was continued at the deputation-room, new Government Offices, on Friday, the president of the State Children's Council of South Australia (Mr. T. Rhodes) being in the chair.

Responsibilities of Parenthood.

Mrs. J. Williams (representing the National Council of Women, Queensland) contributed a paper on "The disabilities of illegitimate children and the best methods of enforcing the responsibilities of both parents." She stated that as a matter of fact there were no illegitimate children, because such children had done no wrong, had violated no law, civic or moral, and were not in any way responsible for the unhappy conditions under which their entrance into life had been made. Yet by common consent and through Parliamentary and legal enactment they had to bear the shame of the dishonor of both parents. Miss Willard, the uncrowned queen of America, had said it was every child's right to be well born; but, alas, how many children were robbed of that birthright? The disabilities of these illegitimate children were numerous, and what was as important as anything, as a rule, they had lost the parental love and the true home atmosphere and associations which developed character and were a country's safeguard. It had been truly said—"No nation can rise higher than the home life of the people." The best traditions and the highest aspirations of the British race were largely the outcome of home influence. In most cases illegitimate children became wards of the State, simply because the mother could not earn her living, and nurse her child. Deprived of natural food, and with weak vitality, was it any wonder that the death-roll of these little ones was excessively high? Child-life was a great national asset, and its preservation was a national obligation. Statistics showed that illegitimate births represented 6.17 per cent. of total births in Australia in 1904, and 6.23 per cent. in 1906. In New South Wales and Queensland the figures were over 7 per cent., but in South Australia only 4 per cent., due largely to the fact that in this State the protection of girls was much higher, being 17 years, while in Queensland and New South Wales it was shamefully low, namely, 14 years. In one State, which she would not name, in 1906, 200 of the mothers of these children were under 16 years of age, and 20 were under 14 years. Dr. Helen Mayo had given some alarming facts about the mortality rate among children born of alcoholic parents, and in support of those figures she could give some information that had come within her personal knowledge. Of 125 children born of alcoholic parents, 55 per cent. died under two years of age, and of the remaining 45 per cent. at least 10 per cent. were crippled and mentally weak. Considering all the circumstances, she appealed to congress to urge that in the various States of the Commonwealth the scientific teachings of the effects of alcohol upon the body be

a compulsory subject in the public schools, as was done in America, where over 20,000,000 children had been receiving such instruction for years. Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Russia, Great Britain, and other countries were also moving in the same direction. Dealing with the best methods of enforcing the responsibilities of both parents, Mrs. Williams pointed out that nature and circumstances alike conspired to place upon the mother a large share of responsibility, while the father was allowed to go comparatively free. Why there should be in existence one moral code for women and another for men was a mystery. This sin of impurity, which would lead a mother to banish her daughter from her home, and a mistress to turn her maid into the streets, the Church to close her doors of membership against her, and society generally to ostracise her, was condoned in man as the sowing of his wild oats, and was frequently referred to as though it were what was to be expected of him. Women themselves were largely to blame for this, and to them they must look for the change so desirable and necessary. Let there be moral equality, not by demanding less from woman—a thousand times no—but more from man. Establishing the paternity of a child had always been surrounded by difficulty, and in this respect legislation had been invariably unjust to the woman. South Australia stood well to the front in all reforms affecting women and children, but in this State a man could not be convicted on the evidence of the mother unless her evidence was corroborated in some material particular, or, if at the time the child was begotten, the mother was a common prostitute. The first provide for the escape of the man by asking for almost impossible evidence, and the second made evasion easy. She hoped that congress would adopt a resolution recommending that when paternity was alleged against a man, he should be compelled to deny the charge or stand convicted. The occupier of a house in which a child was born of an unmarried woman should be required to give notice to the proper authorities, and the registration of the child should be in the father's name, and not as at present, in the name of the mother. What was it that made the parent? It was not the marriage ceremony or the signing of legal documents. The propagating of the race was parenthood, and from the birth of the child till he reached the age of 15 years he should be maintained by the father. In the case of a father absconding to another State, there should be power to enforce the maintenance order. The knowledge that such action could be taken in any of the States of the Commonwealth would place more responsibility on the father.

The Hon. P. McM. Glynn, M.H.R. (South Australia) said in nothing had public opinion and the law hung so long behind the ethics of Christianity as in the treatment of illegitimacy. The bar sinister and the broad arrow seemed, for too long, to have touched the same sense—the sense which made for the conservation of society, though in the case of the child there was a complete absence of moral culpability. He congratulated Mrs. Williams upon her excellent paper, and agreed that it would be better to speak not of illegitimate children but of the children of illegitimate parents. The treatment of such parents had for many generations been unique for its perversity. Interpreters of public feeling did not always regard illegitimate children as being a race lower in point of capacity than those born in lawful wedlock. What would be the effect, however, upon the sanctity of marriage if illegitimate children were to have the same social and legal status as the others? Having reviewed the law on the question, and outlined the present disabilities of the illegitimate child, Mr. Glynn said there had been a gradual recognition of the rights of the children born out of wedlock. His experience in regard to maintenance orders was that the punitive provisions to enforce them were not very helpful. By sending a man to gaol for six months they did not make him a better father or husband, or better able to carry out his family obligations.

Mr. T. H. Streaton, M.P., (S.A.), said human nature was revealed in its strength and its weakness, almost at one and the same moment, in the treatment of those who had the misfortune to come under the ban of illegitimacy. He believed, with all his soul, that the world was growing saner and better, and he hoped the congress would strengthen the hands of the Australian Governments in their efforts to do justice to such children. The question of dealing with delinquent parents—whether legitimate or illegitimate—should be the subject of Federal or inter-State agreement. It was within their knowledge that much of the illicit intercourse of the sexes was encouraged by the precarious and ill-paid nature of the employment in which the man was engaged. Any condition of society which blocked the happy consummation of the highest function with which God had endowed His children was wrong. He thought the congress should pass a resolution, affirming their belief that the establishment of a living wage would do much to decrease that illegitimate parenthood, which was so hurtful to the welfare of the nation.

It was resolved on the motion of Dr. Helen Mayo (South Australia), seconded by Mrs. J. G. Edwards (Tasmania)—"That, in the opinion of this Congress, the demand for the corroboration of the evidence of the mother in affiliation cases should be discontinued, unless the alleged father denies his liability on oath, cross-examination being confined to the matter in hand."

A motion by Miss Vida Goldstein (Victoria)—"That seduction should be a criminal offence when the seducer is of or over the age of 21 years and the victim under the age of 21 years," was lost.

The Register.

ADELAIDE: TUESDAY, MAY 18, 1909.

HOME LIFE.

—o—

At the State Children's Congress yesterday, Mr. Clarke (probation officer of Victoria) truly remarked that a herculean task had been undertaken when the Children's Court Act was passed in his State. The probationary principle of that enactment is in operation here, though our method, which entrusts the State Children's Council with the administration, differs from that in Victoria and the United States, where Magistrates' Courts control the system. The value of the variation will depend upon local circumstances; but the essential fact is that through child delinquency the probationary officer finds access to discordant homes with a moral responsibility and moral authority to contribute towards their recovery. The mournful repetition in probation cases of defective home life is significant of the main source of criminality, social disorder, and domestic tragedy. In the larger sense of favourable conditions education may be regarded as a leading corrective of human ills; and in that sense the education of the child must, it has been said, begin with the grandparents. At least, it would not be fair to found great expectations of a widespread social transformation in the primary stages of the probationary experiment. What can be justly contended at present is that the movement indicated by the State Children's Congress is upon right lines, and has found a practical clue to the rehabilitation of a fallen humanity in the elevation of the home life. The Wise Man said:—"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it," and Persius expressed the same truth in a striking figure—"The clay is moist and soft; now, now make haste, and form the pitcher on the rapid wheel." But who is to do the training and the forming? Nature has established parenthood for the purpose.

We cannot improve upon the providence of Nature for the uplifting of the race; and all substitutory or artificial schemes of education and training will fail in proportion as they depart from the primary plan, which is as fixed in the constitution of things as the stars in their heavenly courses. This has been illustrated in the deplorable results of the institutional or barracks system, whether applied to children or soldiers or young men or young women. One unfortunate tendency in connection with philanthropic work is to omit from its programme of mercy the associated duty of justice. A child has an inherent right to such training as will fit him for a useful and happy career—with a corresponding obligation, from the State viewpoint, of good citizenship. In delinquency, which is prima-facie evidence of parental misconduct, while the first step to be taken should be in the direction of saving the child, the next, which ought never to be avoided, is to require the parents to show cause, if they can, why they should not be punished. The State has such vast interests involved in the proper care of the young that it cannot afford to see them drift into wastrels and criminals, and is bound on the first sign of mischief to adopt preventive or precautionary measures; but for the State lightly to assume parental functions would be to invite a fresh disaster ultimately of no less magnitude. Where under pressure of extreme need the Government may depend upon the co-operation of volunteer workers—enthusiasts for juvenile salvation—under other conditions that assistance would not be available in an equally efficacious form. To encourage parental neglect by accepting parental responsibility without punishing such neglect must be followed by two notable consequences—the weakening of the public sympathy and the philanthropic ardour, without which the Government's intervention can only be futile, and an injurious influence upon the rising generation to be later reflected in a further loss of parental faithfulness. An effective probationary system demands that the parents shall be held answerable for juvenile offences, and that they, as well as the nominal offenders, shall be subjected to official supervision. In

D. A. Advertiser 18.5.09

WARDS OF THE STATE.

The inter-State congress of workers among dependent children opened yesterday with every prospect of useful results. The Chief Secretary assured the delegates of the sympathy of the Government, and the president of the State Children's Council, Mr. Rhodes, introduced the business with an admirable address, in which he outlined the ideals to be kept in view, and the directions in which the practical improvement of methods should be sought. One of the benefits likely to be secured by this important conference is a closer approximation among the States towards uniformity both as to principles and administration. South Australia has pioneered on this continent the work of caring for outcast and delinquent children, but, as Mr. Rhodes illustrated by his references to the Canadian system, even in this advanced State—the originator of the boarding-out arrangement—much can be learned by a study of experience elsewhere. Mr. Wallis mentioned one of the problems the solution of which might be aided by inter-State co-operation. That is the difficulty of following the men who desert their wives and families and cast their natural obligations on the State. It is of the highest importance in pursuing a humanitarian movement for the good of the children that the danger should be avoided of weakening parental responsibility, and if the heart of the neglectful husband and father cannot be touched, at least as far as possible his pocket should be. The rights of the offspring must not be sacrificed, however, even if it becomes necessary for the State to intervene, and to provide the good homes which the natural protectors will not or cannot supply. This is not mere sentimentalism, but the most practical kind of business. Every child, as the Ontario programme declares, is entitled to "a happy and well-trained youth." What is due to the child is also in the interest of the State, for there is no national asset equal in value to good citizenship—the fruit of kind attention and careful training during the plastic years of childhood. An active and enlightened State Children's Department pays for itself over and over again by diminishing the volume of shiftlessness, inefficiency, immorality, and crime. The ideal in methods, as was recognised in South Australia long ago, is to give the waif whom it is necessary to save for his or her own sake and the welfare of society, the advantages of wholesome family life. Institutional treatment is an acknowledged failure. Receiving depots and reformatories are essential for temporary purposes, but the objective, to be realised as speedily as may be, is to remove the child to the domestic environment in which alone character can be satisfactorily developed and due preparation made for life's struggles and responsibilities. Along these lines we have made excellent progress in Australia, but it would seem that foster-homes are not infrequently far from reaching the ideal standard, and it is here that the opportunity presents itself for a larger measure of co-operation between private citizens and the State in carrying out the beneficent work of rescue and reformation. In this respect, apparently, Canada has something to teach which it will profit Australia to learn. Meanwhile it is a matter for congratulation that the workers in this department of philanthropic service are so enthusiastic in their endeavors to perfect existing methods. The interchange of views and experiences at the present congress must have a generally instructive and stimulating effect, from which the whole Commonwealth will gain.

THE LAW OF INFANTICIDE.

The growing tendency towards humanising the Criminal Code is well illustrated in Baron Alverstone's Bill with regard to infanticide, which has just passed its second reading in the House of Lords by 75 votes to 18. The law as to child-murder has long been out of harmony with public opinion in the old country, as in Australia. For many years, apart from very exceptional cases, the capital sentence for this crime by mothers has not been carried out, and it has become a serious question whether for the sake of its own dignity the law should not abandon the useless, and worse than useless, form of imposing a sentence which there is no real intention to inflict. The late Lord Brampton, better known as Mr. Justice Hawkins, tells us in his autobiography that he could never bring himself to do more than "mumble in a tone the prisoner could not possibly hear" the sentence he was imperatively required to pronounce on some wretched woman who, in an agony of shame and apprehension, had destroyed her newly-born infant. The measure now framed and introduced by the Lord Chief Justice proposes that in cases where it is obviously intended that the mother shall not be executed, the sentence shall simply be recorded and not pronounced. In default of such a law, Mr. Justice Hawkins was in the habit not merely of lowering his voice, but of entreating the prisoner to close her ears to what he was about to say. It is clearly time that a law was altered which can only properly be administered in this irregular fashion.

The logical remedy, it might be thought, would be the complete abrogation of a statute it is not proposed to enforce, but the Lord Chief Justice has been restrained from the advocacy of such a course by a fear that infanticide in all cases might come to rank as a less heinous form of murder than any other. Rather than that encouragement should be given to such a notion as this it would be better, he thinks, that judges should go on being parties to a piece of mummery; and something might be sai the formal pronouncem never enforced did reall the sacredness of huma no such thing, and the other country in Euro serious harm can removal of infanticid from the category able with death. In the victim be legitima the killing of a newly-b as an offence outside Germany, in the Scand Belgium, Hungary, and must be illegitimate in murderess to a mitigat The distinction is a re men feel more compassi when a young woman, load of shame, and pr sponsible for her actio But there are not alwa ating circumstances wh married woman, free stigma which attaches shame. There are co Italy, Spain and Port relaxation of the law without specifying the illegitimacy or otherwise of the victim, but even there the motive of the crime must be the saving of the "honor" of the mother or the hiding of her dishonor. This motive in some countries may be pleaded whether the crime is perpetrated by the mother or some near relative; but it is interesting to note that the plea is excluded where the mother, at the time of the birth, had no reputation left to be blighted.

Infanticide, if not a capital offence in France, is nevertheless treated with great severity. It is natural, perhaps, in a country where the restriction of the birth-rate is reduced to something like a science, that every effort should be made by the law to discourage young women who have met with a "misfortune" from relieving themselves from the consequences by resort to an act that cannot be contemplated without a shudder. Liability to penal servitude for life does really, it appears, operate as a check; but so also, it would appear, does the milder punishment inflicted in Germany of imprisonment for any term from three years up to fifteen. All this applies only where there are no extenuating circumstances. Where these exist, as in 88 per cent. of the cases tried in Germany, imprisonment for terms varying from two to three years is held to suffice. A gratifying inference from the statistics is that the growing humanisation o the law has not resulted on the Continent in any increase of infanticide, the fact being just the contrary. The reason, probably, is that the offender loses the sympathy that always attaches to the victim of a Draconic penalty. The liability to conviction becomes greater where juries are not restrained from doing their duty by sentimental considerations; just as sheep-stealing was put down when, with the abolition of the death penalty, juries could reconcile it with their consciences to bring in a verdict of guilty. The provocation to infanticide is often none the less real because it comes not from the victim, but from the circumstances, and is inspired not, as in most cases of provocation by resentment, but fear. The legislators of Italy and Spain are going, perhaps, rather far in exempting not merely mothers, but near relatives of the victim, from the capital penalty; but so far as the mother is concerned, the law does well to recognise the state of mind which must be presumed to exist before the maternal instinct can be obliterated. Our ancestors thought infanticide a worse form of murder than any other because so contrary to the ordinary impulses of human nature, forgetful of the mental or bodily suffering which must have preceded its perpetration, and which led the late Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, who was no sentimentalist, to move three decades ago in the direction of reducing the crime from murder to manslaughter where it was clear that the offender was, in consequence of such suffering, deprived of the

S. A. Advertiser 18 5 09

WARDS OF THE STATE.

The inter-State congress of workers among dependent children opened yesterday with every prospect of useful results. The Chief Secretary assured the delegates of the sympathy of the Government, and the president of the State Children's Council, Mr. Rhodes, introduced the business with an admirable address, in which he outlined the ideals to be kept in view, and the directions in which the practical improvement of methods should be sought. One of the benefits likely to be secured by this important conference is a closer approximation among the States towards uniformity both as to principles and administration. South Australia has pioneered on this continent the work of caring for outcast and delinquent children, but, as Mr. Rhodes illustrated by his references to the Canadian system, even in this advanced State—the originator of the boarding-out arrangement—much can be learned by a study of experience elsewhere. Mr. Wallis mentioned one of the problems the solution of which might be aided by inter-State co-operation. That is the difficulty of following the men who desert their wives and families and cast their natural obligations on the State. It is of the highest importance in pursuing a humanitarian movement for the good of the children that the danger should be avoided of weakening parental responsibility, and if the heart of the neglectful husband and father cannot be touched, at least as far as possible his pocket should be. The rights of the offspring must not be sacrificed, however, even if it becomes necessary for the State to intervene, and to provide the good homes which the natural protectors will not or cannot supply. This is not mere sentimentalism, but the most practical kind of business. Every child, as the Ontario programme declares, is entitled to "a happy and well-trained youth." What is due to the child is also in the interest of the State, for there is no national asset equal in value to good citizenship—the fruit of kind attention and careful training during the plastic years of childhood. An active and enlightened State Children's Department pays for itself over and over again by diminishing the volume of shiftlessness, inefficiency, immorality, and crime. The ideal in methods, as was recognised in South Australia long ago, is to give the waif whom it is necessary to save for his or her own sake and the welfare of society, the advantages of wholesome family life. Institutional treatment is an acknowledged failure. Receiving depots and reformatories are essential for temporary purposes, but the objective, to be realised as speedily as may be, is to remove the child to the domestic environment in which alone character can be satisfactorily developed and due preparation made for life's struggles and responsibilities. Along these lines we have made excellent progress in Australia, but it would seem that foster-homes are not infrequently far from reaching the ideal standard, and it is here that the opportunity presents itself for a larger measure of co-operation between private citizens and the State in carrying out the beneficent work of rescue and reformation. In this respect, apparently, Canada has something to teach which it will profit Australia to learn. Meanwhile it is a matter for congratulation that the workers in this department of philanthropic service are so enthusiastic in their endeavors to perfect existing methods. The interchange of views and experiences at the present congress must have a generally instructive and stimulating effect, from which the whole Commonwealth will gain.

THE LAW OF INFANTICIDE.

The growing tendency towards humanising the Criminal Code is well illustrated in Baron Alverstone's Bill with regard to infanticide, which has just passed its second reading in the House of Lords by 75 votes to 18. The law as to child-murder has long been out of harmony with public opinion in the old country, as in Australia. For many years, apart from very exceptional cases, the capital sentence for this crime by mothers has not been carried out, and it has become a serious question whether for the sake of its own dignity the law should not abandon the useless, and worse than useless, form of imposing a sentence which there is no real intention to inflict. The late Lord Brampton, better known as Mr. Justice Hawkins, tells us in his autobiography that he could never bring himself to do more than "mumble in a tone the prisoner could not possibly hear" the sentence he was imperatively required to pronounce on some wretched woman who, in an agony of shame and apprehension, had destroyed her newly-born infant. The measure now framed and introduced by the Lord Chief Justice proposes that in cases where it is obviously intended that the mother shall not be executed, the sentence shall simply be recorded and not pronounced. In default of such a law, Mr. Justice Hawkins was in the habit not merely of lowering his voice, but of entreating the prisoner to close her ears to what he was about to say. It is clearly time that a law was altered which can only properly be administered in this irregular fashion.

The logical remedy, it might be thought, would be the complete abrogation of a statute it is not proposed to enforce, but the Lord Chief Justice has been restrained from the advocacy of such a course by a fear that infanticide in all cases might come to rank as a less heinous form of murder than any other. Rather than that encouragement should be given to such a notion as this it would be better, he thinks, that judges should go on being parties to a piece of mummery; and something might be sai[d] the formal pronouncem[ent] never enforced did really inspire [a] the sacredness of human life. But it does no such thing, and the example of every other country in Europe shows that no serious harm can accrue from the removal of infanticide by a mother from the category of crimes punishable with death. In France, whether the victim be legitimate or illegitimate, the killing of a newly-born child is treated as an offence outside this category. In Germany, in the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, Hungary, and Russia, the victim must be illegitimate in order to entitle the murderess to a mitigation of punishment. The distinction is a reasonable one. Most men feel more compassion than indignation when a young woman, oppressed with a load of shame, and probably scarcely responsible for her actions, falls into crime. But there are not always the same extenuating circumstances where the mother is a married woman, free from the maddening stigma which attaches to a maternity of shame. There are countries, like Holland, Italy, Spain and Portugal, which allow a relaxation of the law without specifying the illegitimacy or otherwise of the victim, but even there the motive of the crime must be the saving of the "honor" of the mother or the hiding of her dishonor. This motive in some countries may be pleaded whether the crime is perpetrated by the mother or some near relative; but it is interesting to note that the plea is excluded where the mother, at the time of the birth, had no reputation left to be blighted.

Infanticide, if not a capital offence in France, is nevertheless treated with great severity. It is natural, perhaps, in a country where the restriction of the birth-rate is reduced to something like a science, that every effort should be made by the law to discourage young women who have met with a "misfortune" from relieving themselves from the consequences by resort to an act that cannot be contemplated without a shudder. Liability to penal servitude for life does really, it appears, operate as a check; but so also, it would appear, does the milder punishment inflicted in Germany of imprisonment for any term from three years up to fifteen. All this applies only where there are no extenuating circumstances. Where these exist, as in 88 per cent. of the cases tried in Germany, imprisonment for terms varying from two to three years is held to suffice. A gratifying inference from the statistics is that the growing humanisation of the law has not resulted on the Continent in any increase of infanticide, the fact being just the contrary. The reason, probably, is that the offender loses the sympathy that always attaches to the victim of a Draconic penalty. The liability to conviction becomes greater where juries are not restrained from doing their duty by

SAVING CHILD LIFE

S.a advertiser 18/5/09

INTER-STATE CONGRESS IN ADELAIDE.

The first Inter-State Congress of Workers Among Dependent Children was opened at the Deputation-room, new Government offices, on Monday morning.

The president of the State Children's Council of South Australia (Mr. T. Rhodes) was unanimously elected to the chair, and Mr. J. Longmore (secretary of the State Children's Council of Western Australia) was appointed vice-chairman.

The Delegates.

The various States are represented by the following delegates:—New South Wales—Hon. Dr. C. K. McKellar, M.L.C., president of the State Children's Relief Board) and Mr. A. W. Green (boarding-out officer of the Relief Board); Victoria—Miss Vida Goldstein (Women's Political Association), Mr. A. E. Clarke (chief probation officer), and Mr. T. Smith (secretary of the Department for Neglected Children); South Australia—The members of the State Children's Council—Messrs. T. Rhodes (president), P. McM. Glynn, M.H.R., T. H. Smeaton, M.P., C. H. Goode, and E. W. Hawker, M.A., Dr. R. S. Rogers, Lady Bonython, Lady Way, Mesdames McAree and J. Crompton, Misses C. H. Spence and Stirling, and Mr. J. Gray (secretary); Queensland—Mrs. J. Williams (National Council of Women), Mr. W. P. Spargo (secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty), and Mr. G. A. Ferguson (inspector of orphanages); Western Australia—Mrs. Gover (Society for the Protection of Children), the Very Rev. Dean Latham (Perth), and Mr. J. Longmore (secretary of the State Children's Council); Tasmania—Mrs. J. G. Edwards and Mr. M. MacMaster.

The Governor Interested.

His Excellency the Governor, who was slightly indisposed, was unable to carry out his intention of being present and was represented by Mr. W. S. Baillie-Hamilton (private secretary). The latter said his Excellency desired him to state that he was not very well and would have to spend the day quietly. His Excellency was extremely sorry that he was unable to be present, nor did he expect to be able to participate in a visit to any of the various institutions on the following day, but he hoped to be in attendance at the meeting of the congress on Wednesday. He was deeply interested in the work being done among dependent children throughout all the States. (Applause.)

A Sympathetic Government.

The Chief Secretary expressed his pleasure in welcoming the delegates from the other States. Their work was recognised by the Government as being of the utmost importance. Every Government had to consider what should be done with the children who had neither parents nor homes where they could be properly treated; for without good training and care during childhood they could never become useful citizens. If they were not properly treated they became a burden to the State, and in many cases a menace to its interests. It was necessary to take the plastic child and by placing him under good influences to direct his mind into noble channels. So far as the present Government were concerned they were prepared to assist the congress to the best of their ability in having their proposals put into effect. Since he had held the office of Chief Secretary, and had the State Children's Department under his control, he had had it brought home to him how expensive was the system of following the men who deserted their wives and families. If only that one problem were settled and a system was introduced which would save the enormous and in some cases absolutely fruitless expense occasioned in trying to trace the men who neglected those for whom they were responsible, the congress would have accomplished a grand work. They had the advantage of the best opinions from the various States, and he hoped that the result of their deliberations would be of material benefit to the Commonwealth.

The President's Address.

The Chairman delivered the following address:—

On behalf of the State Children's Council it is my pleasing duty to offer a very cordial welcome to you ladies and gentlemen, who have travelled long distances in order to be present and take part in what I believe will be an important congress. This remark is justified by the consideration that you represent the interests of thousands of neglected, dependent, and delinquent children all over the Commonwealth. The importance of our work is accentuated by the fact that the section of the community whose interests we meet to consider frequently is drawn from a social stratum that demands the most careful and sympathetic treatment. They may merge into the community as useful members of the body politic, or they may become a burden and menace to society. The proper discipline, treatment, and training of these young people are your particular responsibility, and your presence here is sufficient evidence of the profound interest you take in this important matter.

When these facts are taken into consideration we can arrive at a fairly correct estimate of the scope and influence of this congress. Australian history, I believe, supplies no instance where the States have combined to obtain some degree of uniformity of enactment and administration, and also to discuss questions relative to methods of work to secure the best results in the vital matters of conduct and character in all dependent children, whether they be illegitimate, delinquent, half-caste, or mentally defective. The ideals to keep before us, I venture to think, are well expressed in the description of the trend of Ontario child legislation, which is to secure a just recognition of the right of every child "to a happy and well-trained youth." To punish cruelty and neglect of children and encourage a deep sense of parental responsibility. To provide family homes rather than institutions for homeless children by urging upon good people the Christian duty and privilege of taking into their hearts and homes a forlorn child, and training him or her for a life of respectability and usefulness. With the addition of two other topics, viz., to fairly and squarely look at the question of infant mortality and the contrivance of drastic machinery for compelling unworthy parents to contribute maintenance, the above epitome is idealistic.

While the subjects to be considered at this congress may appeal to those more particularly engaged in the ministry of the children, we have ample evidence that leaders of thought everywhere have the deepest interest in the subjects we propose to discuss. We regret exceedingly that through slight indisposition his Excellency the Governor is not with us to-day, but we are glad to have his representative Mr. Baillie-Hamilton. (Applause.) We shall look forward with great interest to his Excellency being with us later on. The fact of the Ministry being represented is distinctly encouraging, and is ample evidence of the practical sympathy and interest felt in the work. We may also congratulate ourselves that generally we have the sympathy of the press, the police, and the court officials in some phases at least of our duty. The present day is said to be "an age of child worship." Perhaps the dawn of a more intelligent and thoughtful appreciation of the potentialities of the rising generation or the fact that we have fallen upon an age of declining birth-rate, may have led to fears of a child famine. Whatever the contributing reasons may be, all patriots will rejoice at the truer estimate of the value of a child, whether born in the purple or the unwelcome offspring that first sees the light in the rags and poverty of the slums. Every child is a national responsibility as well as a national asset, and he or she should be moulded into an element of national strength.

The philanthropic side of our work, however, will not monopolise our thought. There are some matters of business which necessarily will engage our earnest attention. There is the matter of attempting to reach some degree of uniformity of practice and co-operation among the various States. South Australians are not disposed to hide their light under a bushel in reference to their system of dealing with neglected and dependent children. Their methods have been ably and lucidly explained by Miss Spence in her valuable work on the "State Child in Australia." (Applause.) One result of this publication has been a series of enquiries from the other States, and also from philanthropists in England and Europe. It may be therefore pertinently asked why seek abroad for counsel and advice, if so well informed. We reply, we do not claim to have reached perfection, and shall, therefore, be glad to sit at the feet of any whose wisdom and experience can aid us to further improvement. Without doubt there is a splendid freemasonry in our aims and efforts, which no mere geographical lines can affect. In this connection if we can in some degree unify our work tangible benefit will accrue. Co-operation in the matter of collecting maintenance from defaulting parents will relieve the Government of some of its burdens, and will go far to provide a barred door to the nomadic wife and children deserters. Action of this kind to be effective in Australia must be essentially reciprocal. It is perhaps difficult to dissociate the official or professional idea when continuously immersed in the duties of an office. We would fain hope, however, that one result of our congress will be the development of the full-orbed humanitarian instinct which will command personal service in dealing with our wards. Our objective should be distinctly preventive effort. The probation work will be a powerful factor in this agency. It was with the greatest pleasure that I heard of the successful and enthusiastic recent conference of probation officers in Melbourne. Probation work has come to stay. As far as our limited experience goes, we are more than satisfied that splendid work has been done locally for our young people. Conduct and character have been improved, and the public purse saved. This comparatively new adjunct to child-saving work is worthy of consideration by the congress, with a view to its still further development.

It is unnecessary to say one word in advocacy of the splendid boarding-out system. It is a proved success, with which Miss Clark's name will ever be honorably associated. Even in this matter, however, we have not reached the Canadian standard. It is impossible to read the admirable Ontario reports without coming to this conclusion. The success in securing homes of pure adoption therein recorded is simply marvellous. Even some of our subsidised homes are not free from the suspicion that children are taken simply to enable the foster parents to eke out a living. In some of these cases there is danger, however systematically they may be visited, that the child's surroundings are but little better than those from whence they have been rescued, at least as far as dietary is concerned. Of course, the ideal conditions are wholesome family life with good moral and religious training. Why should we be content with a lower standard than the Canadian? Surely in these broad lands of sunny Australia there is as ample scope for young life as there is in the land of our "Lady of the Snows." In New York the editor of "The Delineator" started a campaign to secure homes for dependent children, and the result was remarkable. Hundreds of eager hands were extended for the children, some men and women journeying for 1,000 miles to secure a little one for their childless homes. Can we preach a children's crusade that will have the effect of opening closed doors for the free admission and adoption of dependent little ones? If we can enrich homes by so doing a social and national blessing will be conferred.

While we must have receiving depots for the neglected and reformatories for the

Cabinet Minister Interviewed.

"One of the most interesting personages I met through the tour was Mr John Burns, M.P., by whom I was most courteously received. He is a restless man, with deep set brown eyes, that seem to penetrate your very soul. He is keenly interested in the housing and feeding of the poor.

"Under him, a chief inspector is Miss Stanfeld, with whom I spent some days at Wimbledon, a capable, decided, kindly woman, whose income is £500 a year. All the institutions I visited under her guidance were wonderful, but they were institutions.

"I do not advocate institutional life for unmothered children. I say give them the home life; give them some one to cling to and love; someone of their own who will develop their individuality, whether it be good or bad. What I did note in these institutions was that both girls and boys were being fitted for useful careers; and that the girls were taught dressmaking, cooking, and the proper management of children.

"I found no infants until I reached the workhouse and infirmaries. These were conducted on much the same lines as our rescue homes, but the utter hopelessness of the inmates was something appalling.

Model Creche.

"At Notting Hill I saw a most wonderful creche, a three-storied building, a real home, not like the institutional creches in America. There were small stretchers under the shady trees, upon which the children slept.

"Nursing mothers were served with dinner for twopence, and free dinners were given to poor mothers a month before and after the birth of children. I noted also a remarkably convenient table, the practical arrangement of which enabled one teacher to feed 6 infants at a time.

"In this creche, at the time of my visit were 16 infants all bottle fed, whose ages ranged from 4 to 6 weeks. The committee of the creche is endeavoring to reach the older children, those from 4 to 8 years, and provide a shelter place for them after school hours, where they can be fed and taken care of till their mothers' return from work.

Official Baby Saver.

"America! I do not know where to begin to tell you about America, it was all so wonderful.

"Everywhere there it is recognised that the hope of the city lies in the physical welfare of its children. Women fill all the high official positions relating to the welfare of women and children.

I met Dr Josephine Baker who is known as New York's official Baby Saver. She is a pretty, mild mannered little woman about forty, very practical. She controls 167 medical men, 160 nurses, 700,000 school children and 3000 registered homes.

"She looks after all the tenement children especially the babies, and supervises the milk depots. At these places mothers are able to purchase pure milk at cost price, and if they are not able to pay the milk is given free of charge. There is also a registered nurse in charge to give advice to mothers on the rearing of infants. The milk is delivered in special rubber topped sterilised bottles.

In connection with the Charities Board they have Fresh Air Houses right down on Coney Island beach, and here jaded city mothers and children are sent to enjoy free of charge two or three weeks' holiday in the fresh air and sunshine.

Hospital Tents.

"Chicago was full of interest. There they have baby tents scattered about the poorer quarters of the city where sick children are placed in the care of doctors and trained nurses. All food is provided by the health authorities.

"They do not wait for babies to be brought to these improvised hospitals, but certain nurses are appointed to canvass poor districts in the summer time, and report cases. When necessary tents are erected on any available space and the child becomes a civic patient. In this way there is no danger of the child being left too late for medical treatment."

"A nurse or doctor takes charge of the little patient in the daytime, and at night, except in critical cases, the child is cared for by the mother, who receives instructions from the nurse in charge. It is often difficult to persuade mothers to take children to hospitals, but with this system the hospital is placed at their own door.

"In New York the same system prevails, and in many instances there is an all night medical attendance.

Scare Placards.

"In Chicago Dr. Caroline Hedger was in charge of the tent nurses; a large-hearted, breezy, fine-tempered woman, who shook her head when I asked for the birth and death rate of babies in Chicago. She was sadly ashamed to tell me that, so far, no provision had been made to keep such a record.

"Dr. Hedger is an officer of the Chicago Health Department, and some of her scare placards on the baby-saving question were as startling as they were original. These were displayed in prominent places on the advertising hoardings.

"One of them was a gaudy colored attention-arresting piece of printing depicting two infants, one being a healthy, breast-fed specimen, and the other a marasmus-afflicted infant whose ignorant parent had been feeding him on tainted milk, lolly pop, sausage and banana.

"Among Chicago reforms have been the abolition of the public drinking cup and the public roller towel, each a dangerous menace to public health.

Melbourne Women.

"In Chicago I met Miss Alice Henry, at one time a Melbourne journalist. She is stouter and brighter than of yore, and her hair is silvery white. She is doing fine work among the industrial workers of America, and is editing a magazine called 'Life and Labor.' Working with her is Miss Miles Franklin, also well known in Australia. I found that private restaurants were a feature of Chicago living arrangements. These are just private houses, where working women may obtain meals at a moderate tariff.

Children's Court.

"I spent a day at the Children's Court at San Francisco, and sat on the bench with Judge Dunn. From what I saw the foreign element was a tremendous force with which to reckon. Imposition appeared to be rife. One woman, a Polish Jewess, pleaded poverty. She stated that the boy, nine years of age, before the bench was incorrigible; said she had no husband, had to earn her own living, and mothered six other children. Her hair was beautifully braided and arranged in the latest fashion; her hands were white and her finger-nails were polished and manicured—not the type of woman who had worked and mothered seven children.

"In San Francisco 'dependent' children—I do hate the word 'neglected'—are well looked after, and institutional life is made as home-like as possible.

Other Observations.

"On the ferry boats it sickened me to see Europeans and Italians cleaning the boots of Chinese and Japanese for a few pence.

"Market street, Chicago, struck me as being an exaggeration of our Chapel street; but what did appeal to me was the number of transfers one obtained on the tram-cars for a nickel (2½d).

"In the shops flounders were 2½d. They are considered very common fish fare, cod and salmon being luxuries. At Liebe's, the big furriers, I saw an Australian opossum skin marked at 28/. and note paper is sold by the lb.

"At Porta Costa the railway and wharf laborers all wear thick substantial gloves, and on enquiry I found that crushed fingers were almost unheard of in the casualty list.

"In San Francisco little provision is made for the very poor in the hospitals. In fact, the City Hospital is avoided as if it were a plague infested spot, and the other institutions seemed to be arranged to meet the needs of paying patients."

Miss Murray is warm in her praises of the American people and their hospitality.

She has certainly not toured America with her eyes shut, and she has the bright original way of describing her impressions and experiences that is the natural gift of the true raconteur.

INTERESTED IN BABIES.

MISS MARIAN MURRAY.

Age 28/3/12

AN EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM.

There are 6860 children entrusted by law to the care of the Neglected Children's department. The present cost to the State is £90,000 a year. There are 2230 of the children, who are boarded out with their own mothers, most of whom are widows, but about one-fifth of them have been deserted by their husbands. Of the remaining children, there are 446 who are cared for in homes established by the Salvation Army and other religious and philanthropic institutions. Most of these receive a subsidy for the work from the State. The majority of the children, 2645 in all, are boarded out with people who are paid an average of 4/ a week for their support. They are supposed to be treated as a member of the family, and to attend the nearest State school. While the department may be credited with every desire to see that the spirit of the act is carried out, it is very seldom that one of these children would be adopted if it were not for the weekly subsidy which he carries along with him. Nearly all the children begin their connection wtih the department by being sent to the receiving depot at Royal Park. They are sent on to their permanent homes as soon as each case is investigated, and the necessary arrangements can be made.

Now a very large number of these children, in all probability at least two-thirds of them, present a special problem. Some are merely unfortunate orphans, but most of them come from a degenerate stock. The mere fact that they have been thrown upon the State is sufficient to suggest that there is something abnormal about most of them, and this suspicion is strengthened when the numbers steadily increase, in spite of an abounding prosperity. The yearly average was 420 for the four years 1903-1906, and 1120 for the four years 1907-1910. That is, of recent years one child out of every 30 births has been handed over to the State. It looks as if a large number of people are not only depending on the State for provision during old age, but that about the same number are prepared to see similar provision made for their children also. In every case in which the father can be traced there are indications of either physical or mental degeneracy. Up to recent years most people who had gone into the matter held the opinion that the boarding out system, on the whole, gave better results than the establishment of large institutions, and this was undoubtedly true when Mr. Bumble was the typical workhouse official. Two factors, however, have developed within the past dozen years which have completely reversed the educational problem. The first is the advance of medical science. Many of the children are handicapped by actual disease; a much larger number inherit a feeble constitution. The first thing, therefore, that requires to be done is to decide whether the child needs prolonged medical treatment. Tuberculosis, scurvy and syphilis are the diseases most frequently met with, and these diseases are more accurately diagnosed, and are far more amenable to treatment now than ever they were before.

A special cottage hospital should be provided, wnere sunlight, fresh air and good food, in conjunction with the best medical [illegible]ursing attendance, would give the [illegible]possible chance [illegible]make a fresh start amid healthier surroundings. The second factor is the increased efficiency of our teaching methods. As the name implies, the neglected children are not mere orphans. They suffer from something more than misfortune. If allowed to drift, too many of them would end their careers in the prisons or lunatic asylums. The large element of degeneracy has always to be taken into account. The difficulty of piloting the child safely through youth and adolescence into manhood, is proportionately greater. Here again, special provision requires to be made. The task is often so great that no foster parents, however kindly disposed they may be, can be expected to bring it to a successful issue. A special school should therefore be provided for the juniors. Here again an open air life, good food, and sufficient exercise to secure sound sleep are the essentials. The kindergarten will give all the mental training required in the early years. Teachers of special qualifications are required, but these can now be procured, whereas a dozen years ago hardly a single teacher in Victoria had had the special training for kindergarten work. As the children grow older, ordinary school methods will be introduced; but here again, the school workshop and garden will become prominent features in each day's work, and efficient teachers along these lines can be supplied by the Education department. The whole problem has been changed since the reform of our educational methods was begun in 1901.

The older boys may be provided for by simply extending an almost forgotten institution. About eight years ago the experiment was tried of sending some of the boys to Rutherglen. The buildings had been originally erected as a viticultural college, but at that time there was no demand for the higher branches of agricultural education; and only a single student offered himself for enrolment. The proposal was therefore brought forward to utilise the building, and at the same time to give the boys some kind of qualification for farm work. The work was started on a small scale, the number of boys being gradually increased as the initial difficulties were mastered, until by 1908 there were 28 boys in the college. There the matter has remained ever since. The boys usually enter the school at the age of 13 or 14, and remain there till they are 18. Stunted growth and backward development are characteristics of too many of them when they arrive, but three or four years' residence in healthy surroundings makes a great difference physically, mentally and morally. They are trained in all branches of farm work, and in addition a number of them become proficient in grafting the American resistant vines, which is one of the chief objects for which Rutherglen is kept going. The ravages of phylloxera have half-ruined many of the vineyards, and this is the only centre in Victoria where the work of reconstitution is carried out. When they have attained the age of 18 the boys are placed with suitable farmers, and the demand is always much greater than the supply. As they are paid a small wage regularly from the time of their entry at the college as a stimulus towards steady work, most of them have £15 to £20 in the Savings Bank when they begin the world for themselves. One of the chief factors in the success of Rutherglen is undoubtedly the personal character and special qualifications of the principal, Mr. G. H. Adcock. But the question at once arises, why should not the system be largely extended? At present the training is chiefly obtained from the outdoor work on the farm. The small number of boys precludes the proper organisation of the school work or the full scope of manual training. At a trifling increase in cost three or four times as many boys could be turned out, much better equipped in every respect than they are now. Rutherglen has already demonstrated that a great improvement on the boarding out system can be easily attained, but the success achieved merely points the way to further improvement.

Finally, the question of the management of the whole department requires investigation. The problems involved are partly those of education, partly those of medical science, and partly those of business management. Education, public health, and many other special departments are now in the hands of experts, and the results achieved are at least very far in advance of what was accomplished by clerical heads a dozen years ago. It is admitted on all hands that the Neglected Children's department exhibits little sign of progress. It should be reorganised, and placed in the hands of a man who has had a special training for the position.

Argus 9.5.12

CARE OF STATE WARDS.

ROYAL PARK DEPOT.

FAR BEHIND THE TIMES.

Six months ago the Premier informed a body of ladies who were interested in the Royal-park Receiving Depot for Neglected Children, and who had waited upon him at his own invitation, that the institution had been condemned "lock, stock, and barrel" by two medical gentlemen specially appointed to make a report. The report of those gentlemen was, even then, some months old. It might, therefore, reasonably have been expected that Mr. Murray would by now have succeeded in effecting some improvement in the system under which the depot is run. Recent visitors to the place, however, report that so far the improvements effected consist of a few yards of new wallpaper on the walls of one of the buildings, a disused dormitory turned into a playroom for the small boys in wet weather, and a gay nursery frieze run around the walls of the old and insanitary nursery. A wall in the cottage known as "the girls' reformatory" is also being demolished, in order to enlarge the tiny diningroom. There are rumours, it is true, of a determination at last to provide the new nursery promised some eight years ago and some sort of a gymnasium for the boys.

Mr. Murray himself has paid a visit to the depot during the last few weeks, and presumably, the rumours are the result of that visit. It is pertinent to ask whether, on his visit, he saw nothing else wrong with the place than can be rectified by these proposed additions to the buildings? Did it occur to him to ask why the corridor window in the girls' reformatory was broken, and to consider whether such a scene as that broken window represented ought to have been suffered to occur near the little children in that institution whose only sin is poverty and want of care? Did he make any inquiries as to the duties performed by the young, growing girls in the laundry, and as to their hours of work?

Lafayette, Photo.

knowledge of the religious precepts of the Presbyterian Church, and her wishes, so far as they were material, tended to that church. A father could not be permitted to play battledore and shuttlecock with his child's religious belief.

PARENTS TO RETAIN CHILD.

As matters were, Mr Justice Hood thought, the child should be under her parents' control, and it would not tend to her benefit or happiness to be brought up as a Protestant surrounded by sisters and parents who were Roman Catholics, especially when the only mode of ensuring her separate religious training would be by the interference of a Protestant guardian, which would probably cause the child to lead a life of turmoil.

The summons was dismissed, with costs. This means that the child is to remain in the custody of her parents.

Leave was reserved to Mrs M'Ewin to apply for access to the child should the parents decline to allow her to visit her.

A PARENT'S RIGHTS.

Argus. 7.3.12

CONTROL OF A CHILD.

RELIGION IN QUESTION.

A case of considerable interest, affecting a parent's right of control of his child, was the subject of a judgment delivered in Chambers by Mr. Justice Hood yesterday. The matter came before the Court on an application by summons for the appointment of a guardian of Grace O'Dea, a girl under 12 years of age. It was claimed that the child had been given to the charge of her grandmother, Mrs. Mary M'Ewan, of Park-street, Heidelberg, when 18 months of age, and had been taken forcibly by her father, John O'Dea, a fortnight ago, and the summons was directed against him. The child had attended the Presbyterian Church and Sunday-school, and the parents were Roman Catholics.

Mr. Arthur (instructed by Messrs. Snowball and Kaufmann) appeared for Mrs. M'Ewan, and Mr. Starke (instructed by Messrs. Duffy and King) for John O'Dea.

Mr. Justice Hood said the dispute was chiefly as to the custody and education of the child, mainly with reference to her religion. The law as to the power and duty of the Court in such cases was now clearly settled. It was stated in Andrews v. Salt:—

"If a father has not forfeited or abandoned his right to educate his children in his own religion the Court cannot refuse to order a child to be educated in that religion, merely because it thinks that the child will be more happy and contented or better provided for if left with those who have had the care of it. But if a father has forfeited or abandoned his right to educate his children in his religion, the Court will consider only the happiness and benefit of the child, and will order it to remain in the care of those by whom it has been brought up, and to be educated in their religion, although the child may not have so far imbibed the particular doctrine of the religion, so as to render it dangerous to change its religious training."

And in re M'Grath, 1893:—

"The dominant matter for the consideration of the Court is the welfare of the child. But the welfare of a child is not to be measured by money only, nor by physical comfort only. The word welfare must be taken in its widest sense. The moral and religious welfare of the child must be considered as well as its well-being. Nor can the ties of affection be disregarded. As regards religious education, it is settled law that the wishes of the father must be regarded by the Court, and must be enforced unless there is some strong reason for disregarding them. But the law is not so rigid as to compel the Court to order children to be brought up in the religion of the father regardless of consequences to themselves. The welfare of the infant is the ultimate guide of the Court as to religious education, this Court judicially administering the law cannot hold one religion better than another."

He did not accept the view that the girl was entrusted by the mother to the grandmother as soon as weaned on a promise that she would be nurtured, maintained, and educated in the Protestant faith. He thought the child was always retained by her parents as one of their family, frequently in their home; but that the grandmother was allowed to have her company frequently and to regulate her education. He was satisfied that up till near the end of last year the father neglected his duty to direct the child's religion, and allowed her to be educated as a Protestant, and was now interfering solely on religious grounds. The first question was, who was to have physical control of the child? All the parties were in very poor circumstances, but the financial position of the parents was undoubtedly superior to that of the grandparents. Moreover, the grandmother was 85 years of age, living alone with her husband, who was 78, and had no means of providing proper supervision for a growing young child. He felt no difficulty in deciding as between the grandmother and the parents, that she should be in the custody of the parents.

The question of her religion and the change which certainly the parents would make if they could, had to be dealt with, and here again he looked to the child's welfare. He found her an intelligent, well-educated child for her age, of good manners. She possessed a fair knowledge of the religious precepts of the Presbyterian Church, and her wishes (so far as these were material) tended to that church, while she appeared indifferent as to her residence. Her religious knowledge was mainly based on teaching common to most Christian churches, and she had not been troubled much with distinctive dogma yet. Undoubtedly if a change was made she would have to learn much that was new to her, and unlearn much that was old. If this could be avoided by any reasonable expedient, it would be the duty of the Court to prevent it, because a father could not be permitted to play battledore and shuttlecock with such an important matter as his children's religious belief. No plan, however, had been suggested that in this case seemed practicable. If this child was to be brought up as a Protestant, she must either be left in hands quite incompetent to protect her, and unable to maintain her unaided, or she must be entrusted to her parents, with directions as to her religion. The first course was impossible, the second full of difficulties. Any guardian in such a case would have to pay the cost of education, and the child would be a stranger in her own family being taught that the religion of her parents was erroneous and knowing that her own religion was considered a heresy by those dearest to her, while her school life would vary from that of her sisters. Such a life would not be a happy one. If a scheme had been put forward for maintaining and educating the girl without handing her over to the sole care of an impecunious woman of 85, a strong case would have been made out, considering the practical abandonment by the father of his control over the child's religion. But as matters were he thought she should be under her parents' control. The summons would be dismissed, without costs.

Later an application was made by Dr. Kauffmann for an order that the grandmother might see the child.

Mr. Starke said there would be no objection.

Mr. Justice Hood said he did not believe any difficulty would be raised by the parents.

UNMOTHERED CHILDREN.

Herald 26.3.12

AUSTRALIAN WOMAN'S TOUR.

THE BABY SAVER

In Miss Marian Murray, as senior inspector for the Infant Life Protection Act, the Victorian Government has an officer of whom it may be justly proud. At present, through a severe nervous breakdown, Miss Murray is on furlough.

Owing to the enforced idleness attendant on her indifferent health, she recently made a tour through England, Ireland and America, to study the child-saving question, and perhaps, incidentally, glean a hint or two for the benefit of Australia. The result of her observations is interesting. There is nothing of the austere, dictatorial official about Miss Murray. She is the most unofficial-looking official it is possible to imagine. Kindly, courteous, warm-hearted and sympathetic, one feels an instinctive trust in her. Undoubtedly she is a woman's woman, with a quick, ready understanding, and yet at the same time alert and business-like.

Favorable Comparison.

"No doubt many people will be surprised to hear," remarked Miss Murray, "that our measures for the protection of infant life compare well with those of some countries I have recently visited. Of course, we have not the congested life that makes some of the model reforms imperative. I am speaking of the milk depots of Chicago and New York and the hospital tents in densely-populated areas.

"In Ireland I was afforded every facility for viewing charity homes and orphanages, by the courtesy of Sir Charles Cameron (Dublin). In every instance the conditions were primitive. I would rather not record my impressions of civic managment. I was not impressed with the order of things. I did not visit Scotland.

London County Council.

"In England they have a Children's Act, which I was informed by the Chief Inspector had been modelled on the Victorian Infant Life Protection Act. I visited several of the homes in which the children were boarded out, and all I can say is that the homes do not compare favorably with homes to which Australian children are sent.

"In several instances the rooms were over mews and stables, and the environment was always hideous and poverty-stricken. The children were boarded out to foster mothers at 5/ a week. I found that they had no district doctors nor inspectors as we have, nor was there any organised method for a supervision of the registered nurses' homes. It seemed to me that there was no provision against blackmail and corruption.

"One movement of the London County Council by which I was much impressed was the care of blind children. They are clothed and boarded out to foster-mothers at the rate of 7/ a week. At the age of 13 they are removed to residential schools, where they are taught trades. Inspectors are better paid by the London County Council than in Australia. Responsible officials receive good salaries, and retire on pensions.

Although I personally do not entirely approve of certain working details of the Talbot Milk Institute, I should regard myself as extraordinarily mean-spirited if I did not gratefully and enthusiastically proclaim my belief in the lasting value and inestimable benefits that the institute has already been to the community. Can I bring forward stronger or more convincing testimony of the sincerity of my belief in this matter than to publicly state that, with the fullest expert professional knowledge concerning the milk supply that it was possible for me to have obtained in Melbourne, I have been for many months giving my own infant child "Talbot milk," and the child has thriven amazingly?

Why is this Talbot milk so much better for an infant than any other milk available to the ordinary householder? There are three overwhelmingly important reasons to justify such a view:—(1) because the milk is obtained from cows tested to be free from tuberculosis; so far as I know, no other large supply of milk in this city is tested to be free from the grave and insidious danger; (2) because the milk is obtained from cows whose udders are tested to be free from inflammatory germs; and (3) because it is not pasteurised. For milk obtained from an unhealthy source pasteurisation is necessary to diminish its unhealthiness, and, though pasteurisation is the least objectionable of all methods in use for this purpose, and although I know that, on a large scale, pasteurisation is necessary, and must remain a most valuable method of dealing with milk, yet I am convinced that it devitalises milk to, possibly, a grave extent. What standard should we set ourselves as the level of purity necessary for cows' milk as the food for infants? The standard of healthy breast-milk must, of course, be taken to guide us. No one would suggest, I suppose, that healthy breast-milk should be pumped off and pasteurised before it ought to be given to an infant, nor should cows' milk be similarly treated. It is, of course, recognised that pasteurisation, besides destroying other germs, protects more or less effectively; but it cannot be said absolutely against the danger of tuberculosis from milk, therefore the board recommends pasteurisation to counteract this most grave unhealthiness in milk, and makes no mention of the much more valuable method of obtaining milk from non-tubercular cows. To obtain milk from non-tubercular cows was one of the most important parts in the mission of the milk institute, for by such an example tuberculosis would be gradually stamped out from special dairy herds, and the standard of the healthiness of milk would have been raised in every city and throughout the country. Just imagine what is happening, and would continue to happen with increasing danger, if this recommendation of the board were accepted. Every infant who did not receive pasteurised milk was in future to be allowed to run the risk of receiving tuberculosis; it runs that risk already, therefore let the danger always continue in this community; thus recommends the board, and this poisonous suggestion finds acceptance. Already the Lord Mayor has stated that the Talbot Milk Institute was "evidently on the wrong lines, because it rejected pasteurisation." Let the Lord Mayor learn that the institution rejected pasteurisation in order that it might supply milk free from tuberculosis, and free from the devitalising effects of heat. Of course, both methods of dealing with the milk supply of a large city are necessary; the enormous value of clean raw milk does not exclude the extreme usefulness of partially-cooked milk.

Much of the report deals with the use of the milking-machines, and much may be said against this method in obtaining milk, but the object of the Talbot Institute is not the use of the milking-machine, and if the milking-machine has been proved to be a source of trouble, it must in the future be discarded. If I may be permitted to prophesy, I would say in this near future, provided the institute be allowed to live and work, there will be not one, but many, farms supplying the Talbot standard of milk, and local institutes, and, I hope, many municipalities, will be distributing this milk [illegible] and many milkmen will be supplying to those who can pay for [illegible] all foods.—That ha[illegible]

Released 29.2.12

FAMILY DISPUTE

CUSTODY OF A CHILD

QUESTION OF RELIGION

SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT.

In the Practice Court to-day, Mr Justice Hood delivered his reserved judgment in the matter of a summons under the Habeus Corpus Act against John O'Dea, of Heidelberg, regarding the custody of his infant daughter, Grace O'Dea, 12 years of age. The child, until recently, lived with her maternal grandmother, Mrs Mary M'Ewin, of Park street, Heidelberg, and the summons was taken out on behalf of Mrs M'Ewin.

At the hearing early last week Mr W. G. S. M'Arthur (instructed by Messrs Snowball and Kaufmann), appeared for Mrs M'Ewin and the child, Grace O'Dea, and Mr W. G. S. Starke (instructed by Messrs Duffy and King), for the father, John O'Dea.

According to the evidence and affidavits the child who was born in March, 1900, had lived with her grandmother since she was eighteen months old. Her mother at that time remarked, in the presence of a witness, "this is going to be granny's little girl, and she can bring her up as she likes." The little girl was brought up in the Presbyterian Church, but a fortnight ago her father went to the school she was attending and forcibly took her away. Mrs M'Ewin, the grandmother, is a Presbyterian, and Mrs O'Dea, the mother, was a member of that church until after her marriage, when she embraced the Roman Catholic religion, which is the religion of her husband. Mrs O'Dea stated that her husband's reason for taking the child was that he found that the little girl was being made very bigoted.

QUESTION OF WELFARE.

Mr Justice Hood, in delivering judgment, said that the dispute was as to the custody and education of the child mainly with reference to her religion. The law as to the power and duty of the Court in such cases was that if a father had not forfeited or abandoned his right to educate his children in his own religion, the court could not refuse to order the child to be educated in that religion merely because it thought that the child would be more happy and contented or better provided for if left with those who have had the care of her. But if the father had forfeited or abandoned his right to educate his children in his own religion, the Court would consider only the happiness and benefit of the child, and would order the child to remain in the care of those by whom it had been brought up, and to be educated in their religion, although the child might not have so far imbibed the particular doctrines of the religion as to render it dangerous to change its religious training. The dominant matter for the consideration of the Court was the welfare of the child. But the welfare of a child was not measured by money only, nor by physical comfort only. The moral and religious welfare must be considered as well as its well-being. Nor could ties of affection be disregarded. As regards religious education, it was settled law that the wishes of the father must be regarded by the Court, and must be enforced, unless there was some strong reason for disregarding them But the law was not so rigid as to compel the Court to order children to be brought up in the religion of the father regardless of the consequences to themselves. The welfare of the infant was the ultimate guide of the Court. As to religious education, the Court could not hold one religion to be better than another.

FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS.

Having thus stated the law, Mr Justice Hood reviewed the facts of this particular case. The father and the mother were united, and their opponent, the grandmother of the child, was legally a stranger and not able of her own means to support the infant, and as the child had no means of her own, the Court could not devise a scheme for her education and maintenance advantageous to her interests independent of outside help. He did not accept as correct the view put forward by the grandmother, that the girl was entrusted by the mother, as soon as she was weaned, to the grandmother on a promise to maintain and educate her in the Protestant faith. He thought that the true explanation was that the child was always retained by her parents as one of their family frequently in their home, but that the grandmother, having formed a special affection for her, was allowed to have her company frequently, and to regulate her education, the mother retaining control over her movements and substantially clothing her. He was satisfied also that up till near the end of last year the father neglected his duty to direct the child's religion, and allowed her to be educated as a Protestant, and that he was now interfering solely on religious grounds, and not for any of the reasons which he set forth. All the parties were in very poor circumstances from a monetary point of view. The grandfather, grandmother, and the father were all pensioners, and the mother was paid by the State for maintaining two of her own children, but she swore that she had saved money to about £140, and had also a cottage for which she receives 10/6 per week, and is also able to earn money by her labor.

On the question of religion, and the change that parents would certainly make if they could, Mr Justice Hood said, at a private interview with the child he had found her an intelligent, well educated child for her age, of good manners, and expressing strong affection for her grandmother and her father and mother. She possessed a fair

age 11.5.12

Issue of 'child's rights' vs ancient parental rights

Or does he consider it
their stage of growth a
spend the day from 9 am
time excepted, at the
for six days of the week
interest himself at all
formed by two mentally
minded women, at the
satisfied on that score
sible to disregard
and the smell—of th
the bathroom off the
end of it, where the milk for the babies
bottles is kept, a happy feeding place for
flies. Mr. Murray, it is understood,
recognises the need for new arrangements
here. But how many babies, sick and
healthy, were in this nursery on the occa-
sion of his visit, and did he consider the
staff numerous enough to give these chil-
dren a fair chance? Did he consider the
isolation of the so-called isolation tent
effective; or were, on the occasion of
his visit, any of the occupants of that
tent following the matron, for whom
they appear to have much affection, along
the verandahs of the nursery? How many
toys did he see, how many books, how many
children playing games? Were all the chil-
dren under twelve, on that occasion,
brought indoors directly after school to
prepare for tea and bed, whilst a bright
sun shone outside, and fair winds played
amongst the grasses? Was there anyone
who showed a happy, merry, childish
irresponsibility? And lastly, did Mr. Mur-
ray make any inquiries as to the reason
why so many children—over ninety during
this present week—should be in a depot
which is only a receiving home, and as to
the length of time already spent by each
individual child in the depot?

The state of affairs which provokes these questions is the result of a system which the most enlightened observers of child-life in our midst utterly condemn. Last November a large and influential deputation of men and women interested in the welfare of children, urged upon the Premier the adoption of the system of dealing with State wards that obtains in South Australia and New South Wales, the appointment of an honorary council of philanthropic men and women to assume control of all wards of the State. The Premier promised to obtain from the authorities in those two States reports as to the working of the honorary councils there. Is it to much to ask that he will gratify the members of that deputation by making public the result of his inquiries? Pending his reply, it may be interesting just to glance at some of the achievements of the New South Wales "State Children's Relief Board." Like the Victorian Neglected Children's Department, it pursues the system of boarding out all possible children in real homes. This boarding-out of children, it may be said, is the one feature of the Victorian system which everybody unites in warmly commending. But for the children who cannot be boarded out, or sent to service, for the naughty, the sick, the sore-eyed, the syphilitic, the Victorian department provides — the Royal-park Depot! Let the New South Wales board be judged by its deeds. It has established nine cottage homes in rural surroundings for invalid, crippled, and afflicted children: one of these is a home for feeble-minded children, with a specially trained kindergartner to teach the unfortunate little ones; another is a home for children suffering from ophthalmia. Besides these the board has a cottage home farm and four cottage homes for wayward lads committed by the children's courts to the care of the board. Some of the boys work on the farm, which supplies all the cottage homes at Mittagong with milk, vegetables, fruit, and other products. As well as farm and dairy work, the boys are taught bootmaking, blacksmithing, and carpentering. They have helped in the construction of some of the houses: and the crippled and otherwise physically defective children' share in the bootmaking industry. All the boots required for the children in the cottage homes, as well as for the outfits of boarded-out children, are made in these workshops. There are trained teachers and skilled artisans in charge of all this work. The boys in the farm homes attend the Mittagong public school. Mentally and morally deficient lads are cared for in two separate homes

that babies under six months of age who are seriously ill have a very small chance of life unless they are nursed by their own mothers. The New South Wales board recognises this as a principle, and it takes the mother into hospital with her baby, and refuses to board out a baby with a stranger if the mother can nurse it herself. On Tuesday last the city coroner made some scathing comments on the Victorian system of encouraging the mother to part with her child. It will interest those who read the report of his inquiry to learn how the New South Wales board have met this problem, to look on this picture—and on this. There is, however, one aspect of such a comparison that ought not to be ignored—the relative costs of the two systems. According to the report of the Victorian Neglected Children's department for 1910, the number of children being provided for on December 31 of that year was 6,860, and the total cost, inclusive of payments made by parents for their children, was £89.689/11/. The report of the New South Wales board for 1911 shows 8,680 children provided for at a total cost of £94,064/5/9. Roughly, each child under the protection of the State costs the people of Victoria £13 a year: each child cared for by the Citizens' Board in New South Wales costs the people of that State £11. We leave the public to judge which State is getting the better value for its money.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir.—On behalf of the Child-Saving Council of Victoria, I wish to thank you for your article on "The Care of State Wards." This council has been aware for some time past of the unsatisfactory condition under which some children in the care of the Neglected Children's department continue to exist. The only remedy seems to us to lie in the reorganisation and control of the department. A voluntary council, to deal with neglected children, working through the permanent officials of the department, has always seemed the best method available. It has proved successful in New South Wales, South Australia, and in Canada, and a somewhat similar control has been suggested to be the best way of dealing with the difficult problems in Great Britain. This view has been urged upon the Government by deputations, &c., but so far the present chaotic state of things continues, or, at least, no sufficient action has been taken. We are once more urging upon the Minister the pressing need of immediate attention to the conditions existing under the Neglected Children's department.—Yours, &c.,

PATTIE DEAKIN,
Vice-president Child-Saving Council of Victoria.
May 9.

WARDS OF THE STATE. Argus 10/5/12

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir.—The executive of the National Council of Women of Victoria wish to very heartily endorse the excellent article in "The Argus" to-day, entitled "The Care of State Wards." The manner in which the state of affairs at the Neglected Children's department depot at Royal-park was discovered may be very instructive to review at this stage. About two years ago a well-known lady was asked by a poor girl to get her sister out of the depot. In the course of inquiries regarding this case, a very dreadful state of affairs was brought to light. This lady then obtained permission for herself and friends—many of them professionally trained men and women—to visit the depot. They were horrified, and wondered how such a state of affairs could continue under a Government department. The facts were laid before the Premier, who asked for a written report, which, after another visit to the depot, was furnished to him, and he promised to consider it.

Some time after, another party of ladies and gentlemen, accompanied by the Treasurer (Mr. Watt), Mr. M'Bride, and officials connected with the Neglected Children's department, visited and inspected the depot. After this visit a report was called for from two Government medical men. This report was furnished, and, as the article in "The Argus" states, condemned the institution completely. This report has never been published, and the National Council of Women has asked for it, but the request has not been granted. A deputation, in which this council took part, then waited on the Premier, to ask that a voluntary council of men and women should be appointed to control this work, it being understood that such councils had been very successful elsewhere. Again there were promises of consideration, but nothing further has been done.

We now find, on the authority of the article to-day, that the state of things at the depot is still bad. Is it not time that the public generally, and the women of Victoria especially, should direct their energies towards the ending of such conditions? Is it not possible to obtain for our State wards the ordinary decent conditions such as are the right of every child in a civilised community.—Yours, &c., on behalf of executive.

JESSIE J. F. STRONG, V.P.,
MARGARATTA M'INERNY, V.P.
May 9.

Argus 10.5.12

Or does he consider it good for girls at their stage of growth and development, to spend the day from 9 am. till 5 p.m., dinner-time excepted, at the washtub, and that for six days of the week? Did Mr. Murray interest himself at all in the duties performed by two mentally deficient or feeble-minded women, at the depot, and is he satisfied on that score? It is impossible to disregard the condition—and the smell—of the nursery, and the bathroom off the passage at the end of it, where the milk for the babies' bottles is kept, a happy feeding place for flies. Mr. Murray, it is understood, recognises the need for new arrangements here. But how many babies, sick and healthy, were in this nursery on the occasion of his visit, and did he consider the staff numerous enough to give these children a fair chance? Did he consider the isolation of the so-called isolation tent effective; or were, on the occasion of his visit, any of the occupants of that tent following the matron, for whom they appear to have much affection, along the verandahs of the nursery? How many toys did he see, how many books, how many children playing games? Were all the children under twelve, on that occasion, brought indoors directly after school to prepare for tea and bed, whilst a bright sun shone outside, and fair winds played amongst the grasses? Was there anyone who showed a happy, merry, childish irresponsibility? And lastly, did Mr. Murray make any inquiries as to the reason why so many children—over ninety during this present week—should be in a depot which is only a receiving home, and as to the length of time already spent by each individual child in the depot?

The state of affairs which provokes these questions is the result of a system which the most enlightened observers of child-life in our midst utterly condemn. Last November a large and influential deputation of men and women interested in the welfare of children, urged upon the Premier the adoption of the system of dealing with State wards that obtains in South Australia and New South Wales, the appointment of an honorary council of philanthropic men and women to assume control of all wards of the State. The Premier promised to obtain from the authorities in those two States reports as to the working of the honorary councils there. Is it to much to ask that he will gratify the members of that deputation by making public the result of his inquiries? Pending his reply, it may be interesting just to glance at some of the achievements of the New South Wales "State Children's Relief Board." Like the Victorian Neglected Children's Department, it pursues the system of boarding out all possible children in real homes. This boarding-out of children, it may be said, is the one feature of the Victorian system which everybody unites in warmly commending. But for the children who cannot be boarded out, or sent to service, for the naughty, the sick, the sore-eyed, the syphilitic, the Victorian department provides — the Royal-park Depot! Let the New South Wales board be judged by its deeds. It has established nine cottage homes in rural surroundings for invalid, crippled, and afflicted children: one of these is a home for feeble-minded children, with a specially trained kindergartner to teach the unfortunate little ones; another is a home for children suffering from ophthalmia. Besides these the board has a cottage home farm and four cottage homes for wayward lads committed by the children's courts to the care of the board. Some of the boys work on the farm, which supplies all the cottage homes at Mittagong with milk, vegetables, fruit, and other products. As well as farm and dairy work, the boys are taught bootmaking, blacksmithing, and carpentering. They have helped in the construction of some of the houses: and the crippled and otherwise physically defective children share in the bootmaking industry. All the boots required for the children in the cottage homes, as well as for the outfits of boarded-out children, are made in these workshops. There are trained teachers and skilled artisans in charge of all this work. The boys in the farm homes attend the Mittagong public school. Mentally and morally deficient lads are cared for in two separate homes. The board employs a dentist to look after the children's teeth, and his whole time is occupied in attending to them.

In addition to all these undertakings, the board makes very special provisions for the preservation of infant life. It has a small country home for sick babies: a babies' hospital, to which mothers are admitted with their sick babies; and still another home to which women who apply to board out their babies with foster-mothers are admitted, if they can be persuaded to remain in order to nurse their own babies. Doctors say that babies under six months of age who are seriously ill have a very small chance of life unless they are nursed by their own mothers. The New South Wales board recognises this as a principle, and it takes the mother into hospital with her baby, and refuses to board out a baby with a stranger if the mother can nurse it herself. On Tuesday last the city coroner made some scathing comments on the Victorian system of encouraging the mother to part with her child. It will interest those who read the report of his inquiry to learn how the New South Wales board have met this problem, to look on this picture—and on this. There is, however, one aspect of such a comparison that ought not to be ignored—the relative costs of the two systems. According to the report of the Victorian Neglected Children's department for 1910, the number of children being provided for on December 31 of that year was 6,860, and the total cost, inclusive of payments made by parents for their children, was £89,689/11/. The report of the New South Wales board for 1911 shows 8,680 children provided for at a total cost of £94,064/5/9. Roughly, each child under the protection of the State costs the people of Victoria £13 a year: each child cared for by the Citizens' Board in New South Wales costs the people of that State £11. We leave the public to judge which State is getting the better value for its money.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir.—On behalf of the Child-Saving Council of Victoria, I wish to thank you for your article on "The Care of State Wards." This council has been aware for some time past of the unsatisfactory condition under which some children in the care of the Neglected Children's department continue to exist. The only remedy seems to us to lie in the reorganisation and control of the department. A voluntary council, to deal with neglected children, working through the permanent officials of the department, has always seemed the best method available. It has proved successful in New South Wales, South Australia, and in Canada, and a somewhat similar control has been suggested to be the best way of dealing with the difficult problems in Great Britain. This view has been urged upon the Government by deputations, &c., but so far the present chaotic state of things continues, or, at least, no sufficient action has been taken. We are once more urging upon the Minister the pressing need of immediate attention to the conditions existing under the Neglected Children's department.—Yours, &c.,

PATTIE DEAKIN,
Vice-president Child-Saving Council of Victoria.

May 9. Argus 10.5.12

WARDS OF THE STATE. Argus 10/5/12

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir.—The executive of the National Council of Women of Victoria wish to very heartily endorse the excellent article in "The Argus" to-day, entitled "The Care of State Wards." The manner in which the state of affairs at the Neglected Children's department depot at Royal-park was discovered may be very instructive to review at this stage. About two years ago a well-known lady was asked by a poor girl to get her sister out of the depot. In the course of inquiries regarding this case, a very dreadful state of affairs was brought to light. This lady then obtained permission for herself and friends—many of them professionally trained men and women—to visit the depot. They were horrified, and wondered how such a state of affairs could continue under a Government department. The facts were laid before the Premier, who asked for a written report, which, after another visit to the depot, was furnished to him, and he promised to consider it.

Some time after, another party of ladies and gentlemen, accompanied by the Treasurer (Mr. Watt), Mr. M'Bride, and officials connected with the Neglected Children's department, visited and inspected the depot. After this visit a report was called for from two Government medical men. This report was furnished, and, as the article in "The Argus" states, condemned the institution completely. This report has never been published, and the National Council of Women has asked for it, but the request has not been granted. A deputation, in which this council took part, then waited on the Premier, to ask that a voluntary council of men and women should be appointed to control this work, it being understood that such councils had been very successful elsewhere. Again there were promises of consideration, but nothing further has been done.

We now find, on the authority of the article to-day, that the state of things at the depot is still bad. Is it not time that the public generally, and the women of Victoria especially, should direct their energies towards the ending of such conditions? Is it not possible to obtain for our State wards the ordinary decent conditions such as are the right of every child in a civilised community.—Yours, &c., on behalf of executive.

JESSIE J. F. STRONG, V.P.,
MARGARATTA M'INERNY, V.P.

May 9.

Age 11-5-12

In the course of an inquest held last Tuesday on the deaths of three children who had been "boarded out" under the provisions of the Infant Life Protection Act, Dr. Cole drew pointed attention to a peculiar anomaly in the working of the statute. It appears that whenever the mother of a "boarded out" child fails for a period of four weeks to make the prescribed payments the child automatically becomes a ward of the State, and is removed from the protective jurisdiction of the Coroner. Should such a child die before the mother falls into arrears its death must be reported to the Coroner, but once it has become a ward of State, even though it remains in the same home, the Coroner has no right to investigate its death. "All an unmotherly mother has to "do to get rid of her child," said Dr. Cole, "is to get four weeks in arrears." And he declared his opinion that the Act should be amended so as to afford all children thus placed the protection which must accrue from the knowledge that a searching investigation will be made in every case of death. The counsel thus offered to Parliament acquires great weight from the circumstance that it has been advanced in a most unselfish and disinterested manner, for the amendment of the Act suggested would substantially increase the Coroner's work without adding to his remuneration. Dr. Cole made it clear that he is solely concerned with the interests of the children. "Everything makes for the advan- "tage of those people who do not look "after their children," he remarked, and he added: "These inquests are more in the "interests of the children than any other "person. . . . These are the cases I "think I should look into most closely."

In laying down the doctrine that the State is morally bound to surround the child life of the community with every possible species of safeguard, Dr. Cole has followed that same trend of philanthropic opinion which for some years past has been manifesting itself all over the world in a progressive supersession of the archaic patriarchal principle with an increasingly powerful recognition of the paramount rights of the rising generation. In a more primitive state of society the parent was absolute lord of his child's destiny, having rights trenching on the bounds of life and death. With the growth of civilisation, however, the importance of the child as a social unit gradually came to be realised, and by insensible degrees society usurped one after another the functions that formerly belonged exclusively to the individual parent. Notable instances of this process of usurpation abound in the Commonwealth. It was once the father's right, if he chose, to condemn his children to illiteracy. Society wrested this right from him for ever when it made education compulsory and universal. It was once the parents' unqualified right to deny his sick child any medical attendance. He dare not do so now, owing to the risk of being committed for manslaughter at an inquest into the death of his child, which in the absence of a medical certificate he could not evade. These are but casual examples of the inveterate forward looking of the modern mind. The ancients, wrote Joubert, said "our ancestors." We say "our children." We love more than the country and laws of our forefathers the country and laws of our children. It is the magic of the future and not of the past which seduces us. Progress is the mainspring of modernity. We are all banded in a mighty endeavor to effect the improvement of society, and we are inspired to labor by an instinctive understanding that we can only approach our goal by effecting an improvement of our race. The child, therefore, is coming rapidly into his kingdom, for he is the emblem, the custodian and the personification of futurity.

It is most interesting to observe how surely and steadily, even in the most conservative countries, the ancient legal bulwarks of patriarchalism are being battered and broken down. Some twenty years ago a case came before the English courts of justice in which that great philanthropist Dr. Barnardo was called upon to surrender to the parents a child whom he had rescued from a life of misery. The presiding judges were of the antique school of thought. They held the rights of the parent supreme over the welfare of the child, and they lectured Dr. Barnardo for having dared to dispute those rights, as though he were something very like a rebel and a contumacious wrongdoer. The revolutionary change which has been wrought by the two intervening decades is strikingly exemplified by a case decided last month in the King's Bench Division before Justices Hamilton, Darling and Pickford—The King versus Walker. This was a suit instituted by the law officers of the Crown to recover for his natural parents the possession of a male child who had been adopted in infancy by a woman named Walker. The parents were poor when the adoption took place, but they subsequently became well to do—in a position, indeed, to bequeath him a considerable fortune should they pre-decease him. Not unnaturally they desired to remove the boy from the possession of Mrs. Walker, whose circumstances were restricted, and to bring him up as their heir. It was argued that it would be more greatly to the interests of the child that he should be brought up by his natural parents (who professed great affection for him), in the expectation of riches, than to bring him up as a mere tradesman—the only prospect that the Walkers had to offer. Their Lordships, however, took another view. The evidence showed that the boy, who had been ten years with his adopted parents, had become deeply attached to them. He did not wish to leave them, and since the Walkers were able to assure him an education sufficient to earn a respectable living for himself, the Court unanimously refused to remove him from their custody.

Herein we have a whole-hearted acceptance, combined with a spirited assertion, of the new doctrine that a child has rights independent of his parents; that where parental wishes conflict therewith they should be ignored, and that the dominant consideration is the welfare and happiness of the child. The autocracy of the parent has, by this decision, absolutely vanished from the cognisance of British law. The question that must henceforth rule all judgments in disposition of infants is—What is best for the benefit of the child? The authority of the State is now supreme and indisputable. It can interfere with natural relations almost as freely as it pleases. If a stranger be able and willing to provide for a child better than the parents of the child, the State can remove the child from the parents' custody, even though the parents are fit to have charge of him, and hand him over to the stranger—always provided that the child desires the transfer. It is all a matter of the infant's independent rights. Quite lately the child's wishes, preferences and attachments were things of no account. They are now a part of his birthright. The modern doctrine, as most recently enunciated, involves the child's right to choose his own guardians, should a choice be possible for him, and it will only refuse to enforce his choice if compliance would entail an injury to his best interests. In a word, the State has become the over-parent of every child in the realm—no longer merely of the neglected or parentally unwanted child. The driving power of the new inspiration is, of course, futurity. With the past the State has no concern. Its interest in the present is sharp, but essentially evanescent. All its purposes are wrapped up in the future. It is because the individual dies and disappears, but the State is an immortal entity. It cannot die until the world is destroyed and human life becomes extinguished. Like the Wandering Jew, the State is incapable of suicide. It must, therefore, strive unceasingly to render its lot more comfortable by increasing the happiness and efficiency of its constituents, because its only hope of enjoying the life which it cannot relinquish lies in developing and establishing conditions of material well-being approximating the ideal. In a word, the State is compelled, for its own sake, to shrink from no functions and to neglect no service calculated to ensure a progressive promotion of citizen efficiency; and we have only to look closely into the operating mechanism of society to see that the child is inevitably becoming more and more the central figure and deus ex machina of the State.

in the care and feeding of infants, and the proper treatment of children's food. The scheme was adopted, and came into full operation in the middle of 1904, and has remained in full operation ever since.

WORKING OF THE SCHEME.

Some idea of the manner in which the scheme is worked may be gleaned from the fact that full lists of all births registered within the city of Sydney are obtained daily from the registrars of births, together with the addresses of the premises on which births have occurred. As soon as possible after receipt of this information, every house in a poor or thickly - populated district in which a birth has been registered is visited by a female inspector, and the nursing mother is interviewed and instructed verbally in the feeding and management of her child. Printed leaflets giving simple instructions on the same subject are handed to each mother visited. The principal instructions impressed on the mothers during these visits are the importance of breast feeding alone, until the children have attained an age of about seven months, the superiority of cow's milk over any other artificial food, and the importance of the clean storage of infant's food, and its protection from flies and dust.

THE RESULTS OF OPERATIONS.

A daily record of the names and addresses of all nursing mothers visited is kept, together with a record of certain other particulars obtained by the inspector. Over 5000 nursing mothers have already been visited, and the average of the children visited was 5.1 weeks. The results of the operations have been very satisfactory, and although the proportion of children entirely breast fed in 1904 (when the scheme was started) was only 72.2, it has risen at the end of 1908 to a long way over 80 per cent. This result is attributed entirely to the operation of the new scheme adopted by the council. The death rate at all ages per 1000 in Sydney, it may be remarked, fell from .96 in 1904 to .81 in 1907, and is still falling. The diarrhœal death rate does not depend only on infantile deaths, since it is contributed to by deaths at all ages, but from 70 to 75 per cent of all diarrhœal deaths are among children under 1 year of age.

EXTENDING THE SYSTEM.

The City Health Officer considers that under the circumstances a good case has been made out for extending the system of visiting nursing mothers to the suburbs of Sydney, or at least to the more populous and poorer class suburbs immediately suroundnig the city. The municipalities of Glebe Redfern, Newtown, Darlington, Camperdown, Alexandria, and Waterloo, have a combined population of about 100,000 persons, and are populated in the main by a class of persons who would benefit, in Dr Armstrong's opinion, from the establishment of a system of imparting instruction in the care and feeding of children to nursing mothers. He considers that one woman inspector would be able to deal with these districts suc-

DIRECTIONS TO MOTHERS.

In the circular issued to mothers by the lady inspector the following directions are given:—

With the advent of hot weather, diarrhoea in infants becomes very prevalent, and kills many infants every year. It may, in a great measure, be avoided by the exercise of ordinary care.

The best safeguards against the complaint are cleanliness of the house and yards, of the children themselves, and of their food.

All parts of a house should be freely ventilated and kept as clean as possible. Burn all the refuse that you can at once behind the kitchen fire. What you cannot burn put at once into a metal garbage receptacle, and keep the receptacle carefully covered.

Keep all your drains, sinks, and water-closets clean by frequent flushing with water. The free use of clean water for this purpose is better than the use of any disinfectant. Report any block or other defect of your drains at the Town Hall.

FEEDING THE INFANT.

Keep all food, and especially milk, in a clean, cool, well-ventilated place, and away from any position where impure air, flies, and dust may get at it. Flies often carry inyfection, and are very dangerous. Cover the milk jug with a piece of net to keep flies away.

It is safer to boil all milk as soon as it comes into the house. Bring it quickly to a boil, and cool it as rapidly as possible as soon as it has come to the boil. Keep it in a cool place till used.

Infants are best fed entirely from the mother's breast until they are seven months old. If this is impossible for any reason, the best food is fresh cow's milk, prepared so as to resemble mother's milk as closely as possible. An infant should not be given any farinaceous food, such as bread, arrowroot, cornflour, rice, etc., until the teeth appear. All such food is apt to cause diarrhœa. Avoid weaning a child during the hot weather.

Cow's milk may be prepared for infants under six weeks old by mixing one part of fresh new milk with one part of water or barley water. For older children, the proportion of milk may be gradually increased. Sweeten to taste.

DEATH IN THE BOTTLE.

Feeding bottles should be boat-shaped, and should have no rubber tube or glass tube. They should be fitted with a short rubber teat capable of being turned inside out for cleansing. The usual long feeding tube cannot be kept clean, and is very dangerous.

Do not place more food in a bottle at one time than will serve for one meal. Any milk left in a feeding bottle after feeding a child should be thrown away. The bottle should be cleansed and scalded with boiling water and rinsed, and then placed neck downwards to drain in a cool, clean place, where no dust can get into it. Keep the rubber teat carefully cleansed.

Condensed milk is never so good for infants as fresh milk.

Infants should be fed at regular intervals.

Do not overfeed.

When an infant is fretful or suffering from indigestion, it will often be found that it is having too much food. Overfeeding is nearly as harmful as underfeeding. For a few days after birth a child only requires ½oz of food at a time, every two hours, which may be gradually increased, until at two months old the baby gets 2oz for a meal. This amount should be increased by 1 oz each month up to six months, then by ½oz each month up to 12 months. After two months the child should be fed every 2½ hours, and in the sixth month the number of meals should be reduced to six per day.

A qualified medical practitioner should be at once called in to every case of severe diarrhœa or severe and continued vomiting in an infant.

Remove all soiled napkins and filth of any kind immediately from the room where a child is. Such things should not be allowed to remain in the room even for ten minutes.

The State's Best Asset.

Herald 21/9/08

Speaking on Saturday evening to the Australian Health Society on "The Care of Children," Mrs Edwards declared that children could only be healthily born where both parents had taken care of their own mental and physical health. And she went on to say that a large proportion of neurasthenic men and women, as well as the physical and moral degenerates, were the products of malnutrition during infancy and early youth. In these two sentences were contained the gist of an address all the more interesting because of the increasing attention that is being paid to public health, and especially to the health of the young, in this and every civilised State. Children are a State's best asset, and upon their well-being depends the future of the race. But it is necessary all the same to keep dinning this in the ears of the "giddy multitude," which pursues selfish pleasures with avidity, and takes no thought of what may be the effect upon posterity. Indeed, perhaps the most striking feature of civilisation to-day is that while altruism is reflected in social legislation and in all manner of philanthropic movements, there is a pronounced belief that pleasure is the chief end of man—and woman. Children are relegated to the background, and neither before nor after birth is sufficient attention given to their welfare. But if the race is to be strong and healthy physically and mentally, this suicidal policy of pleasure at the expense of posterity must be abandoned for one of unselfish living for the sake of posterity. Young men must refrain from over indulgence in sports and in habits that enfeeble the heart and the body generally, and young women must give up tight-lacing and pay more attention to their health than to fashion. They must give up the toys and take to the serious business of life, and the most serious business of life is to give the world healthy children. Parentage must be regarded as a sacred duty to be prepared for from youth. And when the children are born into the world they must be nourished wisely until they, too, are fit to take their part in the struggle for existence.

relief. The wife nearly always loses her last hope of being supported by the man to whom she was tied, and it is a gratification to him to be released from her and to be set free to ruin some other woman's life. In his Honor's opinion such men should be sent to gaol whether, when deserting their wives, they leave the State or not.

Public opinion will unquestionably support the Judge's view. When a man marries he accepts an obligation which the public interest requires that he shall perform unswervingly until released by either his wife's death or flagrant misconduct. Failure or neglect to discharge this duty inevitably reacts hurtfully upon the State. It is necessary for every deserted wife to live, Talleyrand's ironical epigram notwithstanding. If able to make her own living she deprives some other worker of employment. If not, she becomes a charge on public or private charity. In either case a wrong has been inflicted on society, and the person culpably responsible is the deserting husband. Neither mercy nor pity, therefore, should be extended to such backsliding recalcitrants. They are public enemies, and society ought to protect itself, and especially its weaker members, from their depredations. There is no means to achieve this object save by wresting from them their physical liberty to misbehave and continue misbehaving. Under a scientific penal system such fellows might be compelled to act the part of decent citizens in spite of themselves. For example, they might be set to some useful productive task in gaol, and the proceeds of their enforced labor—after deducting the cost to the State of their prison maintenance—might be applied to the support of their deserted dependants. Unfortunately we are still a long way off considering the penal question properly, and the stupid outcry against the competition of prison labor still affrights the unthinking amongst us. But it may be confidently predicted that the logic of facts and circumstances will ultimately avail to inspire us to a saner standpoint. Certain it is that our present attitude is ridiculous. To insist that our penal institutions shall remain a constant burden on the taxpayers when they might easily be made self-supporting is to outrage the most elemental principle of political economy. And for what?—a mere sentiment, an unreasonable, purblind prejudice. Free workers, it is contended, should not be subjected to the competition of criminals. That idea, obviously insensate as it is—for our criminals are nevertheless Victorian citizens, and if they were all set free to-morrow they would have to earn their livelihood by competing with the workers who are free to-day—has up to this date succeeded in confusing the intelligence of some men, who cannot see that while preventing our prisoners from doing productive work in gaol we are actually maintaining these vagabonds in unproductive idleness; ay, and maintaining the dependants of many of the criminals as well.

One frequently afforded illustration will serve to demonstrate the utter folly of the system. It is that of that human monster the wife beater. He is usually a wage earner in modest circumstances, living more or less from hand to mouth. For some reason or for no reason at all he suddenly decides to beat his wife half to death. He does so and is sent to gaol for perhaps two or three months. In gaol he does nothing more useful than pick oakum, and he enjoys a fine lazy, comfortable, well fed holiday at the State's expense. He could be made to earn his keep and something more, but the free laborer will not let him do that. Meanwhile the wife he has abused and his children, if he has any, bereft of their bread-winner's services, promptly feel the pinch of want. The wife either finds work or wins her sustenance from charity. The punishment of her husband's crime, therefore, does not fall on him, the criminal; it is shared between the taxpayer, who pays for his holiday, and his unfortunate wife and children, left destitute by his defection. Surely it is time that our legislators put a term to the apathy that has so long deterred them from reforming a system capable of causing so much fiscal waste and moral mischief.

THE NATURAL WAY.

Herald 14.1.09

SAVING A GREAT ASSET.

THE LIVES OF INFANTS.

WHAT IS DONE IN SYDNEY.

Some little time ago some striking figures were given in a Sydney message regarding the success which had attended the efforts by the Sydney Board of Health and the City Council to induce mothers to realise their responsibilities, and to instruct them in the proper methods of rearing their offspring, so that many valuable lives—the best national asset—might be saved to the State, and the rate of infantile mortality be reduced.

It is well known that the obligation of mothers towards their offspring, in the matter of nursing, is one which appears not to be fully recognised in very many instances. In some cases the frail condition of women is sufficient reason for not undertaking a task which others would feel but lightly; in other, the mothers are obliged to be absent from home the entire day, earning money to support the family; a third class finds the social engagements so many and so exacting that, unless they break away they cannot be at home to fulfil their duties of motherhood. The authorities in Sydney, realising the serious loss of life which results from ignorance and neglect in the matter of feeding infants, have made special endeavor to spread knowledge among the less well-informed.

DR. THOMPSON EXPLAINS.

Dr. Ashburton Thompson, president of the New South Wales Board of Health, when seen on the subject, gave a short account of what has been, and what is still being, done in the direction indicated.

"In 1904," he said, "a woman sanitary inspector was attached to the sanitary staff of the Sydney City Council. Her duty was to visit a house at which a birth had recently taken place, to see the mother, and to exhort her to feed the infant exclusively from the breast milk. If that was impossible, she was to advise the mother as to the next best way of rearing the infant."

"However, her main duty was to confirm those who suckled their infants in doing so, and to encourage those who did not to undertake to do so at the next birth. During the four years that have since elapsed, 4748 nursing mothers were thus visited, or 53 per cent. of all births registered, or 67 per cent. of all births which took place elsewhere than in public institutions. The average date at which each visit was paid after confinements was 5.3 weeks.

A MARKED EFFECT.

"The effect of this is shown by figures touching the proportion of children found to be entirely breast fed, and compared with the death rate from diarrhoea disease. In 1904, at the beginning of this method, 72 per cent. of the children visited were found to be entirely breast fed; in the next year the proportion was 77; the following year, 70.79; and in 1907 it was 80 per cent. Deaths from diarrhoea diseases declined from .96 per thousand to .81 of the whole population, adult and infantile together. These two series of data seem to point to the inspection and instruction as being the cause of the increase of breast feeding, and the diminution of deaths from diarrhoea.

"This plan having been tried within the area of the city of Sydney, which has a population of only 106,000, or thereabouts—naturally a diminishing population—the Board of Health considered that the system should be extended to the more populous suburbs outside the city, and at its meeting on November 10 last, urged the Minister to agree to the appointment of another woman inspector to carry on the work in those districts. The selected districts have a population of about 200,000. In choosing which house shall be visited, regard is had, primarily, to financial status. That is to say, the poorer homes are visited in preference to or before those in which the mothers may be supposed to already have the advantage of the advice of a doctor."

CITY COUNCIL AT WORK.

The City Council of Sydney, under the direction of the Government Medical Officer, has been doing a great deal during the past four years to get mothers to go in for the natural way of feeding their young children. It is calculated that fully 65 per cent. of all the mothers in the community, other than those in public institutions, have been visited by the council's lady inspector, and that very many lives have been saved as the result of the system.

In 1904 Dr. Armstrong laid before the City Council a scheme which he said at the time would tend to the reduction of mortality from infantile diarrhœa in particular, and infantile mortality in general, through the better instruction of nursing mothers. The principal feature of the scheme consisted in the employment of a trained woman inspector to visit the mothers of all children born in poor and thickly-populated neighborhoods in the city, and instruct mothers