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29/10/41

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Visitation Report of BINDOON

COMMUNITY

- 1 Br Sebastian Bresnehan, Superior is hard working and devoted to his duties. Owing to the circumstances of the place and the presence of a dairy, it was almost impossible for the three Brothers who formed the Community, to perform all their religious exercises together. Br Sebastian usually rises at five, has his prayers and then goes to the dairy with some boys.
It seems to me that Br Sebastian is not the correct type to to be in charge of a Government subsidised Institution which is so closely watched by the Child Welfare Dept. and so much under the notice of the public, owing to the Court cases that are being constantly sent to Bindoon. He is very easily depressed and at times, finds it difficult to restrain himself from giving vent to pent up feelings. I think that he can't help being the victim of varying moods, hence it would be better, in my opinion, to sent him to some place where his duties would be more mechanical than in Bindoon.
- 2 Br Conrad Fricker, Domestic was a member of this Community at the time of the Visitation. He has since severed his connection with the Congregation and hence there is no use in enlarging on him.
- 3 Br Isidore Howe, Domestic is 29 years of age and has made 4th Vows. He is an exemplary religious and is efficient as a stock man; he had some years of experience before joining the Brothers, in mixed farming.

Bindoon is now a subsidised School

For WARDS of the STATE

The Lotteries Commission gave us £2,500 in order to enable us to establish an independent School for DELINQUENT boys.

Up to last October, DELINQUENT boys used to be committed to Clontarf by the Court where they mixed up with innocent children ~~with~~ sometimes with bad results. The State paid little or nothing for such boys in Clontarf.

The Provincial Council decided to establish such a Home in Bindoon, provided the Government subsidised it. For political and other reasons, the State Cabinet refused on three occasions this year to grant us a subsidy. After bringing much influence to bear on the matter, the Cabinet finally recognised Bindoon as a Govt. subsidised School for wards of the State. The Government pays at the rate of £1 per week per boy up to the number of 10 boys and 15/ per week for all boys over the number of 10.

If Bindoon is placed under capable management and given a staff of Brothers capable of managing the type of boy that is being sent there, its future financial position is assured and untold good can be done for the Church amongst a much neglected class.

No effort should be spared to make the School a success, but



Visitation Report of BINDOON

I feel convinced that the present Superior cannot cope with the difficulties, especially the initial ones connected with such a difficult mission.

Finance

O/D on 20th Oct. '41.....	£4,634
On 21 St. Oct. '41 credited with Lotteries money	2,518
O/D	2,116
Loan from St. Vincent's Orph. S. Melbourne.....	500
	2,818
TOTAL DEBT.....	£2,616

With an income of say, £500 per year from the Govt., plus Child Endowment, plus Farm produce, there should be no fear, from a financial stand point, of the future of Bindoon, provided we keep the correct type of Community in it. The latter, to my mind is going to be the main factor on which the future success of this important Institution will depend.

No permission was obtained from the Provincial for the loan from South Melbourne Orphanage, by the Superior of Bindoon to borrow or the Superior of the Orphanage to make the loan. All this was very irregular, to my ~~mind~~ way of thinking.

The total expenditure for 1940 amounted to.....£850
 The total income for 1940 amounted to 601
 Of this amount £250 was a donation from Clontarf.
 The remainder was derived from Farm produce—Wool, Cream and pigs.

During 1940 and '41 a new wing was erected by the Clontarf boys under the supervision of Mr S. Bresnehan and Br Paul Heaney. The building is constructed of stone obtained on the property, with a roof of tiles and concrete verandahs. The contract value of the building is £5,000. Owing to the influence of Br Paul and the cheap labour of the boys, the wing has cost less than £1,000. Most of this expenditure has been met by Clontarf.

The front portion of the building is now being built together with one large room of the second wing.

The present Community consists of the Superior, Br Sebastian Bresnehan and the Sub Superior, Mr Peter O'Sullivan and volunteer helpers.

Matters needing attention

- (a) If the School is to be a success, it is essential to replace the present Superior by one who is willing and capable of handling the unusual type of boy that is being sent to Bindoon and also one who has been proved as a financier. The present Superior has neither the temperament nor the ability to deal with this

important Institution, the first of its kind we have taken on in Australia. When I was making out a case for the subsidy for the boys who are wards of the State and likely to be cared for in our proposed Home for Delinquent boys, I was reminded of time and again that the Catholic Church had such a Home, run by the Oblate Fathers in Glendalough, but for want of numbers it had to be closed, while an Institution run by another religious body was crowded.

- (b) The work connected with the dairy should be so arranged as to enable the Brothers and boys to finish their morning prayers, before beginning the day's work. Since the financial position is so much improved, the dairy need not be run on such a large scale
- (c) The Lord Abbot of New Norcia told me that he would consider the matter of giving the Brothers a resident chaplain. If finance will permit, this would be an excellent move for the spiritual benefit of the Brothers and boys.
- (d) Br Peter O'Sullivan has not much control of boys, hence it will be essential to send a Brother with special aptitude for managing boys of the type that are being sent to Bindoon, in addition to the Superior.

P. A. Carley.

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EXPENDITURE, 1941

Total expenditure for the year..... £1991 12 3

The above expenditure made up as follows :-

Farm expenditure.....	827	17	5
New wing.....	606	10	3
Household expenditure.....	557	4	7
	<u>1991</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>

I noticed that the Brother in charge of the sheep spent £345 in buying in what he considered a good type of sheep. I am afraid that this Brother has had too much freedom in expending, otherwise he would not have run the House into so much expenditure in buying in what he termed a good breed, as before he went there our place in Bindoon topped the market for fat lamb prices. Some 5 or 6 years ago, about 350 stud ewes were sent to Bindoon from one of the best stud farms in W.A. with a view to breeding up first class sheep which, I understand from Mr P.O'Sullivan they did for some years, hence if they had kept the ewe lambs each year and crossing them with a proper type of ram, there would not have been any need to put this poor House to this high expense. However, this Brother is now in Tardun and is under the direction of another Br, as far as buying is concerned.

From the books(account) it seems that the accounts could not have been kept accurately, but it would not be fair to take too much heed of this, owing to the multitude of duties that fell to the lot of the Superior in 1941.

I notice that the total deposits in the Bank during 1941 amounted to £3,859. This does not include petty cash which must have been considerable in a place like Bindoon where the truck goes to Perth two or three times each week.

The O/D at the commencement of '41 was	£4449.
.. .. . end .. '41 ..	2700
Payments during '41	1991
Total income in	3792

Under the new conditions existing in Bindoon, its future, as far as finance is concerned is assured, as long as we can make a success of the Court cases. From this aspect the Institution is an undoubted success under the present Superior. When he took it over from his predecessor the number of Court cases was reduced to five and now it is more than double that number and the all seem very happy and are helpful in the working of the place. Mr Paul's predecessor, although anxious to make the Court cases a success, at the end lost all hope of doing so. Mr Paul, on the other hand has implicit confidence in his ability to deal with these cases and from my observations, he has succeeded admirably.

From my calculations, the Annual income from Government sources should not be less than £1500 a year. To this is to be added the farm produce, which under the matured and intelligent guidance of Mr Paul, should be considerable.

The spirit of co-operation between the co-ordinated *Institutions*

NEED FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE FOUR CO-ORDINATED INSTITUTIONS
 Without mutual co-operation and good will it will be difficult to work the four Institutions efficiently. This aspect of the Scheme cannot be too much emphasised.

Castledare is the cradle or supply source for the other Institutions, but unfortunately the Superior there is narrow in his outlook of the scope and comprehensiveness of the Scheme, as a whole, confines his activities to his own Institution, is anxious to run Castledare as a separate unit and has expressed an unwillingness to allow his little boys to be drafted to the other Institutions at the time laid down by members of the Provincial Council and is unwilling to part with surplus money to assist the other Institutions in accordance with the Provincial's directions and has even sought outside advice in connection with this matter.

The Superior of Bindoon is an outstanding example of everything that tends to make for the success of the Scheme, as a whole. Since the evacuation, his trucks are constantly on the move gathering up donated provisions in Perth and elsewhere, loading them on the train for Tardun and the evacuees there from Clontarf. He correctly views the whole Scheme as one and in this respect he is faithfully carrying out the wishes of the Provincial.

The Superior of Clontarf views matters in exactly the same light as Mr Paul Keaney and is broad and generous in his outlook on all matters connected with the general good of each Institution; he is always ready to carry out the suggestions of the Provincial and members of his Council for the well-being of the Scheme, as a whole.

It may be too soon to judge the aptitude of the present Superior of Tardun for the very complicated and important assigned to him as Superior of this many-sided Institution. From my own observation and from what I have heard from some of the members of the Tardun community I am doubtful about his ability and vision to deal successfully with the Scheme. It seems to me that he is too inert, too lacking in originality, too mechanical and too much inclined to follow the "Laissez faire" method to make a success of a Scheme which requires the man at the head of affairs to possess all the solid virtues of the Religious State, much originality, a keen sense of detail and a comprehensive vision to enable him to grasp all that the Scheme stands for and to appreciate, help and sympathise with its real material object viz to settle our boys on the land on their own account, without adding to our financial obligations. We have already achieved this objective in the case of one trainee who is now owner of his own home and one of the most prosperous farmers in the district. He worked the farm, as a probationer for five years. We held the returns from the produce from which we deducted our own expenses and utilised the remainder to reduce the debt on the property, down to £1000. He became responsible for the debt of £1000. At the time that he took over the debt from us we owed him £70 on account of the sale of produce, which sum we paid him when we handed him over the deeds of the property. The Land Settlement Scheme has been tried out during exceptionally bad seasons and it has succeeded beyond expectations.

From my talks with Mr Hilary about the Land Settlement Scheme and other activities connected with Tardun, I feel that he has not grasped the position and is not likely to do so. It is the Land Settlement Scheme that has made the great appeal to the Government, Bishops, Priests and Public and has meant many thousand pounds to Tardun in the past and is likely to make a greater appeal in the future, if properly worked. Now that the financial position is practically assured, it would be a great pity to allow a more serious embarrassment to undermine a Scheme that such wonderful possibilities for the boys, the Church, the State and our own reputation

I hope that it is not out of place here to refer to one phase of the recent evacuation of the Clontarf boys (those of School-going age) to Tardun. This necessitated the transfer of the Superior of Clontarf, Fr. M. Fagan to Tardun, where he had been Superior until the beginning of the present year, for Departmental and other reasons.

There are over 100. SEE PAGE 6

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The Superior of Clontarf views matters in exactly the same light as Fr. M. Fagan and he broad and generous in his outlook on all matters connected with the general good of each Institution; he is always ready to accept the suggestions of the Provincial and members of his Council for the well-being of the Scheme as a whole.

It may be too soon to judge the attitude of the present Superior of Clontarf, but the very commendable and important assistance rendered by him to the many-abled Institution from his own observation and from some of the members of the Dublin community whom I have heard from about his ability and vision to deal successfully with the Scheme, it seems to me that he is too inert, too lacking in originality, too inclined to follow the "wisdom" of the Provincial and too much inclined to follow the lead of the man at the head of the Scheme which requires the man at the head of the Scheme to possess all the solid virtues of the religious state, much more than a keen sense of detail and a comprehensive vision of the whole. He is too ready to accept the standards for and to appreciate the merits and demerits with the least material object view to settle our own affairs and without adding to our financial obligations. We have already achieved this objective in the case of one farmer who is now owner of his own home and one of the most prosperous farmers in the district. He worked the farm as a probationer for five years. We held the returns from the produce from which we deducted our own expenses and utilized the remainder to reduce the debt on the property down to £1000. We became responsible for the debt of £1000. At the time that he took over the debt from us we owed him £750 on account of the sale of produce, which sum we paid him when we handed him over the deeds of the property. The land settlement Scheme has been tried out during exceptional years and it has succeeded beyond expectations. From my talks with Fr. M. Fagan about the land settlement Scheme and other activities connected with it, I feel that he has not grasped the position and is not likely to do so. The land settlement Scheme has been the most successful of any carried out in the past and is likely to have a wider appeal in the future. It properly worked out the financial position is practically assured, it would be a great pity to allow a man of his experience and vision to be lost to the Scheme and our work.

Clontarf boys now in Tardun and they supply the major portion of the net revenue which is necessary to maintain the three separate sections now in residence in Tardun-Geraldton, Tardun proper and Clontarf. From my previous knowledge of Br Hilary I was under the impression that ~~that~~ he would be sensitive enough to the feelings of others and sufficiently broad in his outlook to meet the critical and difficult position that arose ~~over~~ in connection with the evacuation, but from what I have heard from Br Maximus and others it seems that he, to a great extent, ignores the Superior of Clontarf, fails to consult him in matters that are vital to the well-being of the place and the boys from Clontarf. Personally, I think that Br Hilary may do tolerably well as Superior of an ordinary day school but I have lost confidence in his ability and tact to deal with a complex situation like Tardun or even to successfully direct a Boarding School. There is much room for close scrutiny of the Tardun affairs at the next Visitation.

Points needing attention in Bindoon

- (a) The appointment of a local Bursar ~~bindoon~~
- (b) Cleanliness inside and outside require close attention in Bindoon, owing to the number of critical Govt. Officials and others who visit the Institution. I have asked Br Regis Wexted to attend to this matter in future.
- (c) Before the advent of the present Superior to Bindoon a bad and even dangerous practice existed in Bindoon in connection with trips by truck to Perth. Brothers have been known to spend two, three and even four days in Perth and this, on occasions, without any real necessity. They always found excuses when questioned but I am satisfied that some, at least, did not justify a Brother from being away from his own community and that at times, without the knowledge of his Superior, as the phone was not connected, at the time. The present Superior is exact on this point, still I consider that a hint from the Provincial as to his mind on this matter would do much to support myself and the Superior in our efforts to stop this form of irregularity.
- (d) The morning prayers are sometimes commenced before 6 45 by the Superior. This results in some Brothers who are anxious to be in time, coming late for this important exercise.
- (e) The monthly Retreat was omitted in April, the only ~~month~~ occasion on which the Retreat could be held since the period of the evacuation.
- (f) Accusation of faults has not been held. It is difficult to carry out this rule, owing to want of accommodation. The verandahs are all occupied with beds, hence it would be difficult even to use the chapel for the purpose of accusation. Extra accommodation will be soon provided and then there will be no reasonable excuse ~~for~~ for the omission.
- (g) Some of the boys in the kitchen sometimes come late for mass and this without real necessity.