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Visitation Report of BINDOON

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CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT REPORT - 1947

The Secretary.

1. On the 29th instant I accompanied yourself and Mr E Turnbull, Dental Officer, Public Health Department, to St Joseph Farm and Trades School, Bindoon, and made an inspection of the premises and migrant boys in residence.

2. I saw each of the 20 migrant boys personally and it seems obvious that they have been specially selected in one group as they appear to be of poorer average mentality than other migrants who arrived in the same party. Although I will have to make some adverse criticism in this report, it must be realised that Brother McGee has a difficult task ahead to train and educate this class of boy.

On the 16th instant we made a brief visit to this Institution and as a result criticism was made of the general conditions prevailing. It is observed that there is now some improvement, but I consider that the conditions are still not up to the standard required by this ~~Department~~ Department. The domestic staff reported to have been engaged consists of the Matron, Miss G Warner who has been at this Home for some time; her niece, Miss J Warner, a girl of tender years, who commenced her duties on the 28th instant and Mrs Toy. As these women have only recently commenced their duties it may be too early to expect great improvement.

3. The dormitories have improved to a certain extent. Beds and bedding are good and it was noted that they were covered with clean counterpanes. A small oval fibre mat was beside each bed. The dormitories however in general are not attractive. There is no provision whatever for lockers, but Brother McGee stated that 100 wooden lockers were on order to overcome this difficulty. The ablution facilities are in the course of transfer from the original block, to the new building. Hot and cold showers in the bath in terrazo work in the new building are now being used. These facilities are satisfactory for the present, but should be completed before further admissions are accepted. The sanitary conveniences and urinal, which were newly erected, were inspected and found clean and satisfactory.

4. Dining-room:

The boys were seen at lunch, which consisted of baked rabbit, cabbage, potatoes, swedes and sweets, with ample bread and milk. The table-cloths and serviettes were not as clean as could be expected. It is noted that the boys apparently do not wash their hands prior to meal-times and in consequence the edges of the table-cloth quickly become dirty. New three-legged stools have been provided, which I do not think are as satisfactory as a wooden chair with a straight back. It was noted that the boys were inclined to hunch over their meals instead of sitting up straight.



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as they would in a chair. This aspect was pointed out to Brother McGee, but he maintains that the stools are more serviceable.

5. General Health:

It is stated that there has been no case of illness and from my observations the boys are all free from any sores. All were examined by the Dental Officer and, except for minor extractions and scaling, were reported to be above average.

EDUCATION: It is Brother McGee's opinion that all boys are retarded by approximately two years, but he prefers to reserve his comments and final statement until the end of the year, when he has had greater opportunity to assess their ability.

The classrooms are dull, dingy and dirty, and appear to lack facilities for teaching. One room is fitted with standard type desks, but no other facilities exist; it is even lacking a blackboard.

6. Trainee Boys:

The following boys have left school and are engaged in duties on the property -

- REDACTED** - learning tractor driving and general duties. He is stated to be dull and not showing great aptitude.
- REDACTED** - employed in the dairy shed. Although backward is reported to be shaping well and with proper training may become an efficient rural worker.
- REDACTED** - employed on dairy work and in the wool-shed. Progress very good and shows much aptitude.
- REDACTED** - a dairy and general hand. Work good and normal progress. I pointed out that on the nominal roll he is stated to be 13 years of age, but Brother McGee informed me that he has now turned 14.
- REDACTED** **REDACTED** was making no progress whatsoever at school and is now engaged in general house duties. He does not show any aptitude whatsoever for farm work.

7. Generally I was not impressed in any way with the appearance of these boys. Personal cleanliness was not good and their hair was unruly. Clothing was very poor, and, in most instances, dirty. Footwear was noticeable for the variety of shoes, sandals and sandshoes, all in extremely bad condition and apparently beyond repair. Except for the fact that stone bruising is prevalent owing to the nature of the country, I would suggest that these boys would be better off without shoes. It is obvious that these boys lack personal supervision in respect of their clothing and hygiene. I pointed out these matters to Brother McGee, but he seemed to consider that the present standard was satisfactory. He points out that it is difficult to keep these boys clean, particularly in the winter months when the grounds are inclined to be muddy. I would suggest that they be suitably clothed during their school hours and in their leisure hours be permitted to change into play-clothes.



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A new dairy is in the course of erection and it is Brother McGee's ambition to have this completed and in use at the earliest possible date. There is no doubt that the design and workmanship of this building are good and it will be an extremely valuable addition to the property, but I think this aspect should pend until such time as the domestic arrangements and facilities are functioningsatisfactorily.

8. In view of these conditions I cannot recommend that any more boys be admitted to this Institution until such time as an improvement is made in the general standard of clothing and cleanliness and better facilities for education provided.

(Sgd) R G Marriott

Institution Officer

Covering Letter from Mr H T McMinn (Sec) to Mr P_ R_ Jackson, Secretary to the Archbishop of Perth:

Dear Mr Jackson,

I forward you herewith a copy of a report made by Mr R G Marriott, my Institution Officer, on the conditions prevailing at St_ Joseph's Farm School, Bindoon.

I may say that I am in full accord with the report submitted to me by Mr Marriott. The conditions at Bindoon are not good. As a matter of fact, the educational facilities provided for the boys are most inadequate and I fail to see how they can receive proper schooling. Furthermore, the conditions generally do in no way conform to those at other Institutions, or for that matter the provisions of the Child Welfare Act.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd) H T McMinn

Secretary