

BOXHILL BOYS' HOME

15th May, 1958

Inspection of Boxhill Boys' Home continued for a period of 2½ days. During that time the boys in the Home were seen, and the relevant information recorded on their various files.

Accommodation:

Boxhill Boys' Home is in three different sections:

- (a) Number 1. Accommodation: 50 boys.
Ages 11 years to 15 years
Staff: 1 male
4 females (of whom 3 are Salvation Army officers).
- (b) Number 3. Accommodation: 38 boys.
Ages 6 years to 8 years.
Staff: 1 male
3 females (of whom 3 are Salvation Army officers).
- (c) Number 4. Accommodation: 32 boys
Ages 8 years to 11 years.
Staff: Married couple

Other members of staff: 3 married couples (Salvation Army officers).

Schooling:

Primary school in grounds, attended only by the institutional children.

Staff: 4 teachers. Grades include one opportunity grade.

Secondary School: Boys attend Boxhill and Blackburn High School, and the Burwood Technical School.

Clothing and Personal Appearance:

The boys, generally, were suitably clad for the season, but footwear was in poor condition.

Diet:

No special plan for the diet; mainly fruit and vegetables in season. A number of boys complained that diet is sometimes monotonous. This was discussed with Brigadier Theaker who will investigate and if complaint justified, will arrange more variety.

Medical Attention:

Dr. Atkinson, who is available any time.

Dental:

School Dental Service have visited 3 times during the last 18 months to give the boys a general check-up. Mr. Bird, Elgar Road, gives any urgent attention.

Sick Bay:

There is a room set aside with 4 beds which is suitably equipped for its purpose.

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Deterrents to Misbehaviour:

1. Corporal punishment: A number of the boys reported that they had received corporal punishment from various officers. This was later discussed with Brigadier Theaker who said he already had been worried about discovery of the ways in which two members of the Boxhill staff (Mr. Sangster and Major Briggs) had been treating the boys. Of such two officers, one had already ~~been dismissed~~ ^{voluntarily left}, and the other was about to be discharged. (Subsequently, this one has now actually gone).

Brigadier Theaker admitted he, too, had also been administering corporal punishment to the boys.

He was not aware of the Children's Welfare Act or Regulations as no copies had been left by his predecessor. Inspector has subsequently given him copies and discussed import with him. In consequence, Brigadier Theaker will now reorganise so as to comply with prohibition of corporal punishment. He will need time to change his system, and Inspector has suggested that position be reviewed again in three months.

Later, Brigadier Darlow from the Salvation Army Headquarters, contacted Inspector. He said that he had been discussing Inspector's visit with Brigadier Theaker. He said that the Salvation Army were endeavouring to comply with the Regulations, and it was unfortunate that Salvation Army officer and another employed person had, in particular, used harsh treatment with the boys.

Brigadier Darlow enquired as to whether it would be possible for Inspector's report to be forwarded on to him. Inspector said that it was not for him to say, but for the Director. Inspector told him that his request was similar to other requests received, and that the Director had usually discussed points with the people concerned if any change was necessary.

Both Brigadier Darlow and Brigadier Theaker appear anxious to correct the situation, and it is strongly recommended that a period of three months be allowed to bring about the necessary changes.

2. Other Disciplinary Deterrents:

- (a) Stand in line: Offenders made to stand in section of quadrangle for fixed period of time. Inspector expressed dislike of this practice, and consideration is being given to its discontinuance.
- (b) Deprivation of T.V. viewing.
- (c) Deprivation of special outings.

Inspector intends to further discuss disciplinary deterrents with Brigadier Theaker on his next visit.

Bed Wetting:

At the present time there are approximately 10 wet beds. Brigadier Theaker said no special method was used, apart from getting the boys out several times earlier in the evening.

Extra Duties:

Boys are required to share chores around the institution, to average extent of 1 hour each per day.

Spare Time: Outside:

The boys have a large playing field, and a limited amount of

kindergarten play material.

Inside: Each of the three sections has a recreational room, and there is a general room which is used for gymnasium, etc.

Visitors Book:

Although Brigadier Theaker does keep some record of visitors, there is no such thing as a general visitors book. This problem was evident on a number of occasions when boys said they were visited by parents, or other persons, but could not remember, or didn't know, where they lived. Later in discussions with Brigadier Theaker as to these addresses, he was not able to help. Inspector said that he considered that each person visiting should leave their address at the home. Such could be made a condition of their being permitted to visit. Inspector stressed the need of such a record of addresses for Departmental purposes re the possibility of helping the children re placement, etc.

Institution generally:

Inspector did not have the time to visit every part of the Home during this visit. Such will be concluded on next visit. From what the boys said, and some sections that the Inspector visited, it can be seen that the Salvation Army people are endeavouring to brighten up the Home generally. This includes new beds and bedding, linos, and curtains.

Brigadier Theaker said that the Committee had in hand plans to remodel the main kitchen.

Recommendation:

As in report, that no action be taken pending further visit in three months.

A. Mitchell
4.6.58.

Mr Morgan
Yes Review these matters in 3 months
M. Kelly
10/6/58

- (a) re corporal punishment - I feel Mr Mitchell has covered this aspect ~~as suggested~~ as suggested, that the matter be reviewed in 3 mths time, when I feel that, as Bgdr. Theaker has proved most co-operative in dealing with Dept, that Mr Mitchell will be able to furnish a favourable report on this aspect. *10.6.58*
- (b) see request by Bgdr. Dearlow for copy of report - whilst I feel he (i.e. S. A. Dept) should not get a copy of this report - if desired the matter of Cpl. punishment & elimination of same could be discussed at this Office with them & Bgdr. Theaker.
- (c) Re Visitors record - I will ring Bgdr. Theaker re this referring to the relevant regulation i.e. Reg. 60 & Mr Mitchell can check whether such has been been incorporated when, as suggested, he visits Home again in 3 mths time. *10.6.58*

Mr O'Halloran for review in August '58

Done
for 13/8

13/6/58