

1904.

(SECOND SESSION.)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

NAUTICAL SCHOOL-SHIP "SOBRAON."

(REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL, 1904.)

Presented to Parliament by Command.

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The Commander and Superintendent, N.S.S. "Sobraon," to The Under Secretary of Public Instruction.

Sir,

Nautical School-ship "Sobraon,"
Sydney, 1 June, 1904.

I have the honor to hand you, for the information of the Minister of Public Instruction, my Annual Report terminating 30th April, 1904, as provided under Clause 14 of "Sobraon" Regulations.

PART 1.

The First Stage—Boys on Board.

2. The number of inmates continues to increase, and now registers the highest daily average in the institution's life, viz., 397, with an enrolment of 578. Admissions number 160, and discharges 177, forming 337 changes in personality. The improved conditions in the interior of our State have permitted of increased apprenticeship.

3. Tables "B" to "E" furnish the clearest index to antecedents of those recruited, and the facts there presented should be kept in mind when assessing the Institution's later results.

4. In the matter of expenditure the total, owing to increased numbers, has been slightly higher, but on the other hand the cost per head upon daily average (397) is reduced to £22 10s. 4d., which is lower than for some years past. Taken at 8s. 7d. per week for board, lodging, clothing, and education, the charge of extravagance certainly will not apply.

The stores on hand have been materially reduced during the last two years, which would be productive of economy if a more prompt response to requisitions could be relied upon.

5. No improvement has taken place in the small sum contributed by parents towards cost of their children's maintenance whilst on board. The increased number provided for furnished only £272 2s. 6d. from parents, or 3d. per week on daily average. This is discreditable to many who earn good wages, and fail to contribute.

6. The health of the inmates has been excellent, no sickness in any serious form, and an absence of any death. We have been fortunate in escaping even the epidemics common with children on shore.

7. The general behaviour of the boys throughout the past year has been quite exemplary. Orderly and meritorious conduct has rendered the task of instruction a pleasure to the staff and profitable to the youngsters.

We have now a record of seven years' absence from any absconding, and this with a daily strength of almost 400 boys, the majority of whom proved resentful of restraint prior to experiencing discipline.

8. Every opportunity is embraced for rewarding good conduct and engendering contentment, for upon these qualities depends the tone which will pervade any large assemblage confined within a restricted area. Each sport gathering of importance has been patronised by "Sobraon" votaries of its particular class, who are most enthusiastic imitators in their junior capacity. Our various clubs continue to be administered by boy committees, assisted by members of the staff. Swimming has, as usual, taken a

leading part, and, thanks to a sound course of athletic exercises, a "Sobraon" lad, in the person of B. Keran, to-day holds the world's champion record time for both mile and half-mile distances. It is pleasing to here add that the proud holder of these honours fully recognises the wisdom of striving to excel in other useful knowledge more essential to success in life than sport. Keran is fast becoming a skilled carpenter; his industrious application points to the possession of a mind as healthy as his physique is sound. We are justly proud of this boy, and will strive to keep him safe-guarded from the temptations which tend to debase true sport.

My thanks are due to the numerous associations and committees who generously encourage my boys by giving them facilities for witnessing and competing in sport programmes.

9. The ship's excellent band, under Mr. Bourke's capable direction, continues to render good work, and is a useful factor in maintaining a high standard of excellence in drill, and is duly appreciated during recreation. Its services are constantly in demand in connection with both national and philanthropic movements.

10. The Library and Recreation Hall never fail to attract large attendances, and both have received interesting material for profitable relaxation, which is added to from month to month.

11. School work has been well up to previous standards. For particulars I would draw attention to Chief Schoolmaster's report, appended. As, however, I consider the summary last recorded by Mr. Inspector Willis to be the most creditable ever registered for "Sobraon" school-work, I may be pardoned for here reproducing it:—

"Organisation, excellent. Discipline, excellent. Methods of Instruction, sound in character, and effectively applied. The attention of the pupils and their mental effort, admirable. General management, very satisfactory."

The highest credit is due to Messrs. Matthews, Mitchell, and McGoogan for such results. Our Annual Prize Distribution was a gala day, attended by Inspectors and their friends from all districts. As formerly, the Chief Inspector, with characteristic thoughtfulness, collected funds, and selected the prizes. The Under Secretary, Mr. Bridges, assisted by Mr. Chief Inspector McCredie, presented the awards. Numerous watches, medals, &c., were at the same time disbursed as conduct and sport awards.

12. What has now developed into an important and, from an industrial standpoint, useful branch of our establishment, is that of Carpentry. A reference to Mr. Wigram's report amongst the appendices will show that not only has no idleness been tolerated, but that valuable furniture has been made for use in the Public Schools. A large sum of money, as recompense for this labour, has been banked to the boys' credit, and what is even more satisfactory, I have the pleasure of learning from their instructors that the proficiency attained is of a high order, whilst behaviour is all that could be desired.

Mr. Bowden, the foreman in charge, also his staff, impress me as being well selected, tactful, and painstaking men, who spare no effort to advance their pupils.

My only regret, in this connection, is that there exists but a restricted outlet for these improvers after attaining the age of 18, when they have to leave departmental control. I fear prejudice on the part of the "trade" militates in no small degree against our lads obtaining employment with the readiness that is to be desired. Mr. Wigram, the architect, directing this branch of the Instruction Department, is indefatigable in his efforts to overcome this trouble, which, I feel sure he agrees with me, is the main difficulty to be combated. A most creditable sample of the joinery work of our juveniles is a press containing some 100 prizes won in the school examination for the year, and is a handsome addition to the library furniture.

13. It is with satisfaction that, after a trial extending over two years, I am able to claim unqualified success for my method of relaying the ship's moorings. During that period the vessel has ridden smoothly, free from friction or damage, and no expense has been necessary in the matter of overhauls, which formerly had to be paid for at intervals of four months.

Fresh water main and hose, also electrical lighting plant, have satisfactorily answered requirements.

14. I now come to a phase of our training which has found an advocate in me for many years past: that of practical instruction in seamanship. Through the kindly medium of His Excellency the State Governor, Admiral Sir Harry Rawson, R.N., K.C.B., also His Excellency, Admiral Fanshawe, R.N., &c., the Imperial authorities offered H.M.S. "Dart" on loan to act as sea-going tender to the "Sobraon." The New South Wales Cabinet have now accepted this generous offer, and instructions to arrange for taking over the vessel were conveyed to me by the Hon. J. Perry, M.P. The little survey vessel in question is of 300 tons register, rigged as a brigantine, with auxiliary steam power—a pretty model; and, with her taut spars and large spread of canvas, there is no doubt of her sailing qualities. It is greatly to the credit of those governing our State that such splendid opportunities should be provided for turning to the best possible account our neglected boys, and adapting them for service afloat. Although there may be those disposed to criticise the expenditure necessary to thus perfect the theoretical training given in our receiving ship, it must be patent that without adding the practical finishing experience the training stops just short of that stage which renders the boys competent and their qualifications attractive to shipmasters.

I have at times been met with the contention that the ship was a failure, inasmuch that but few boys followed up their ship training by going to sea. This contention is not well grounded, for, irrespective of whether its inmates go afloat or remain on shore, the ship does not fail as a reformatory institution. There has, however, always been a large proportion of suitable boys anxious to follow up the nautical experience gained here, but owing to our instruction failing to reach the practical course, they have been denied an outlet when subject to outside competition with more favoured youths. This obstacle is now being removed, and I feel confident that, by extending our sphere of operations, my next Annual Report will show practical benefit resulting in many useful seamen entering the new avenue opened to them.

I have no diffidence about the success of our tender, "Dart," and, given a suitable crew, will have evidence that she can do excellent work to fully compensate for all additional cost.

Within the last few weeks, several of my former boys have been readily enlisted on board H.M.S. "Mildura," where they are doing well; and during the next twelve months I expect to find many ex "Sobraon" lads amongst the crew of H.M.S. "Challenger."

PART 2.

The Second Stage—Apprenticeship.

A fair number of boys have been provided with situations, but not nearly as many as would meet the demand constantly at my disposal to select from. This is a healthy feature, and on that, permits of more latitude in the choice of employers.

With marine and mechanical trade outlets opened up, former farming country pursuits must necessarily become less patronised. There will, however, always be a fair proportion whose choice and fitness will lead in that direction.

Reports from employers, police, and boys now just received are in every way satisfactory, fully 90 per cent. being favourable testimony of good conduct and useful service.

During March, I had again the pleasure of visiting numbers of my wards, for which purpose the route selected was along the south coast to Shoalhaven, then across to Kangaroo Valley, Moss Vale, Marulan, Binalong, Gundagai, Tumut, Young, north and west to Molong and Parkes, and returning along the Western Line to Sydney.

From some seventy or eighty visited, there were but four who failed to receive a good character. One boy I returned to the ship, and in the three other cases the boys were not alone to blame. Mutual pleasure to myself and youngsters at meeting was one result of the inspection, which otherwise would be helpful in securing faithful service to employers, with kindly encouragement to the apprentices. I found the general conditions and wage-payments satisfactory. What few defects existed received my attention.

The total wage-payments since May, 1890, now amounts to £17,268 10s. 5d., with good substantial bank accounts current to-day. During my tour of inspection, the police in every district visited rendered me most valuable assistance in locating the houses and affording much useful information regarding people resident within their patrol. An open letter supplied me by Mr. Inspector-General Garvin insured me consideration and economy in time wherever presented.

A few short communications from employers, boys, and district police officers, taken from some hundreds in my possession, may serve to bear out my previous estimate of progress made towards reformation.

Mr. G. Nowland, of Warrah Ridge, writes:—"Your letter to hand. I am pleased to say R.G. is a really good, honest lad, and we are all pleased with him. There is £16 2s. in the bank to his and your credit."

Mr. G. Grey, of Kiama, writes:—"I have pleasure in saying that the apprentice, W.C., is giving satisfaction, and is of good behaviour. The sum of £27 2s. has been paid into the Savings Bank to his credit."

Mr. M. Regan, of Raleigh, writes:—"Your letter to hand regarding the conduct of the boys, E. and F. I cannot but speak in the most laudatory terms of them since they have been in my employment, being good and attentive to their work, and exemplary in their behaviour."

Mr. R. W. Burstall, of Young, writes:—"I would like to add my testimony to the good results of the training the boys get whilst under your charge. I have had one of the lads in my house constantly for the last eight years, and have never heard of them using a profane or obscene word, or doing an indecent act. The last boy, who is just about leaving, is a better boy in every respect than the average of his class. He has just been awarded the second prize in the senior class of the Church of England Sunday-school, and is to be confirmed by the Bishop of Goulburn next week."

Mr. J. Nelson, of Barrengarry, writes:—"Re your communication of inquiry as to apprentices, there is £6 14s. paid to the credit of R.G., and £10 8s. to the credit of J.W. The boys behave well, but, like most boys, are very careless about writing."

Mr. D. Campbell, of Casino, writes:—"Re apprentices F.W.N. and J.S.—I have much pleasure in informing you that the conduct of both the lads is worthy of my best comments. I am extremely pleased with both of them. Re banking accounts—On the 2nd February, 1904, joint account to yourself and F.W.N., credit £8 10s.; J.S., 19s. A further payment is due to each in a few days. I have requested them both to write to you. I have no particulars of any other apprentices. Re ex-apprentice C.—This lad left me some short time since, when his time was up. He was a useful, obliging, well-behaved lad."

Mr. S. J. Barber, of Coodradigbee, writes:—"Re the apprentice C., his bank-book is made up in full up to date, viz., £14. C. is doing very well, and I have no fault to find in him. My ex-apprentice left me last Christmas, to go home to his people, after five years' service, and I could not wish for a better boy than he has been."

Mr. W. Wilson writes:—"My apprentice, A.E.T., has been with me now a little over two years and three months, and I have paid to your joint credit the sum of £15 3s., paid up to the 5th June. The boy has conducted himself very well since he has been in my service, and is also willing to do what he is told, and has made himself acquainted with the many different lines of usefulness required on a sheep and cattle run."

Mr. G. H. Parker, of Mullumbimby, writes:—"Replying to your letter, I wish to say that my apprentice, H.A.T., gives entire satisfaction, and I am very well pleased with his conduct in every way. He is civil and obliging, and performs his duties well in every way. Re amount now standing to your joint credit in Government Post Office Bank is £3 3s., but a further payment will soon be due. I will get the boy to write at once, as requested in your letter. I do not know of any ex-"Sobraon" boys at present who may be in the district, but will make inquiry, and if I hear of such will make known to them your request that they should keep up a correspondence with you."

Apprentice F.B. writes:—"I was in Bathurst last week and placed £1 8s. to our credit. As I had no use for my pocket money, I placed it with my wages. I milk two cows both night and morning. My master taught me how to ride, and now I do plenty of it. J.B. is back working here again. I get plenty to eat and drink. My master and mistress are very kind to me; they treat me just like their child. I go to the mountains to help my master with a lot of cows. He has a poison cart and goes out poisoning rabbits, and I go out and help him. I went to help him to make posts with two other men who are working for him. When my master goes into Bathurst, he always brings home some lollies for me. I never get into any mischief. I am told my work when my master is going out. Please remember me to all the officers and boys on board."

Apprentice A.F. writes:—"It is just twelve months this month since I wrote to you, I am sorry to say, but I hope you will forgive me, and that this letter will find you and your family in good health, as it leaves

leaves A. and I both doing well. I hope all of our boys are having a merry time of it on board, not forgetting my own brother. Please, I want to ask a favour of you, if you will kindly let us send a Christmas cake to my brother, if he is on board for Christmas. Now for a little news. We have had a splendid year for all kinds of feed—maize, vegetables, and fruit—after so much dry weather. All stock are looking well. We are milking 56 cows twice a day, and get over 100 gallons a day. Twenty-three young calves are being hand-fed. They mostly all go in for dairying and a little farming up here. The Bellinger is a very pretty river. It is considered by many travellers from the city to be one of the nicest on the North Coast. I must now say Good-night. Wishing you and your family a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. I enclose a Xmas card to you, hoping you will receive it all right. Please remember me to the officers and boys on board."

Apprentice E.C. writes:—"Just a few lines, hoping to find you and the boys on board well. I am in the best of health. We are having a lot of hot weather. Everything is looking well. I had a pleasant trip to Sydney at Christmas for ten days, and I enjoyed myself very much. I was very glad to see my people and place looking so well. I was very pleased to hear about Bernard Keran, and I hope he will succeed next time to be the champion swimmer of New South Wales. I was very glad to live in the country, and to have such a good season after the drought. We had a Thanksgiving Service at the church yesterday on account of the very good harvest season. I would very much like to hear if J.E. and J.C. are on board yet, and if they are well. Remember me to all the officers and boys on board. This is all at present."

Apprentice E.A.H. writes:—"I am writing you a few lines to let you know how I am getting on, and I hope that all the boys are quite well. I saw that the boy Keran is the champion swimmer of New South Wales, and saw that he got best in the 100 yards. I had my photo. taken with the big dog. Mrs. Craig said if she could get another she would send it to you. Mrs. Craig said that I am very much better. I saw that the boys have got H.M.S. 'Dart' to go outside the heads, and learn to be sailors. A policeman called and said that I have a good home; and he saw my bank book and told me to be a good boy, which I am going to be. Please remember me to all the boys."

Apprentice S.H. writes:—"Just a few lines, hoping to find you in the best of health, and all on board. It is a long time since I wrote to you, so I thought I would write a few lines. We have had a lot of rain lately, and I believe you have had a lot too. Everything is looking well up here now, and there are prospects of a good crop. We will soon have winter up here now, but it will not be too bad. There is nothing much to do now as it has been too wet, but there will be plenty to do when it dries. It will soon be time to cut the cane, but I will not be here. It is pretty lively when the men start, as we do not live far from it; she works day and night; there are about 200 men employed there. I was thinking of trying to get a job there, but I do not think I will leave the river as I like it very well. I will go down and see my parents and come back again. My master was down in Sydney lately, and said he went on board to see you and enjoyed himself very much; he was saying that the boys and officers looked well, and everything else. I hope you will send a good boy up in my place, as I know he will like the place very well. He has got a good master and mistress and plenty of good children for company, and a good house and plenty to eat and drink. I must thank you very much for getting me such a good place, and thank my master and mistress for the way they have treated me. I think that is all I will say in my letter. I now wish you every success."

Apprentice J.F. writes:—"Just a few lines to let you know how I like my place. Mr. and Mrs. Crick are very kind to me, they do all they can for me, and I try to do all I can for them by working. I am getting a big boy now. We had a long stretch of harvest this year, and I was not sorry when it was over; it is a very hot game. Mr. Crick got nearly 4,000 bags of wheat this year, and he is very busy now getting it carted into town. Mr. Crick bought three young horses the other day, and we had some great fun breaking them in. I received the photo. of the ship and was glad to get a look at it again. Mr. Crick gave me a rifle for a Christmas present, and I am a pretty good shot; I often knock rabbits over. The only boys I know off the ship up here are W.K., R.R., and W.O'C. They all like their places. I wish you would let the boy, T.D., write to me as he was a mate of mine on the ship. I wish to be remembered to all the officers and boys on board."

Constable Vaughan, of Fernmount, reports that he saw A.F. and A.F.E. at Mr. Regan's, Raleigh. Both boys appeared to be in the best of health, and were well clothed and fed, and good sleeping accommodation provided. No complaints were made by either master or apprentices, and the boys appear happy and contented. Mr. Regan speaks very well of their conduct, and states that they are two honest, well-behaved boys.

Constable Charles McKay, of Frederickton, reports that he saw apprentices J.S.K. and F.A.M. at Mr. P. C. Basche's, of Frederickton. They both bear good characters, have a good home, speak well of their treatment by their master, who in turn speaks in the highest terms of the boys. No unpleasantness exists between the master and the boys. Amount to credit of J.S.K. is £10 18s., and to F.A.M., £7 18s.

Constable Jago, of Dungog, reports that he visited apprentices W.M., F.P., and C.N. Interviewed the master of each boy, and received good reports as to character. The boys appear to be well treated and clothed, and are perfectly satisfied with their master and home. There is no unpleasantness existing between master and apprentice, each apprentice getting on well with his master.

Constable Ferris, of Gunbar, reports that he has visited S.S. at Mr. J. Flanagan's, Rookwood, Gunbar. The master is very pleased with the boy, and states that he is very well behaved and obedient, and is also a very hard-working boy. Apprentice speaks very highly of the treatment he is receiving from Mr. Flanagan.

Constable J. Adams, of Quirindi, reports that he visited A.F.S. at Mr. McCanna's, of Kangaroo Valley, and also R.G. at Mr. Nowland's, of Warrah Ridge, Quirindi. Found A.F.S. looking well and strong, apparently in the best of health. He is also well clad, his clothing being made out of warm and serviceable material. He informed the constable that he was very happy, and that his master treated him very well. The master, on being interviewed, spoke in the highest terms of the boy. Stated he was an excellent worker, and a boy to be relied on. Amount placed to his credit in the bank is £16 17s. 4d. Found R.G. well dressed, and looking hearty and strong, and stated he had a very comfortable home with Mr. Nowland. Master stated he could not speak too highly of this boy. He is thoroughly trustworthy, and an excellent disposition, and for his age is one of the best boys in the State. Amount to his credit is £16 2s.

PART 3.

The Third Stage—Ex-Apprentices.

No week passes without visits from inmates who have proved their claim to be recognised as worthy and industrious citizens.

Many occupy good positions; some are married, with family responsibilities of their own. Those of my staff who were trained on board the "Vernon" discharge their duties well, and understand, from experience, how much depends on their tact and force of good example.

In addition to those joining H.M.S. "Mildura" on this station, we have others in the Mediterranean fleet, who correspond constantly with me. I will here insert three letters, which convey the sentiment common amongst our ex-wards.

G.D., of San Francisco, U.S.A., writes:—"I received your kind and welcome letter last Tuesday, and was very glad to hear all about myself and family. There was much in it that I already suspected, but I was very glad to get myself straightened out with regard to my age and where I was born. I shall not write to my father, because, judging from the address given, he is still the drunken sot that I remembered as a child. You might think me strange, but there is no feeling in me of wanting to know my brothers and sisters; they seem to be just the same as any of the boys of the ship—somebody I had known a long time ago. I thank you very much for the trouble you have been put to on my account, and I realise how much I owe to my training on board the 'Sobraon' under you; for I never think of that time without pleasant thoughts, for I count the days spent there as being some of the happiest of my life. Thanking you again for the interest you have shown in this matter. I send my regards to all the officers, and particularly to yourself."

G.E.M., Mediterranean Squadron, writes:—"I have the pleasure of writing you these few lines hoping this will find you in good health, as it leaves me at present. I am in His Majesty's service, the Royal Navy, up the Mediterranean, cruising from place to place. I have been in the service now two years and six months. I like the Navy very well. I hope to be on the Australian station before long, and I will come and see you when I do come out. I have been away from my dear mother for nearly three and a half years. I am a stoker, mechanic, trained man, with one 'good conduct' badge. My wages a month are £3 12s. 6d. The cruiser I am on is a first-class armoured ship, with thirty boilers, four funnels, and can steam 23 miles an hour. She has a crew of officers and men, 700 all told. The fleet's home port is Malta. There are in this squadron 14 first-class battleships, 2 armoured cruisers, and small ships, torpedo boats, and destroyers; total, 64 ships. I have not much news to tell you this time, captain. I must close with best wishes to you and all on board the 'Sobraon.' I must close this now. Good-bye."

F.J.O., of the ship "County of Caithness," writes:—"Having found the opportunity, I wish to thank you for your kindness to me whilst on your ship, also in getting me such a fine ship. I am about to leave for London to join another ship for Cape Town. I hope you and your family are enjoying the best of health. I have studied very hard since I left the ship. I am going before the Board of Trade to try and pass for a third mate. I think I will succeed. I think that every boy who leaves your ship will try and do his best to uphold the name of the "Sobraon" and his captain, and that some day he will be proud to say that he was a boy on the training-ship. I hope that all on board are enjoying the best of health. Please read this letter to the boys. It is a fine thing to get such a chance to go to sea. It gives a boy a chance to see and learn something of the world, that probably he would not otherwise get if he were not on the training-ship. I will now conclude, wishing to be remembered to Mrs. Mason and Frankie. Wishing you one and all a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I also wish to be remembered to all the officers."

Concerning our small proportion of failures, I cannot do better than here insert a summary of a return which is just to hand from Captain Neitenstein, Comptroller-General of Prisons:—

Ex-"Vernon" or ex-"Sobraon" inmates entering gaols during the year ending 30 April, 1904.

"The within return covers any ex-inmates over a period of 37 years from a total received of 5,029, and is made up principally of confirmed offenders whose names come constantly in repetition year after year. The majority of these, I regret to state, are unsusceptible to any known reformatory influence. The total defaulters number 90, of which 69 served full training, 30 only partial course, when they were discharged to relatives.

"Some offences recorded hardly permit of criminality or failure under the institution's methods, being as hereunder:—

- " 1. Heading them.
- " 2. Breach of Traffic Regulations.
- " 3. Hawking without license.
- " 4. Playing cards in public.
- " 5. Not paying fare.

"Counting all as failures, against number received, gives the infinitesimal proportion of 1·7 per cent.

"This result will bear favourable comparison with any large assemblage of boys, whether under private or public control."

PART 4.

Miscellaneous.

The religious instruction of inmates has received every attention at the hands of the honorary chaplains from the Church of England, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic denominations, as represented by Rev. W. J. Cakebread, B.A., Rev. S. G. Best, Rev. J. Cosh, B.A., D.D., and the Rev. Fathers M. Rohan and S. J. Burke. The Jewish boys were instructed by Rabbi Phillipstein, whilst Mrs. Ford and Miss Hughes continue their kindly help weekly as in former years. To all these earnest workers my grateful thanks are due. The recent appointment of the Rev. S. G. Best to the incumbency of St. Ann's, Ryde, also that of the Rev. Father J. Rohan, to St. Mary's Presbytery, has deprived the "Sobraon" of gentlemen whose ministrations and presence will be greatly missed by the boys and myself.

Through

Through the kindness of Captain Neitenstein, I have been privileged to peruse a most valuable and voluminous report compiled by that gentleman upon the result of his tour through America, Great Britain, and the Continent. It deals exhaustively with prisons, reformatories, asylums, &c., and is most instructive.

To those genuinely interested in the problem of saving our waifs from crime and its attendant miseries, I commend consideration of sections 259, 260, 261, and 262, which must appeal strongly to those having practical experience of neglected children. Without piratical design, I reproduce my late chief's reference to "Sobraon" methods:—

"But neither here (Industrial School, Mimico, Toronto) nor anywhere else did I see anything superior to the system carried out on the 'Sobraon.' I have been on board most of the training-ships in the United Kingdom, and there is not one of them comparable with our vessel in internal fitting out or arrangements. It is, however, in the system which allows the major part of the sentence to be spent under supervised liberty that we have the advantage. Mimico is a good specimen of a shore institution. It teaches trades more or less imperfectly, as all such institutions do, but to do this it has to retain the inmates a long time. It has always seemed to me that the principal object of an institution is to reform, and that the sooner this is done the better. The longer a boy is boxed up in semi-imprisonment, the shorter, necessarily, must be the time available for that valuable stage intermediate between detention and discharge. In the 'Sobraon' plan this is the time selected to teach the boy how to earn his living, and this is the most important part of the whole system. The boy enjoys his freedom under just that modified restraint which is so necessary; he is taught a remunerative occupation, under practical conditions, and the State is relieved of expense. These methods have undoubtedly produced surprising results, and I have not yet come across any system which has accomplished more. But for dealing with children other than the reformatory class, we have a great deal to learn from other countries."

I trust this slight digression will be pardoned on the ground that the views annunciated by the competent authority quoted so thoroughly coincide with what I have advocated for years past that they claim repetition wherever our results are under review.

By the retirement of Mr. Inspector-General Fosbery, the "Sobraon" was deprived of an active worker, but we are fortunate in retaining a staunch friend in his successor, Mr. Garvin, who, with his zealous and hard-working staff, continue to render indispensable service at all times.

I must acknowledge assistance from Mr. Cutler, C.E., of Fitzroy Works, the Harbour Trust Department, who are at the present time overhauling the ship's moorings, and very many other officials—"Sobraon" patrons too numerous to name.

Visitors have been numerous during the past year, and much complimentary matter has been entered in the "Visitors' Book." I will give but two extracts, which come from sources well qualified to express opinions.

Captain G. M. Field, R.N., who is in charge of the Steam Reserve and Naval Store Establishments, writes—"The ship is beautifully kept, and clean, and the drill of the boys is as near perfection as it is possible to be. The whole, I think, reflects the greatest credit on all concerned."

The Hon. W. J. Trickett, M.L.C., who administered the Institution for some years, favours me with the following—"Very pleased to again visit the ship, and myself and friends are delighted to find everything so perfect and well regulated. The 'Sobraon' is certainly a model training-ship school, of which its Commander and all on board may well be proud."

In conclusion, I may be permitted to refer with regret to the withdrawal of Mr. Maynard, Under Secretary, from active service. Having served under that kindly-disposed gentleman for many years, I was able to appreciate his numerous good qualities, also to value his complimentary reference to "Sobraon" work, whilst acting as its Permanent Head. I am grateful to the Acting Under Secretary, Chief Clerk, other Departmental Officers, and the ship's staff generally, for consistent and much-appreciated support during the past year.

W. H. MASON,
Commander and Superintendent.

APPENDICES.

(A.)

ADMISSIONS and Discharges.

ADMISSIONS and Discharges.												
Admissions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	160
Discharges	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	177
Total changes in ship's company												337

(B.)

ANTECEDENTS of Boys admitted, so far as can be traced.

Previously under State control (incurrigibles, &c.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	33
Previously before the Courts ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	65
Twice before the Courts ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
Three times before the Courts	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Not previously before the Courts	...	...	...	...	...	...	72

(C.)

BIRTHPLACES of Boys admitted.

	BIRTHPLACES OF BOYS ADMITTED.	
New South Wales	...	139
Victoria ...	...	11
Queensland ...	...	5
New Zealand	...	1
Tasmania	...	1
England ...	...	1
Scotland ...	...	1
Unknown	...	...

(D.)

RELIGIONS of Boys admitted.

[illegible]

(E.)

PARTICULARS of Parentage.

Class 1.

Neglectful parents	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	..	..	68
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Class 2.

One parent—							
Father dead; mother remarried	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Mother dead; father remarried	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Father dead; mother neglects to control	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Mother dead; father neglects to control	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Father dead; mother prostitute	...	...	...	...	...	...	19

Class 3.

Parents deserted, unknown, or dead	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
------------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	----

Class 4

Parents of bad character:-							
Mother prostitute; father deserted	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Mother prostitute; boy illegitimate	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Mother drunkard; father neglects to control	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Father deserted; mother neglects to control	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Father drunkard; mother neglects to control	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Parents divorced	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Parents unfit to have charge of children	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Parents living apart; mother indifferent character	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Boy illegitimate	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Parents in gaol	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

Class 5.

Parents respectable; boy sent here under special advice	...	...	...	...	...	1
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(F.)

AGES of Boys admitted.

[illegible]

TABLE III.
CLASSIFICATION of 89 Boys admitted to First Class.

Ages.				Upper 1st. First Reading Book.	Middle 1st. Reading Primer 2.	Lower 1st. Reading Primer 1.	Totals.
Between the ages of 16 and 17 years				1	3	1	5
"	"	15	" 16	3	5	2	10
"	"	14	" 15	5	7	4	16
"	"	13	" 14	5	4	6	15
"	"	12	" 13	2	3	3	8
"	"	11	" 12	4	1	10	15
"	"	10	" 11	1	6	5	12
"	"	9	" 10	1			1
"	"	8	" 9	3	2	1	6
"	"	7	" 8			1	1
				25	31	33	89

TABLE IV.
CLASSIFICATION according to ability in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic.

				Well.	Indifferently.	Not at all.	Total.
READING.							
On board, 30th April, 1903	...	...	...	190	170	20	380
Admitted to 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	30	95	35	160
Discharged to 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	109	64	11*	184
On board, 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	200	139	17	356
WRITING.							
On board, 30th April, 1903	...	...	...	220	144	16	380
Admitted to 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	39	47	74	160
Discharged to 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	97	76	11*	184
On board, 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	230	99	27	356
ARITHMETIC.							
On board, 30th April, 1903	...	...	...	210	154	16	380
Admitted to 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	31	80	49	160
Discharged to 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	101	72	11*	184
On board, 30th April, 1904	...	...	...	200	129	27	356

* These are boys who have been transferred to the State Children's Relief Department.

Dear Sir,

Department of Public Instruction,
Architect's Office, Sydney, 3 June, 1904.

In reply to your letter of the 2nd instant, I have much pleasure in giving you the following information:—

DETAILS of quantity of work turned by "Sobraon" Boys at Workshops for year ending 31st December, 1903.

Desks and forms	...	...	...	...	...	...	30,391 running feet.
Pointers	...	...	...	...	...	...	115
Tripods	...	...	...	...	...	...	49
Easels	...	...	...	...	...	...	123
Blackboards	...	...	...	...	...	...	132
Tablets	...	...	...	...	...	...	784
Tables	...	...	...	...	...	...	103
Dual desks and seats	...	...	...	...	...	...	531
Washstands	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Map racks	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Book presses	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Hat racks	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Doors	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Quantity of sundry work not detailed.							

The total wages paid to the boys for the year 1903 was £144 17s. 1d., being at the rate of from 1s. to 5s. per week per boy, according to ability and class.

I trust the above will give you all the information you require; if not, I shall be glad to give you any further particulars.

Captain W. H. Mason, N.S.S. "Sobraon"

Yours, &c.,
J. S. WIGRAM,
Architect.

Table III.

Percentage of 50 plus children in 1950

State	Percentage
Alabama	10.0
Alaska	10.0
Arizona	10.0
Arkansas	10.0
California	10.0
Colorado	10.0
Connecticut	10.0
Delaware	10.0
District of Columbia	10.0
Florida	10.0
Georgia	10.0
Idaho	10.0
Illinois	10.0
Indiana	10.0
Iowa	10.0
Kansas	10.0
Kentucky	10.0
Louisiana	10.0
Maine	10.0
Maryland	10.0
Massachusetts	10.0
Michigan	10.0
Minnesota	10.0
Mississippi	10.0
Missouri	10.0
Montana	10.0
Nebraska	10.0
Nevada	10.0
New Hampshire	10.0
New Jersey	10.0
New Mexico	10.0
New York	10.0
North Carolina	10.0
North Dakota	10.0
Ohio	10.0
Oklahoma	10.0
Oregon	10.0
Pennsylvania	10.0
Rhode Island	10.0
South Carolina	10.0
South Dakota	10.0
Tennessee	10.0
Texas	10.0
Utah	10.0
Vermont	10.0
Virginia	10.0
Washington	10.0
West Virginia	10.0
Wisconsin	10.0
Wyoming	10.0

Table IV.

Percentage of 50 plus children in 1950

State	Percentage
Alabama	10.0
Alaska	10.0
Arizona	10.0
Arkansas	10.0
California	10.0
Colorado	10.0
Connecticut	10.0
Delaware	10.0
District of Columbia	10.0
Florida	10.0
Georgia	10.0
Idaho	10.0
Illinois	10.0
Indiana	10.0
Iowa	10.0
Kansas	10.0
Kentucky	10.0
Louisiana	10.0
Maine	10.0
Maryland	10.0
Massachusetts	10.0
Michigan	10.0
Minnesota	10.0
Mississippi	10.0
Missouri	10.0
Montana	10.0
Nebraska	10.0
Nevada	10.0
New Hampshire	10.0
New Jersey	10.0
New Mexico	10.0
New York	10.0
North Carolina	10.0
North Dakota	10.0
Ohio	10.0
Oklahoma	10.0
Oregon	10.0
Pennsylvania	10.0
Rhode Island	10.0
South Carolina	10.0
South Dakota	10.0
Tennessee	10.0
Texas	10.0
Utah	10.0
Vermont	10.0
Virginia	10.0
Washington	10.0
West Virginia	10.0
Wisconsin	10.0
Wyoming	10.0

Table V.

Percentage of 50 plus children in 1950

State	Percentage
Alabama	10.0
Alaska	10.0
Arizona	10.0
Arkansas	10.0
California	10.0
Colorado	10.0
Connecticut	10.0
Delaware	10.0
District of Columbia	10.0
Florida	10.0
Georgia	10.0
Idaho	10.0
Illinois	10.0
Indiana	10.0
Iowa	10.0
Kansas	10.0
Kentucky	10.0
Louisiana	10.0
Maine	10.0
Maryland	10.0
Massachusetts	10.0
Michigan	10.0
Minnesota	10.0
Mississippi	10.0
Missouri	10.0
Montana	10.0
Nebraska	10.0
Nevada	10.0
New Hampshire	10.0
New Jersey	10.0
New Mexico	10.0
New York	10.0
North Carolina	10.0
North Dakota	10.0
Ohio	10.0
Oklahoma	10.0
Oregon	10.0
Pennsylvania	10.0
Rhode Island	10.0
South Carolina	10.0
South Dakota	10.0
Tennessee	10.0
Texas	10.0
Utah	10.0
Vermont	10.0
Virginia	10.0
Washington	10.0
West Virginia	10.0
Wisconsin	10.0
Wyoming	10.0

Table VI.

Percentage of 50 plus children in 1950

State	Percentage
Alabama	10.0
Alaska	10.0
Arizona	10.0
Arkansas	10.0
California	10.0
Colorado	10.0
Connecticut	10.0
Delaware	10.0
District of Columbia	10.0
Florida	10.0
Georgia	10.0
Idaho	10.0
Illinois	10.0
Indiana	10.0
Iowa	10.0
Kansas	10.0
Kentucky	10.0
Louisiana	10.0
Maine	10.0
Maryland	10.0
Massachusetts	10.0
Michigan	10.0
Minnesota	10.0
Mississippi	10.0
Missouri	10.0
Montana	10.0
Nebraska	10.0
Nevada	10.0
New Hampshire	10.0
New Jersey	10.0
New Mexico	10.0
New York	10.0
North Carolina	10.0
North Dakota	10.0
Ohio	10.0
Oklahoma	10.0
Oregon	10.0
Pennsylvania	10.0
Rhode Island	10.0
South Carolina	10.0
South Dakota	10.0
Tennessee	10.0
Texas	10.0
Utah	10.0
Vermont	10.0
Virginia	10.0
Washington	10.0
West Virginia	10.0
Wisconsin	10.0
Wyoming	10.0

Table VII.

Percentage of 50 plus children in 1950

State	Percentage
Alabama	10.0
Alaska	10.0
Arizona	10.0
Arkansas	10.0
California	10.0
Colorado	10.0
Connecticut	10.0
Delaware	10.0
District of Columbia	10.0
Florida	10.0
Georgia	10.0
Idaho	10.0
Illinois	10.0
Indiana	10.0
Iowa	10.0
Kansas	10.0
Kentucky	10.0
Louisiana	10.0
Maine	10.0
Maryland	10.0
Massachusetts	10.0
Michigan	10.0
Minnesota	10.0
Mississippi	10.0
Missouri	10.0
Montana	10.0
Nebraska	10.0
Nevada	10.0
New Hampshire	10.0
New Jersey	10.0
New Mexico	10.0
New York	10.0
North Carolina	10.0
North Dakota	10.0
Ohio	10.0
Oklahoma	10.0
Oregon	10.0
Pennsylvania	10.0
Rhode Island	10.0
South Carolina	10.0
South Dakota	10.0
Tennessee	10.0
Texas	10.0
Utah	10.0
Vermont	10.0
Virginia	10.0
Washington	10.0
West Virginia	10.0
Wisconsin	10.0
Wyoming	10.0