ROYAL COMMISSION
ON
STATE CHILDREN AND CHARITIES DEPARTMENT.

REPORT
OF
ROYAL COMMISSION.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.

[FIRST SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT.]
ROYAL COMMISSION

WESTERN AUSTRALIA,

TO WIT.

WILLIAM ELLISON-MACARTNEY,
GOVERNOR.

[LS.]

To James McCallum Smith, Harry Griffiths, John Francis Mullany, Selby Walter Munsie, and Samuel Matthew Rocke, Esquires.

GREETING:

WHEREAS it is desirable that a Royal Commission be appointed to inquire into and report on the matters hereinafter mentioned: Now therefore I, the said Governor, acting with the advice of the Executive Council, do hereby appoint you the said James McCallum Smith, Harry Griffiths, John Francis Mullany, Selby Walter Munsie, and Samuel Matthew Rocke a Royal Commission to inquire into and report on the State Children Department and the Charities Department, and all institutions within the meaning of "The State Children Act, 1907-1919," and the working and management thereof, and any improvements which ought to be made in such working and management: And I do hereby desire and request that you do, as soon as conveniently may be, report to me in writing your proceedings by virtue of this Commission: And I do appoint you the said James McCallum Smith to be Chairman of the said Commission.

Given under my hand and the Public Seal of the said State, at Perth, this 23rd day of December, 1919.

By His Excellency's Command,

JAMES MITCHELL,
Premier.

GOD SAVE THE KING !!!
REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE CHILDREN AND CHARITIES DEPARTMENT.

To His Excellency Sir Francis Alexander Newdegate, K.C.M.G., Governor in and over the State of Western Australia and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

Your Excellency—

In accordance with the terms of our Commission we have taken evidence and examined witnesses relating to the operations and administration of the State Children and Charities Department, and inquired generally into the question of the welfare of State and other children, and now beg to present our report.

We desire to state for the information of Your Excellency that on the first day of October, 1919, Parliament in its wisdom appointed us a Select Committee of Enquiry, but it was found impossible for the Committee to complete its labours in connection with a subject of so great importance by the time appointed for the rising of Parliament. The Committee therefore, on the 21st day of November, 1919, brought up and presented to Parliament an Interim Report, which was received, read, and ordered to be printed.

The Chairman of the Select Committee (Mr. J. McCallum Smith, M.L.A.) reported to the House that much work remained to be accomplished, and as a result the Select Committee, consisting of Mr. J. McCallum Smith, M.L.A., Mr. H. Griffiths, M.L.A., Mr. J. F. Mallany, M.L.A., Mr. S. W. Munsie, M.L.A., and Mr. S. M. Roeke, M.L.A., was appointed a Royal Commission under the Public Seal bearing date the 23rd day of December, 1919, and gazetted the 2nd day of January, 1920, to inquire into and report on the State Children Department and Charities Department, and all institutions within the meaning of the State Children Act, 1907-1910, and the working and management thereof, and any improvements which ought to be made in such working and management.

Your Commission, on resuming its labours, resolved to admit the evidence tendered to the Select Committee, and incorporate it with that tendered to the Royal Commission. The evidence given subsequent to the presentation of the Interim Report emphasises that upon which the Interim Report was based, and which will be referred to in the Report of Your Commission.

Your Commission held 42 sittings, and examined 77 witnesses in all, several of whom were re-called and re-examined, in addition to which one member of the Commission, Mr. S. M. Roeke, visited New Zealand, and brought back with him information of much value, which will be used in the framing of this report, and in the making of recommendations for the guidance of officers and others charged with the welfare of child life and departmental administration.

The appointment of the Royal Commission is the outcome of charges made in the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd day of September, 1919, by the honourable member for North Perth (Mr. J. McCallum Smith), but your Commission found that as the evidence proceeded the subject broadened out to such an extent, as is to be expected when dealing with a problem of vital importance, that it accepted evidence tendered covering practically the main ramifications of the question of child welfare.

OVERPAYMENTS BY DEPARTMENT.

The formulating of the charges against the Department was in the nature of a public duty, the correctness or otherwise of which could be ascertained only upon inquiry. The principal charges, if proven, would appear to show a deplorable laxity or negligence in administration, but although in a degree more or less important some are borne out in evidence and admitted, the explanation given by the witnesses concerned removes that which at first sight appeared to be gross negligence.

For example, in the case of a widow, with children, in receipt of monetary relief, it is proven that money, to the extent of £36, was paid after re-marriage. The facts of the case are that the woman contracted a marriage with a returned soldier who served in the recent war, and he was unemployed through illness caused by wounds received at the war. That the fact of the re-marriage was unknown to the Department is admitted. It is also shown that only one officer is engaged in the inspection of country cases, and that the Department must depend for its information upon the police and honorary inspectors.

In the case of a widow in receipt of monetary assistance, and who it is alleged went for a trip to the Eastern States, the records show that the cost of the journey was provided by some of the employees engaged at the place where she formerly worked, because she appeared to be in ill-health. The Department made inquiries in the Eastern States, and found that she had apparently given birth to a child. The eldest daughter was left in charge of the children in this State during the absence of the mother, and if the Department had discontinued the allowance the daughter would have had no means of supporting them. The Department appeared anxious to give the woman a chance, and if it had discontinued the allowance the children would have been brought before the Court for committal, in which case the State would have had to pay for their maintenance.

The next case is that of a station-master, separated from his wife, and refusing to support his children. Proceedings were taken, the defaulter served a short
term in prison, and since his release payments are now regularly made.

The next case is that known as the "Collie twins." From the evidence received it is certain that the Department was absolutely in the dark, the fact that it was performing a humane service by continuing the payments was a mere matter of good luck so far as the Department is concerned. As it transpired the unfortunate mother gave birth to twin children a few weeks after her marriage, the husband repudiated parentage, and had it not been for the assistance rendered by the State at that time of need the consequences to children and mother would possibly have been very grave, but because the Department rendered justifiable assistance, that fact does not absolve it from the lack of knowledge of the facts of the case: what the Department had failed to do Mr. Rocke accomplished by a visit to the Collie district.

A serious allegation is made against the Department in the following words: "In many cases wealthy people have been sued for maintenance for the support of their children, and at the last moment the summonses have been withdrawn, and the money has not been paid." No evidence was adduced to substantiate that charge before the Commission, but from the Departmental reports, as well as from evidence, it would appear that a summons was issued without authority against a woman for the recovery of maintenance, money paid for the support of her grandchild. It is true that the summonses were withdrawn, the reason given for its withdrawal is that it was issued without any authority, but there is no evidence to show why authority was not obtained. From the evidence tendered, and from a perusal of the records, it would appear that the Department had been endeavouing to recover maintenance from the father, who was said to be in New South Wales. At that time the Intermediate Institute Persons Relief Act was not in force in that State: consequently, action could not be taken under that Act. An endeavour was then made to procure maintenance from the grandmother, who refused to pay, but desired the custody of the child, whom she intended taking to New South Wales. The mother strongly objected to her child leaving the State, because of the good and sufficient reason that the grandmother was a woman of questionable character.

Other charges of overpayment were made; some of the cases were justified because of distress through unemployment after the recipient had re-married. It is admitted in evidence that there have been some cases of imposition, but it appears to your Commission that imposition is made comparatively easy when one inspector only is employed to supervise the work in the country districts. Although in his evidence Mr. Watson stated that the Department was undermanned until recently, he expressed the opinion that the country inspection was sufficient. If that is so, the admitted impositions should never have occurred, but your Commission is of opinion that the country supervision is inadequate. It is true that the Police Department renders some assistance in making inquiry in the country, but thoroughness is in that direction cannot be expected of the police who have multitudinous duties to perform.

The name of the Department is the State Children Department; there is no department under the designation of the Charities Department. The work of administration of outdoor relief is performed by what may be termed a branch of the State Children Department, a work which was formerly one of the activities of the Medical Department.

It appears that the chief activities of the Department, so far as finance is concerned, may be placed under the following headings:

- Money paid for the maintenance of children boarded out, or committed to institutions.
- Monetary assistance rendered to widows with children, and
- Outdoor relief, viz.: Assistance rendered in money or rations, or both, to distressed persons.

Your Commission recognises the fact that the State Children Department is not an ordinary trading concern, and, therefore, cannot present an ordinary trade balance sheet. It is a spending Department, its principal revenue being the sums which may be recovered from parents or guardians who may be in a position to refund to the Department the amount or a portion of the amount expended for the maintenance of children committed to the care of the State.

In its Interim Report the Commission pointed out that the sum of £10,000 was written off in 1917 as uncollectable, and since that date the sum of £5,000 has again accrued. This is regrettable, but the whole charge cannot fairly be laid at the door of the present administration, much of the larger sum had accrued during the period of office of the predecessor of the present Secretary of the Department. There has, however, been a slowness to recognise the inadequacy of the system to obtain recoveries from persons who should be compelled to discharge their liabilities to their children and to the State. The fact is responsible in a degree for much of the loss of revenue, but latterly a more efficient system of recovery, it is claimed, has been established, and according to the evidence is working satisfactorily. It is recognised also that assistance cannot be withheld from suffering human beings, even if the recovery is uncertain, but your Commission urges that every lawful endeavour be made to recover money due to the State by persons who are in a position to pay.

ENFORCEMENT OF PAYMENT BY FATHERS FOR CHILDREN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK.

A peculiar position has arisen in connection with the enforcement of payment by fathers for the maintenance of children born out of wedlock. It appears that orders under the Bastardy Act have been made for payment to the mother, and in some cases the order has been ignored, or for some reason not complied with. The child, then, at the mother's request, is taken by the State, and the reputed father proceeded against under the State Children Act, with a result more satisfactory, but now Mr. Canning, Police Magistrate, has expressed the view that the man is twice charged with the same offence. If that view is correct, the order made under the State Children Act cannot be enforced, and the man will go scot free. It is understood that a test case is to be made, and if the verdict is given against the Department, it will necessitate the writing off of a large sum of money, because the orders obtained under the State Children Act will be illegal.

A glaring case was brought to light in which the Under Secretary, under whose control is the State
Children Department, interfered with, and prevented the Department taking action against an officer of the Civil Service, a man employed in the Public Works Department, for the recovery of money due for the maintenance of his child. Ordinary workmen, in receipt of a wage much lower than the sum received by the officer in question, have been prosecuted and compelled to pay. Your Commission sets its face against such differential treatment as being unjust, and records its emphatic protest against the unwarranted action of the Under Secretary (Mr. North). The Departmental officers have a right to every assistance from their Departmental Permanent Head in the execution of their duty.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION.

Your Commission has inquired carefully into the general administration of the Department, and has already condemned in no uncertain terms the office accommodation recently occupied by the staff. It is hard to imagine any building more unsuitable for the Departmental work, and we have no hesitation in saying that the accommodation militated largely against successful administration. It is pleasing to note that better accommodation has been provided and some re-organisation has taken place, from which it is expected better results will obtain.

SYSTEM OF REMITTING MONEY TO RECIPIENTS.

The method of remitting money to recipients of Government aid is, in some instances, unsatisfactory. The cases referred to in particular are those in which the cheque is posted direct from the Treasury.

The unsatisfactory nature of the process is evidenced by the fact that cheques have been forwarded to the wrong persons, some of whom have succeeded in cashing them, and then the assistance of the Criminal Investigation Department has been called upon to secure a recovery. In one case, after the error was pointed out by an officer of the State Children Department, the Treasury officials repeated the same grave mistake. Two cheques, each for the sum of £6, were sent to a person not entitled to receive them. In cases of this kind, and then, that they are sent to a person not entitled to receive them, have been presented and compelled to pay. Your Commission sets its face against such differential treatment as being unjust, and records its emphatic protest against the unwarranted action of the Under Secretary (Mr. North). The Departmental officers have a right to every assistance from their Departmental Permanent Head in the execution of their duty.

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Your Commission is of opinion that better service would result if the New Zealand system of payment were adopted. In that country the Postal Department acts as banker for the department controlling the work in connection with State children, but as the similar department in this State is controlled by the Commonwealth Government, your Commission knows of no serious obstacle in the way of charging the State Government Savings Bank with the duty of performing that function on behalf of the State Children Department. The virtues of the system recommending it to your Commission are its safety and its expeditious movement, coupled with the saving of time and labour, and its general efficiency. Included herewith is the draft of the coupon in use in New Zealand:

**THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS ACT, 1909.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate No.</th>
<th>Maintenance of Boarded-out Children. *</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coupon for £...</td>
<td>Receiving one month's payment for boarded-out child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Received the above-named sum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signature:.........................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date............</td>
<td>(Not payable unless the certificate on cover is also produced.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coupon is sent by the Education Department, which is the department controlling the work in connection with State children, direct to the person entitled to receive it, and is payable at any Postal Money Order Office just as a postal note is cashed. The coupons are issued in book form, each book containing twelve coupons consecutively numbered, and having attached a certificate, without which payment would be refused. The certificate is a necessary precaution, because if a person lost a coupon the finder could not obtain payment without the production of the certificate. At stated periods of the year the paid coupons are collected by the Postal Department, and a debit raised against the Education Department for adjustment.

**PAYMENT OF PENSIONS.**

Your Commission endeavoured to obtain information regarding the financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and State Governments in cases where persons in receipt of pensions from the Commonwealth Government become inmates of State Charitable Institutions. The evidence tendered related to the Homes for aged men and women, and shows that when a pensioner enters a charitable institution his or her pension is claimed by the Medical Department on behalf of the State Government, for the maintenance of the inmate, less 25s. per week allowed to the inmate. It is not clear that the State receives from the Commonwealth all the money due to it under the system in vogue. It appears that claims against the Commonwealth Pensions Department are rendered quarterly, but the witness was unable to say that the adjustment is made quarterly. In fact, the evidence shows that there have been occasions when the Commonwealth Department has declined to pay claims, alleging the case to be not in accord with regulations. No appeal against the decision of the Commonwealth is made by the State Department, and the matter is simply allowed to drop.

But there is another aspect which your Commission desires to bring under notice. The regulations apply alike to Invalid and Old Age Pensions, and the method adopted by the State Department is calculated to cause severe hardship in some cases. For instance, if an aged couple were endeavouring to exist on a pension payable to one of them, and that one were admitted to a State Charitable Institution, the payment would immediately cease so far as the other person is concerned, and he or she would be deprived of the means of existence.
ISSUE OF RATIONS AND EXTRAS.

The lot of many aged persons in receipt of a pension from the Commonwealth Government is not a happy one, and the recent action of the State Government in discontinuing the issue of rations is calculated to add suffering to the lives of those of whom many have borne the burden of the task of early colonisation, and are deserving of better treatment at the hands of the State which they have faithfully served.

An officer of the Public Service (Mr. Simpson) has been appointed business manager, and among other duties it appears that he must go through the various Departments and ascertain where savings can be effected, and make recommendations accordingly.

Prior to the appointment of Mr. Simpson several old age pensioners, residing in the Fremantle district, were in receipt of a few rations from the State Government, and by reason of that assistance were enabled to eke out an existence. But the business manager, undoubtedly anxious to save a few pounds, proceeded to Fremantle, where he investigated the fact of the allowance of bread and meat to aged persons, and subsequently recommended the discontinuance of these rations. The result of that portion of the activities of the business manager shows a pitiful incapacity to deal with a big subject, and is deserving of the severest condemnation. The explanation made by the State Government that the care of the aged poor is a duty devolving upon the Government of the Commonwealth is unworthy.

At about the same time it was ordered that the issue of "extras" to widows with children must cease, except in special cases which might be referred to the Department. On the file relating to one case it is noted that the applicant (a widow) appeared to be well dressed, evidently suggesting that because of that fact she was not a person entitled to Government relief. The applicant gave evidence before the Commission, and explained that the reason of her being neatly dressed was that she took care of herself and her two children. Her skirt, which she had for nine years, was turned and remade by herself, and she was wearing a golfer for which she was paying at the rate of one shilling per week.

It appears to your Commission that it would be a wiser policy if the Government recognised thrift and maternal affection, and rewarded them, rather than penalising those laudable characteristics, which appears to be the policy now adopted.

PAYMENT OF FEES AT HOSPITAL GATES FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION.

Your Commission investigated a complaint which sets forth that the authorities at the Fremantle Public Hospital made a charge of two shillings and sixpence for the issue of a medical certificate which was necessary to enable indigent persons to obtain assistance from the Government in paying the rate of one shilling per week.

From the evidence it is clear that the charge is made, also the sum of one shilling is demanded at the gate from persons in poor circumstances who are in need of medical attention. It appears that the certificate or medical attention is not refused to persons who are not in possession of the money with which to pay.

Your Commission expressed its disapproval of the regulations of the Hospital Board, but in doing so no reflection is cast upon the Resident Medical Officer (Dr. Stubbe) nor upon any officer of the institution.

It is recognised that the officers must work under the regulations of the management.

There is evidence of treatment meted out to a widow by the Fremantle Hospital authorities which, to say the least, is callous. The facts are that a widow, residing at Fremantle, found it necessary to take one of her young children, a boy aged five years, to the Hospital, where he was detained three weeks for treatment. Eventually the mother was presented with an account for the sum of five pounds, and payment demanded. She pointed out that her only income was the sum received from the Government to help maintain her two children, and which sometimes was augmented by a few shillings she earned at washing. But the hospital authorities suggested that she should hand over the few shillings of maintenance money, which she did, after protesting that she required it to pay the rent, so as to keep a roof over her head. Such action on the part of the hospital authorities appears to your Commission to be entirely bankrupt of human feeling or of consideration for a distressed mother. It is hard to conceive that the financial position of a Government subsidised institution should be such as to justify the inhuman action referred to.

KEEPING RECORDS.

Improvement in the method of keeping records and files in the State Government Department is absolutely necessary; the fact that file sheets are in some cases unnumbered is regrettable, inasmuch as it is not possible to arrive at conclusions entirely satisfactory on account of that omission. In other cases, parts of files are missing, and no satisfactory reason is given. Reference to records does not, of a necessity, imply incompetency on the part of the officer in charge of records, but it does mean that a recognised system must obtain, especially in regard to correspondence and reports.

One witness, in giving evidence, complained of what appears to be a case of "trafficking" on the part of an officer of the Department with a woman in receipt of Government relief. The officer, giving evidence in rebuttal, stated that he purchased a piece of fancy work (a tablecloth) from the woman in question, on behalf of another person, and that he did so with a view solely to helping the woman who was endeavouring to earn a few shillings so as to assist in the support of her invalid husband. It was the word of one witness against that of another, and your Commission hoped to ascertain the truth of the matter by a perusal of the file, but, found, to its annoyance, that portion of the file missing. Your Commission cannot condemn too strongly the loss or removal from files of important documents. The witness stated that the Inspector neglected his duty in visiting her, because money was owing to her for the tablecloth. It should have been possible to clear up that point by a reference to the file, but, strangely enough, the portion of the file on which the record should appear is missing. It is remarkable that the period occupied in completing the payments for the tablecloth was nearly two years and six weeks, the price being 25s. If trading is allowed or conducted between an officer of the Department and a person in receipt of Government relief, it must be inimical to the interests
of the Department, and is calculated to be capable of very grave results.

By reason of the unsatisfactory condition of the file relating to a female child, your Commission had to undertake much additional labour in an endeavour to elucidate what appears to be an extraordinary and tender years was in charge of a woman of ill-repute, and that both were living in a Chinese den in a lane between Wellington and Murray Streets. Your Commission visited the locality, and interrogated the woman, the child having in the meantime been removed to the Receiving Home by officers of the Police, and State Children Department. It is not known how the woman became possessed of the child. It appears from the evidence that this woman is not a foster mother nor did she receive money from the Department for undertaking the care of the child, but the fact that that portion of the file is missing makes an unsavoury case more unsavoury.

EFFICIENCY OF STAFF.

During the examination of the officers of the Department your Commission endeavoured to judge as to their fitness for the duties they are called upon to perform, and from examination and observation it is pleased to record its opinion that, as a Department, the child having in the meantime the system of operations is brought up to date.

It has been pointed out that the system of obtaining recoveries from persons who are debtors to the Department, prior to the re-organisation of recent date, was obsolete. That applies in a less or greater degree to other activities of the Department, and if the system is faulty it will be impossible for the work of the officers to be received at its true value. Harmony, common sense, and the ability to apply the touch of human sympathy, coupled with the power of discernment, appear to your Commission that there is no system is faulty it will be impossible for the work of the officers to be received at its true value. Harmony, common sense, and the ability to apply the touch of human sympathy, coupled with the power of discernment, appear to your Commission that there is no

Two only appeared to be out of harmony with their Chief: the exceptions are Chief Inspector David Stewart, who was recently appointed, and Inspector Murphy.

The chief complaint of Inspector Murphy appears to be the fact that his promotion has not been so rapid as he thought it should be, and in his endeavours to prove his complaints he made certain charges against the Secretary, Mr. Watson, which, upon investigation, proved groundless. In the interests of the State, and of those who become a charge upon the State, discord must be eliminated regardless of the individual officer.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF INSPECTOR.

In its interim report your Commission recommended the appointment of a Chief Inspector. The recommendation was given effect, and Mr. D. Stewart, of the Health Department, was selected to fill the position. This officer appeared before your Commission, and tendered evidence the nature of which went to prove that the operations of the Department in the past left much to be desired. Unfortunately a considerable amount of friction and ill-feeling between Mr. Stewart and Mr. Watson, the Secretary, developed shortly after the appointment of the former, and your Commission is not at all hopeful that this will disappear. Unless both officers come to a common understanding to sink their differences, and work in the best interests of the Department, there can be only one result. Your Commission recommends that if harmony does not prevail immediately such drastic step be taken by the Minister as will remove the trouble.

ORGANISATION.

Your Commission desires to express the opinion that among the Departmental officers is found material suitable for the building of a first-class organisation, provided they receive the help of advice and guidance which might be tendered by a person conversant with the directing of operations of a similar nature in a country where the work is more advanced, and the administration, through experience, having less imperfections.

Experience directed into the correct channel is a factor which will help towards successful administration, and by the obtaining of advice from a source where initial difficulties have been in a measure overcome, and problems solved which now loom largely before the younger and less experienced administration, should prove helpful in the avoidance of error, which, as a rule, operate against the Department, its officers, or indigent persons.

EXPERT FOR INSTRUCTION OF OFFICERS.

In the report on the activities of a similar depart- ment operating in the Dominion of New Zealand, Mr. Rocke points out that the success of the system there is due largely to the work of the controlling officer, Mr. John Beck, who has grown up with the work, and is described as a man on top of his job. Mr. Rocke recommends that the services of Mr. Beck be obtained for a short period, so that our Departmental officers may benefit by his greater experience.

It appears to your Commission that there is no officer in the State Children Department who has had special training in sociology or psychology, and whilst your Commission is not enamoured with the idea of the imported "expert" in the general acceptance of the term, it believes that invaluable good would result from the inspiration which would be the outcome of contact with a man such as Mr. Beck, who evidently has made a success of his work in dealing with the destitute, the neglected, the delinquent, and mentally deficient child in New Zealand. The result would be to impart invaluable knowledge to our own officers at a cost comparatively small.

REMOVAL OF CHILDREN.

Witnesses complained to your Commission that they had been unable to obtain justice at the hands of the Secretary of the State Children Department; some in regard to their own children, who had been committed to the care of the State, and others who had been foster parents, but had been relieved of their charges. Upon further investigation it is found, and rightly so, that the interests of the child are the first consideration. There is no corroborative evidence of a child being removed from a suitable home: poverty in itself is not the chief factor operating against the home; in fact there is ample evidence to show that where poverty through misfortune is the
of the Department, and is calculated to be capable of very great results. By reason of the unsatisfactory condition of the file relating to a female child, your Commission had to undertake much additional labour in an endeavour to elucidate what appears to be an extraordinary case. On June 19th of last year, it was reported to the State Children Department that a child of very tender years was in charge of a woman of ill repute, and that both were living in a Chinese den in a lane between Wellington and Murray Streets. Your Commission visited the locality, and interrogated the woman, the child having in the meantime been removed to the Receiving Home by officers of the Police, and State Children Department. It is not known how the woman became possessed of the child. It appears from the evidence that this woman is not a foster mother nor did she receive money from the Department for undertaking the care of the child, but the fact that that portion of the file is missing makes an unsavoury case more unsavoury.

EFFICIENCY OF STAFF.

During the examination of the officers of the Department your Commission endeavoured to judge as to their fitness for the duties they are called upon to perform, and from examination and observation it is pleased to record its opinion that, as a body, they are men and women in whom confidence may be placed to perform their duties capably, and with credit to themselves and to the State, provided always that the system of operations is brought up to date.

It has been pointed out that the system of obtaining recoveries from persons who are debtors to the Department, prior to the re-organisation of recent date, was obsolete. That applies in a less or greater degree to other activities of the Department, and if the system is faulty it will be impossible for the work of the officers to be received at its true value. Harmony, common sense, and the ability to apply the touch of human sympathy, coupled with the power of discernment, appear to be the essential qualifications necessary for the successful activities of the State Children Department. Those qualities were found to be in the possession of the majority of the officers who came before the Commission. Two only appeared to be out of harmony with their Chief; the exceptions are Chief Inspector David Stewart, who was recently appointed, and Inspector Murphy.

The chief complaint of Inspector Murphy appears to be the fact that his promotion has not been so rapid as he thought it should be, and in his endeavours to prove his complaints he made certain charges against the Secretary, Mr. Watson, which, upon investigation, proved groundless. In the interests of the State, and of those who become a charge upon the State, discord must be eliminated regardless of the individual officer.

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ORGANISATION.

Your Commission desires to express the opinion that among the Departmental officers is found material suitable for the upbuilding of a first-class organisation, provided they receive the help of advice and guidance which might be tendered by a person conversant with the directing of operations of a similar nature in a country where the work is more advanced, and the administration, through experience, having less imperfections.

Experience directed into the correct channel is a factor which will help towards successful administration, and by the obtaining of advice from a source where initial difficulties have been in a measure overcome, and problems solved which now loom largely before the younger and less experienced administration, should prove helpful in the avoidance of error, which, as a rule, operate against the Department, its officers, or indigent persons.

EXPERT FOR INSTRUCTION OF OFFICERS.

In the report on the activities of a similar department operating in the Dominion of New Zealand, Mr. Roeke points out that the success of the system there is due largely to the work of the controlling officer, Mr. John Beck, who has grown up with the work, and is described as a man on top of his job. Mr. Roeke recommends that the services of Mr. Beck be obtained for a short period, so that our Departmental officers may benefit by his greater experience.

It appears to your Commission that there is no officer in the State Children Department who has had special training in sociology or psychology, and whilst your Commission is not enamoured with the idea of the imported "expert" in the general acceptance of the term, it believes that invaluable good would result from the inspiration which would be the outcome of contact with a man such as Mr. Beck, who evidently has made a success of his work in dealing with the destitute, the neglected, the delinquent, and mentally deficient child in New Zealand. The result would be to impart invaluable knowledge to our own officers at a cost comparatively small.

REMOVAL OF CHILDREN.

Witnesses complained to your Commission that they had been unable to obtain justice at the hands of the Secretary of the State Children Department; some in regard to their own children, who had been committed to the care of the State, and others who had been foster parents, but had been relieved of their charges. Upon further investigation it is found, and rightly so, that the interests of the child are the first consideration. There is no corroborative evidence of a child being removed from a suitable home: poverty in itself is not the chief factor operating against the home; in fact there is ample evidence to show that where poverty through misfortune is the
operating factor assistance has been rendered the parent or parents to enable them help support and retain their children. But there is ample evidence to prove that when children are removed and committed to the care of the State it is because they are neglected and living under conditions which are opposed to their interests, the so-called home being deemed an unfit place, and in very many cases in-temperance is the cause.

LAXITY IN GRANTING RELIEF.

From a careful perusal of the evidence it does not appear that there is undue laxity when dealing with the granting of relief. It is shown in evidence that the war was, in a large measure, responsible for the increased expenditure, by reason of the large number of industrial troubles, sickness, and unemployment.

As a result of the investigations made, your Com-mission is of opinion that a number of necessary reforms and improvements in the conduct of the Department have been introduced. Your Commis-sion recognises that there is a large number of people in receipt of relief through circumstances over which they have no control, and from whom it is not possible to recover any portion of the money paid out.

To withhold assistance from such would be callous, but at the same time your Commission insists that persons who are able to pay, even if only a portion of their liabilities, shall be compelled to do so.

INSUFFICIENCY OF ALLOWANCE.

Your Commission pointed out in its Interim Re-port that in its opinion the amount allowed per child to widowed mothers and foster mothers, 7s. per week to the former, and 8s. per week to the latter, with a slight increase in special cases, is totally inade-quate, and recommended an increase.

Since the issue of the Interim Report the Depart-ment has made an increase to the natural mother of 1s. per week for the keep of each child, bringing the amount up to 8s. in all cases. Your Commis-sion expresses the opinion that this amount is inade-quate for the support of a child, and recommends that the allowance to mothers be increased to a mini-mum of 10s. in all cases where State children, or children with their natural parents are supported by the State. Your Commission sees no reason for any distinction between the natural parents and the foster parents of the child.

It may be mentioned that the amount paid for the maintenance of a child in New Zealand is 13s. per week for every child over the age of one year, ex-cept in special circumstances, when the amount may be increased, and 17s. 6d. per week for children un-der the age of one year. In addition the Government provides dental and medical attention, medicine, and school books, the payments continuing until the school period is completed, regardless of age.

INSTITUTIONAL AND BOARDING-OUT SYSTEMS.

In response to the invitation of the Commission to persons desirous of giving evidence to come forward, several witnesses presented themselves, and gave their views for and against the institutional system of caring for children, as adopted in this State. The evidence was of a conflicting nature, as is usual when sections of the people are wedded to particular sys-tems. So conflicting in fact was the evidence ten-dered that much labour was necessary on the part of the Commission, including the visitations to institu-tions and private homes, before it was possible to arrive at a conclusion.

Your Commission is of opinion that the best meth-od of dealing with neglected and destitute chil-dren, otherwise designated State children, is that known as the boarding-out system. The one reason for that opinion is based on the fact that in a private home the individuality of the child is brought into prominence and catered for, but although that sys-tem is nearer the ideal than that known as the in-stitutional system, the question arises: Are private homes offering in numbers sufficient to meet the de-mand, if that system were adopted entirely? Your Commission is of opinion that they are not. A pecu-liar feature was noticed in witnesses giving evidence in condemnation of the institutions. Without ex-ception, they viewed the institution in the light of those established in older countries where thousands of children are housed under one roof. Your Com-mission would point out that in this State the institu-tions are controlled by religious denominations, under the supervision of the Department, in so far as they are visited periodically by Departmental officers, including an inspector of the Education De-partment. The number of children under any one roof is small when compared with institutions in older lands; therefore the danger of uniformity of result in upbringing is not so great as witnesses de-clared or feared, as evidenced by the fact that there is little or no difference to be observed in the child from an institution when compared with a child reared in a private home.

It is already admitted that a good private home is superior, and having recorded so much, your Com-mission feels that it would be lacking in its sense of justice if it failed to recognise the splendid work performed by institutions on behalf of helpless chil-dren.

Emphasis is stressed by witnesses upon the state-ment that foster mothers receive children into their private homes primarily because of their maternal love for the children. Your Commission believes that it is true of the majority of cases, but the same factor is in evidence regarding those who labour in the institutions. Their chief reward is in the reali-sation that they are protecting infant life, and train-ing it for good citizenship.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN INSTI-TUTIONS.

The educational facilities, and also the standard, vary considerably in the institutions, and just here your Commission desires to emphasise its recom-mendation that the curriculum shall be that adopted by the Education Department, and the qualifications of the teachers, as also the facilities, equal to those operating in State schools.

WORK OF INSTITUTIONS.

Amongst other institutions visited was the Parkersville Home, which differs somewhat from other institu-tions working on behalf of children in this State insomuch as it is conducted on what is known as the Cottage Home system, having a number of wings or branches, each distinct from the other, and each hav-ing about a dozen children domiciled therein.

Your Commission was favourably impressed by the apparent happiness of the children, who have
been given refuge in that institution. The same spirit of devotion to their work is in evidence in regard to the women who labour there for the sake of the children, as is evidenced by the work of women (and men) in other institutions. The premises at Parkerville are sadly in need of repair and renovation, which, it is understood, will be undertaken when funds are available.

The Salvation Army Homes at the Collie were also visited, and it is found that they are doing splendid work. It appears that the Collie Homes receive mostly delinquent children committed by the courts, most of whom are above the age of 14 years, and whilst your Commission is of opinion that the delinquent child should, in the first instance, be treated under a properly organised system of probation, which will be referred to more fully at a later stage, it desires to record its appreciation of the good influences and care of these homes.

The State is indebted to the good offices of the various denominational homes which undertake the care of delinquent children.

Your Commission is pleased to note that some vocational training is being given at various institutions, and recommends that system of vocational training in all institutions should be compulsorily introduced and conducted. Every boy may not be suitable for farm work, neither should the horizon of the opportunities afforded a girl be within the limits of domestic service.

CARE OF MENTALLY DEFICIENT CHILDREN.

The presence of the mentally deficient child in some of the institutions is easily noticeable. Your Commission is of opinion that a system which fails to make special provision for that unfortunate class, is faulty, and is responsible for the waste of public money. To attempt to deal with that class by methods similar to those adopted in the case of the normal child is doomed to failure. It is unfair to both classes of children, and unfair to those persons charged with their care. The waste of time and effort were particularly noticeable when the mentally deficient child was included amongst the normal children in classes where the education of the children is undertaken by the institution authorities.

The care of the mentally deficient child should be a separate and distinct branch of the operations of the work in connection with child welfare. If it is attempted in conjunction with the work for the normal child, there is only one result certain, and that is failure, as well as being a severe handicap on the work of the general system. Special institutions and specially trained teachers are essential for that class of work, the subject of which merges into the all important problem of the reproduction of the unfit.

With the establishment of special schools, it is possible to undertake the work of observation and classification, and in the case of a child being proved to be totally unfit, the question of segregation can then be considered and decided.

It appears that the Government of New Zealand, recognising that fact, has established special schools, and is making provision for the future of the afflicted children, as will be observed from the following, quoted from Mr. Rocke's New Zealand report:

"The care of the feeble-minded child, although being attempted during a period of twelve years, is only now being judicially brought to bear. Until recently it has been worked upon wrong lines, and the result has been disappointing. It is now recognised that the feeble-minded can derive no benefit from attendance at the ordinary school, nor can he be associated with the normal child of his neighbourhood. Special schools are being established within which attendance by the feeble-minded is compulsory. One such school is now on the upper floor of the Gift Kindergarten School in Auckland, already referred to. The child is allowed to do much as he pleases until he understands the lesson of obedience. He is then instructed by a process requiring infinite patience on the part of the especially trained teachers. The instruction is of a simple nature, and considered suitable to the limited intelligence. It is largely of a manual character, as it is found that the children advance very slightly in the arts of reading, writing, and counting.

"Only in very exceptional cases, if in any, can it be expected that feeble-minded children can be brought up into a standing, or can they form efficient members of the ordinary community. It has been found that those who most closely approach the ordinary standard of intelligence and capacity run greater risk of being seduced into the sphere of delinquency than those of a very low grade of intelligence. Care must be taken that the term 'feeble-minded' is not confused with the terms 'dull' and 'backward'; the latter certainly means under proper treatment that progress is often mistakenly credited to the feeble-minded, the position of whom appears to be extremely sad and hopeless.

"After careful observation in the special class the rejection will be removed for segregation, and placed under the care and control of the Government for the term of their natural life, if necessary.

"It appears to me that here is a basis at least upon which we may work out the solution of the all important problem of preventing the unfit from the reproduction of their species. The segregation of the female at the age of puberty is considered the essential, because it is found that in almost every case the feeble-minded girl or woman is afflicted with nymphomania, hence she easily becomes, when at large, the victim of some unscrupulous male person, with the result that another generation of feeble-minded is produced and cast upon the State."

Your Commission recommends that serious attention be given to this all-important problem.

CHILD SLAVERY.

There is a feeling in certain quarters that child slavery is in existence among the farming community, but the Commission has received no evidence in support of this, although it appears that in one or two instances, some years ago, children might have received better treatment.

Your Commission recommends that great care should be exercised in allowing State children to be sent to districts too remote for Departmental inspection, and that provision be made for efficient supervision and inspection of the living and working conditions of the child in the district.

During the progress of the debate in Parliament on the motion for an enquiry, and of which your Commission is the outcome, Messrs. Underwood and Angwin implied by way of interjection that child slavery was in vogue at the Fairbridge Farm School. The charge is a most serious one, and, if proven, must bring into condemnation a system conducted ostensibly for the benefit of children, but in reality for the benefit of some person, persons, or institution.

Messrs. Underwood and Angwin were called and gave evidence. The former stated that his remark was based entirely upon hearsay, and both admitted
that they had never visited the institution in ques-
tion. Mr. Angwin said his objection to the insti-
tution was based upon the fact that whilst it received a subsidy from public funds it was not under Gov-
ernment control.

The charge that child slavery exists in the insti-
tutions is not supported by evidence.

Your Commission agrees with the contention that
any institution in receipt of public money by way of
subsidy should be subject to inspection by officers
representing the State.

EARNINGS OF CHILDREN.

At the age of 14 years boys and girls in institu-
tions under the supervision of the State are placed out
for employment, the terms and conditions of which
are first approved by the Department. The earn-
ings of such children are banked to the credit of the
children earning the money, less a small sum allowed
each for pocket money. At the age of 18 years the
total savings, plus interest, are paid to the boy or
girl, regardless of his or her ability to control money.
Your Commission draws attention to this fact, which
appears to be a weakness calculated to operate against
the interests of the child, and again would refer to
Mr. Rocke's New Zealand report, which reads:—
"It must be remembered that, although a child upon
reaching the age of fourteen years, may be placed out
to service, it does not follow that such service must
necessarily be farming or domestic, but the conditions
and wages must be approved by the Department, which
also controls the money earned, the control remaining
until the boy or girl proves the ability to control his
or her money. The control exercised by the Govern-
ment is regardless of age, and in some cases remains
long after the period of manhood or womanhood is
reached. Power to confiscate is reserved as an incen-
tive to conduct the work.

It appears to your Commission that a distinct ad-
vantage would be gained for a child if a similar
regulation were in force in this State; it has been
pointed out in evidence that a boy has received a
sum considerably in excess of £100, and in less than
two weeks he was penniless, a state in which it is
easy for a boy to drift into crime.

Your Commission recommends that control of chil-
dren should not cease at the age of 18 years. To
pilot safely a child until that age is reached, and
then to cast him or her adrift upon the world with­
out supervision, and without interest, appears like
abandoning a good work at a time when a Friendly
interest is most desirable, and calculated to do an
immense amount of good.

Your Commission recommends that the card system
operating in the State Children Department should be
extended, so that the history of every child under
the care of the Department should appear thereon.
This, if adopted, would obviate the need of handling
many cumbersome files, thus saving much valuable
time.

STATE CHILDREN TO BE UNDER CONTROL
OF MINISTER FOR EDUCATION.

Your Commission recommends that the work in
connection with State children should be placed un­
der the control of the Minister for Education. As
the child is the basis of our national life, the care
of him would be removed as far as possible from any
factor calculated to place upon him the hallmark of
charity. The present State Children Department
could be created a Sub-Department of the Educa-
tion Department, in which case the Secretary of the
Sub-Department should have access direct to his Min-
ister. When Governments cease to talk about the
wealth potentialities of the State, and give instead
practical recognition of the fact that potential wealth
can never become real wealth without the develop­
tmental operations of the people, and that without
the child the people would be non-existent in the
space of a few years, then we shall be nearer the day
of the realisation of the above suggestions.

Your Commission desires to emphasise the fact
that the child is the best asset of a nation, and the
nation which realises that fact, and gives to child
life that care and protection which is commensurate
with its value as the best asset, is the nation which
will be truly great. That, however, cannot be accom­
plished by the mere distribution of a charity dole.

The unchallengeable right of the child to live and
develop physically, mentally, and morally must have
the endorsement of Governments and people, and that
right must be jealously guarded against forces which
may be deemed inimical to his interests.

Every factor or force operating against the inter­
ests of the child operates against the true interests
of the nation, and is an obstacle in the way of pro­
gress, the removal of which should be the endeavour
and ambition of every man and woman conscious of
his or her duty.

COTTAGE HOME SYSTEM FOR MENTALLY
deficient children.

During the hearing of the evidence several referen-
ces were made to the work as conducted by the
Government of New South Wales at the Homes
known as the Mittagong Cottage Home System, and
which appears to be, in the opinion of certain cir-
cles, a decided advance on anything attempted in
Australia in connection with the work of Child Wel­
fare, but, unfortunately, that opinion is not borne
out by fact.

In the Interim Report issued by the Select Com-
mittee the following recommendation was made:—
"... Your Committee also strongly recommends
that a trial be given to the cottage plan as success­
fully operating in New South Wales. Your Committee
wishes it to be understood that the recommendation
does not mean the abolition of institutions, as we recog­
nise that certain children, such as incorrigibles, can only be
handled there."

This was based on the evidence of witnesses appear­
ing before the Select Committee. Since that time
the Commission has, through the courtesy of the
office of the Premier of New South Wales, been
supplied with a copy of the report of the Royal Com­
mmission appointed to inquire into the Public Service
of New South Wales, covering the administration of
the Acts relating to State Children. The report was
presented to the Parliament of New South Wales, and
ordered to be printed on the 10th day of August
of this year.

This Commission was the outcome of representa­
tions made by the Hon. Sir Charles MacKellar,
K.C.M.G., M.L.C., to the effect that he was of opinion
as the result of long experience and close observa­
tion and investigation, that the ranks of the criminal
and prostitute classes are largely recruited in conse­
quence of faulty methods of treatment of adolescent
delinquents. He alleged that vicious adolescents are
under the present system put into the same institu­
tions as young boys and girls who are convicted of
small offences, such as stealing fruit, etc., with detri­
mental effect to the latter class of confine.
The findings of the New South Wales Commission prove an utter disregard, in the Mittagong Homes, for the moral welfare of the children, due to the fact that no serious attempt at classification is made, and the result of such stupidity and insensitivity to the real issue of Child Welfare is disastrous, and is not in any sense compensated for by the admission of the Classification of the inmates of the Industrial School for children 17 years and 9 months are housed. Among the boys to be little that could reasonably be desired," but the Commission adds, "the objectionable features appear to be in respect to the grouping, and these are serious indeed." The results of the lack of classification are shown in cases enumerated by the Commission, and constitute a scathing indictment. While the lack of classification of the inmates of the industrial school section is bad, the conditions prevailing in the Cottage Home for Cripples is infinitely worse. In that Home are inmates of normal mentality handicapped by the fact that they are cripples, associated with juvenile criminals, a distinctly immoral youth, and a number of feeble minded lads of varying ages. Even a worse grouping is found in the Home for Cripple Girls, where children of both sexes, including boys up to the age of 12 years, and girls up to the age of 17 years and 9 months are housed. Among the boys are included those of normal mentality, and those who are described as mentally and physically deficient, and among the girls are those described as incorrigible, immoral, but of normal mentality.

The case of one State boy is particularly noted. He had committed no offence, but had been sent to one of the Homes temporarily for a change of air to help him recover from an attack of bronchitis. The Commission states:—"This lad had no doubt experienced a beneficial change in respect to the country atmosphere, but in regard to the general atmosphere of his society probably the change was by no means beneficial."

The opinion expressed by the New South Wales Royal Commission is that assistance necessary in a Home of the description referred to, as well as the care of its inmates, should devolve upon mature women, preferably after some training for the work, and that the care of the feeble minded, and particularly as it applies to the adolescent, is a question of such serious importance that it should not be dealt with in the hopeless, amateur manner in which it appears to be conducted by the Government of New South Wales. It is only fair to record that the Commission emphasises the fact that its opinion relates to the matter of the grouping of children of varying ages, sexes, mental capacity, etc., and adds, "Otherwise the work appears to be well done, and the appearance of the homes and of the children reflects credit upon the matron in charge."

The revelations contained in the report will cause some surprise to many persons who have condemned the institutions conducted in this State for the benefit of children, particularly in view of the fact that the hostility has increased since the date of the Child Welfare Conference which was held in Perth during the year 1916, and which was attended by Mr. Green, the officer in charge of the departmental operations for the welfare of children in the State of New South Wales. On that occasion Mr. Green roundly condemned the institutions of this State, evidently on an imperfect knowledge of the facts, or simply because they were institutions.

The Commission can find no justification for the suppression of names of parents or guardians who are prosecuted for the recovery of maintenance money, or for the enforcement of an order of the Court. Your Commission is influenced in this view by reason of the fact that assurances were given that parents who may be the victims of real misfortune are not prosecuted, and it is the opinion of your Commission that the Court before which such charges should be heard is the Police Court.

Your Commission desires to pay its tribute to foster mothers who undertake the care of children for a sum inadequate to provide the necessities of life for them, which proves that in the average case their service is not rendered for the purposes of gain. The homes of many of the foster parents were visited, and with one or two exceptions were what might be termed first class homes.

PENSIONS TO WIDOWS.

Your Commission expresses a hope that at an early date the Commonwealth may recognise its responsibilities, and make provision for widows in Australia, by means of pension; in the meantime the duty devolves upon the State Children Department, and is placed under the heading of out-door relief, or monetary aid. This assistance given is responsible for a large amount of the expenditure, and is a necessary expenditure, tending to increase, consequent upon the high cost of commodities.

Your Commission is of opinion that sufficient aid should be granted, so as to enable the widow to give all her time and attention to her children, rather than compel her to enter into avenues of employment, in which case her children must suffer. Evidence was given by widows before the Commission to show that they had to be destitute before relief would be granted. Your Commission is of opinion that it is an unwise procedure for the Department to refuse to render assistance to a widow until she is destitute, or nearly so. Another case was cited in which a widow in possession of a sum of £40 applied for relief. The application was recommended by the Secretary of the Department, and refused by the Permanent Under Secretary. The assistance rendered in such cases in New Zealand is worthy of consideration, and is as follows, quoted from Mr. Roebuck's New Zealand report:—

"The order of assistance rendered is, firstly, food; secondly, house rent; thirdly, clothing, and in that manner any pension paid by the State is supplemented. Rations are issued to cover a period not exceeding seven days, and the number of rations to be issued is according to the requirements of the family. One ration consists of four pounds of bread, two and a half ounces of tea, one pound of sugar, and eighteen pennyworth of any of the following articles:—potatoes, butter, corn-flour, cocoa, condensed milk, candles, flour, matches, oatmeal, rice, sago, soap, treacle, or golden syrup.

Here is an example of the assistance which may be rendered per week to a woman having four to six children, and being without male support:—Food, 25s., rent 20s., cash for clothing, etc., 20s. If the woman is a widow, the amount which she receives from the Pensions Department is taken into consideration, and the assistance from the Charitable Aid Board reduced accordingly."
NEED FOR RECEIVING HOME.

During the period when the Commission was hearing evidence, members of the Children’s Court presented a statement and also tendered evidence to show that costs could be reduced by the abolition of the Receiving Home. That phase of the question received careful consideration, and your Commission is of opinion that it is impossible to work either the boarding-out system or the institutional system without the aid of a clearing house, which is the function performed by the Receiving Home. This fact is recognised by the New Zealand Government, and emphasised by Mr. Roeke in his report as follows:—

“The centre round which the system revolves, and without which it would be impossible to continue, is the Receiving Home, which is a clearing house. It is a comparatively small establishment, performing several functions. Here is located the office of the Infant Life Protection Branch of the Education Department, one of the duties of which is to find good homes for children of tender age.”

The members of the Children’s Court advocated the drafting of certain children to the institutions and the “bottle babies” to the Children’s Hospital, pending the finding of foster homes in which to place them. The suggestions have had very careful consideration, and are pronounced to be absolutely unworkable.

CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL.

A large amount of evidence was tendered to your Commission in connection with babies treated at the Children’s Hospital. Witnesses testified to the improper attention given to babies, and to their being discharged from that institution in an unfit condition. Cases were cited, and names and dates given. It was also shown that children had been discharged with sore buttocks, in one case with a bleeding labia, and in other cases with high temperatures. Medical evidence was tendered in rebuttal, but, after careful consideration, your Commission is of opinion that there is room for considerable improvement in the care bestowed on the sick children whilst under treatment there. It would appear that in one direction this could be effected by retaining the children for a longer period than at present, as evidence is in the possession of your Commission which shows that children are retained for a greater length of time in the Children’s Hospitals in the Eastern States. This, in many instances, might obviate the necessity for return to the institution in consequence of being discharged too soon.

It was brought out in evidence that friction exists between the Children’s Hospital and the Receiving Home, and your Commission recommends that steps be taken to bring about more amicable working, otherwise the unfortunate babies are bound to be the sufferers.

RECEIVING HOME AND STAFF.

Your Commission desires to record its appreciation of the good work performed by Matron Tilly and her staff, especially in view of the fact that their work is conducted under conditions which are calculated to militate against success, principally by reason of the premises being unsuitable for the work.

Your Commission notes with satisfaction that its condemnation of the premises now used as a Receiving Home, as set forth in the Interim Report, appears to have borne fruit, inasmuch as the Gov-

erment has already commenced the erection of up-to-date premises in another portion of the city, and in a more suitable locality.

SYPHILITIC CHILDREN.

From the evidence of medical men, and of Departmental officers, and also from observations made, your Commission is of opinion that syphilis is making vast inroads upon the childlife of this State, and your Commission earnestly recommends that efforts be made to combat the disease by every possible means.

DETENTION WARDS AND DISEASE.

In its Interim Report your Commission condemned the horrible dens which were used as detention wards, in which children were locked up whilst awaiting trial, or, after commitment, awaiting to be taken to an institution. The wards were not only insanitary and unhealthy from every point of view, but it appears that they were a depot for the possible and easy spread of venereal disease. The laziness which characterised the inefficient examination of children, an examination upon which was issued a medical certificate of good health, is deserving of severe condemnation. It is shown in evidence that girl-children who may have been afflicted with venereal disease could be removed to an institution, and thus become a source of danger to every person therein.

Dr. Blanchard, the medical officer who usually saw the children, stated that the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Atkinson, had expressed the opinion that the children could not be examined without consent, and, consequently, the examinations which were conducted prior to the amending of the Health Act were discontinue. Dr. Atkinson admitted that view. Your Commission regrets that the Commissioner of Public Health adopted such an unreasonable attitude, having full knowledge of possible consequences; in fact, one child, suffering from venereal, was actually received into an institution. The attitude of the Commissioner of Public Health is hard to understand in view of the fact that he admitted that the Act distinctly states that the Children’s Court has power to order an examination, either before or after commitment.

PROBATION SYSTEM FOR DELINQUENT CHILDREN.

Your Commission recommends that every effort be made to extend the probation system of dealing with delinquent children. Already some little attention is being given to that phase of the work, but its organisation is on an imperfect and incomplete basis, as the general system cannot be worked without a Receiving Home, neither can the probation system be worked without a properly established Probation Home. The initial cost of re-organisation may be rather heavy, chiefly the cost of building or procuring a home, but your Commission is of opinion that the effort would be well rewarded in the ultimate decreased cost to the State and the prevention of children drifting into crime.

It appears that by the adoption and complete organisation of the system of probation for the treatment of delinquent children, the New Zealand Government has saved large sums of money, in addition to saving a large number of children from drifting into crime, and becoming a serious charge upon the
State, as well as becoming a menace to society. We quote Mr. Rocke's New Zealand report, as follows:

"Prior to the introduction of the probation system the Government had approved five industrial homes for boys and girls; three have since been closed as industrial homes, resulting in a saving of £42,000 per annum. It may be urged that the resultant sum has been merely diverted into another channel of expenditure, but I find that this is not the case. Commitments have been reduced 85 per cent., and that fact alone, it is claimed, has resulted in the saving of another sum of £20,000 per annum of public money. It must be understood that the system applies alike to girls and boys.

"It may be interesting to point out here that seven years ago there was no probation system operating in New Zealand, and that the work has stood on its present basis only during the last four years. The question was discussed for a long time before the Government decided to give it a trial. Eventually a gentleman (Mr. Shell) was asked to establish the system, but so half-hearted on the question was the Government of the day that the fine work would have been killed in its infancy had it not been for the untiring efforts of Mr. Shell, his abstinence, subject to a properly realised value of children. He commenced by taking children into his own home, an experiment which evidently showed signs of merit, because the Government then agreed to pay the cost of the home, and appointed him Chief Probation Officer for the Auckland Province. The following figures will explain themselves:—During the period of a few short years (four or five) 354 boys were dealt with in Auckland under the probation system at a cost of approximately £2,000. Had that number been dealt with under the industrial institution system the cost would have been £22,500. The average period spent in an institution was four years. The money saving aspect is great, the moral is incalculable."

Your Commission is of opinion that it should be possible to find within our own borders a man possessing the necessary qualifications, one who understands the Australian conditions of home life, or the lack of home life; one who is prepared to devote his whole attention to the problem of saving the delinquent child. Having expressed that opinion, and believing that nothing can be done until a workmen's expedition be despatched to the State as childhood going to waste, your Commission earnestly recommends that immediate steps be taken to establish that desirable and essential reform.

Your Commission does not desire it to be understood that, in making the foregoing recommendation, women justices are to be debarred from sitting with the special magistrate on cases concerning delinquent children.

SPECIAL MAGISTRATE FOR DEALING WITH DELINQUENT CHILDREN.

Your Commission is of opinion that a grave mistake is made when a conviction is recorded against a child, regardless of the degree of his error, for the simple reason that the fact of that record may operate against the child during the term of his life. It appears to your Commission that, with the exceptions of indictable offences, a delinquent child should be remanded to the care of a trained probation officer, who would be one of the principal officers in the event of the desirable rearing of the system becoming an accomplished fact.

It is pointed out already that progress in the direction indicated is impossible of realisation without the establishment of a Probation Home, to where the remedied children would proceed for observation and treatment, the result of which would probably be the saving of the child in a comparatively short period of time, and at a small cost to the State. The adopted method of committing a child to an institution for a long term of years has very little to commend it, and in the opinion of your Commission the institution, subject to a properly reorganised probation system, would be a step in the right direction.

To operate efficiently a modern probation system it is essential that a Children's Court be established absolutely free from even the suggestion of police court methods or procedure. It is urged in certain quarters that a special magistrate should be appointed to hear cases concerning delinquent children.

PRE-NATAL AND PRE-SCHOOL PERIODS.

An interesting phase of the work as conducted by the Government of New Zealand is that which deals with the pre-natal and pre-school periods, the latter having reference to children between the ages of one and five years. The work in connection with the former is conducted mainly by a society known as the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children, but more generally designated the "Plunket Society." The good work of the society receives Government recognition in the form of a subsidy of £24s. in the £ up to £100 for every nurse employed in that work.

Operating in conjunction with that society are the St. Helen's Hospitals, which are Government institutions for maternity cases, established for the benefit of wives of men whose incomes do not exceed the sum of £4 per week, and to which women may be admitted before confinement at a fee of £1 per week to cover all charges. The value of these hospitals will be better understood when it is known that connected with these are out-door departments through which mothers may be attended in their own homes with or without a private doctor, and for which the fee chargeable is £1 for the attendance of a trained nurse at confinement, including ten daily visits. Doctors are in attendance at the hospitals on certain days, when any women desiring advice during pregnancy may obtain it free of charge, whether intending to be confined in St. Helen's or not. A baby clinic is held weekly. Thus the mother with limited means is relieved of much anxiety, with the inevitable good result that the child is born better-fitted constitutionally to face the battle of life, and therefore less likely to become a charge upon the State.
The "Plunket Society" is performing a wonderful amount of good work also in giving instruction to expectant mothers, and in teaching mothers the correct way to nourish babies; also giving instruction in the method of preparing artificial food when that expedient is necessary.

The New Zealand Education Department is extending its organisation so as to undertake the care of all children between the ages of one and five years, with the view to the correction of physical disabilities and weaknesses, thus fitting the child to enter the school period minus the disadvantages which are apparent in a large number of children which have come under the observation of your Commission.

Your Commission recommends the initiation of activities similar to those just outlined, believing that the establishment of them will help very much in the solution of the problem of the child.

FREMANTLE GAOL AS UNSUITABLE REFORMATORY.

Your Commission condemns absolutely the setting apart of any portion of the Fremantle Prison as a reformatory for children, the fact that the first essential of a place of reform is its removal entirely from prison and prison influences must condemn those responsible for such a stupid policy as lacking the knowledge necessary for the performance of the functions of their office.

PLACING OF CHILDREN IN DENOMINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

A complaint was made to your Commission that touting for children for a special institution was indulged in outside the precincts of the Children's Court, but it is evident that it was not a common practice, and what was done was not with the knowledge or consent of the Department. An honest effort, it appears, is made to distribute the children in accord with the religious belief of the parent, or parents; the non-Catholic children usually are sent to the Salvation Army and Anglican institutions, for the simple reason that the other Protestant denominations have no institutions, with the exception of the Methodist, recently established. The children belonging to those religious bodies are sent to the institutions conducted by such bodies.

WOMEN OFFICERS.

The question of whether a man or woman officer should receive statements of a delicate nature from girls and women was brought under the notice of your Commission. The argument used against allowing a woman officer to take the statements is that she is not versed in points of law, and because of that the case, when brought before the Court, might be jeopardised.

Again it is claimed that women prefer to give their statements to men because, it is alleged, their own sex are lacking in sympathy towards them. Your Commission is of opinion that a woman officer should be specially trained for the work of receiving statements from women and girls, and to appear in Court, if necessary, and that the women and girls should be at liberty to make their statements to the sex they desire.

DISCOURTESY OF TRADESPEOPLE TO RECIPIENTS OF RELIEF.

Complaints were made to your Commission that recipients of relief were treated discourteously by some tradespeople who are contractors to the Government to supply groceries, meat, etc., and your Commission is of opinion that there are grounds for the complaints, and recommends that it be pointed out to contractors that those in receipt of relief are entitled to ordinary civility and courtesy.

WITHHOLDING OF ASSISTANCE TO DISTRESSED ALIENS.

Charges of inhuman conduct were also levelled against the Department in regard to the withholding of assistance to distressed alien persons in the Spearwood district. It is shown in evidence that the aliens in question were hard-working, law-abiding citizens, and they certainly were in dire distress. From the evidence tendered it appears that assistance was given them, and then withdrawn at the instigation of the Spearwood Progress Association. Your Commission condemns such conduct on the part of the Association, and also on the part of the Department as being inhuman and un-British. A disturbing incident in connection with this matter is that two letters bearing forged signatures were forwarded to your Commission purporting to come from two constables alleged to be desirous of giving evidence. The constables denied all knowledge of the letters, and your Commission was unable to ascertain by whom the letters were written.

CAUSES OF DISTRESS.

The inquiries of your Commission would be incomplete if an endeavour were not made to ascertain the cause or causes of the distress evidently existing in this young country. From the evidence given, your Commission finds that the causation is mainly alcohol, sickness, and disease. The influenza epidemic of last year will probably account for a large increase in expenditure for that year, but a larger channel of expenditure is opened up through the desertion and neglect of wives and children by husband and father, and the cause of that desertion and neglect is usually due to intemperance. In fact, many children have been arrested and committed to the care of the State on account of the drunken habits of parents.

With one exception, the Departmental officers giving evidence were unanimous in their opinion that intemperance is the largest factor responsible for the need of the operations of the Department. As those witnesses are men and women who come in personal contact with the class of people with whom the State Children Department largely deals, it is reasonable to suppose that their conclusions are the result of careful observations, devoid of prejudice or hysteria.

The medical opinion is almost unanimous in its expression that the sufferings of the children and the disadvantages under which they are placed are due largely to drink and syphilis. One medical witness stated:—"Alcohol in the parent is the factor which leads to degeneration more than anything else."

When intemperance is associated with poverty and squalid home conditions, the lives of the children are a tragedy. Of such children it may be said that they have never had a childhood in the real sense. It would be surprising indeed if they developed into normally efficient citizens.

Rather than the children, parents, who have proved themselves unfit to be parents, should be placed under restriction. It certainly is folly to believe that the
Alpha and Omega of the work consists in the removal of children from a home which is adjudged to be unfit for children, and from parents who are unfit to rear them, and yet to wait year after year for the succession of additional children who proceed from the same home. In many cases the evil effects cannot be remedied, even if the children are taken charge of from infancy: physical and mental infirmity are often stamped upon the children for life, through the moral or physical degeneracy of the parents.

Our great need appears to be a realisation of the fact that the child is the basis of our national life, and because of that, to determine that no cause or factor, calculated to destroy that basis, shall remain to rob the child of his undoubted birthright.

Your Commission desires to correct a typographical error which appeared in paragraph 7 of the Interim Report of the Select Committee, and which reads: “That greater care be exercised in selecting foster parents,” etc. The word “greater” should read “great.”

Appended is Mr. Rocke's report of the work on behalf of neglected, destitute, delinquent, and mentally deficient children, and indigent persons, conducted by the Government of the Dominion of New Zealand, and including the system of pensions operating in that country.

Your Commission desires to add that the Secretary has carried out the duties required of him in an entirely satisfactory manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. That the State Children Department be placed under the control of the Minister for Education.
2. That the boarding out system be adopted as the best method of dealing with neglected and destitute children.
3. The appointment of a special Magistrate to deal with delinquent children.
4. That the allowance to mothers be increased to a minimum of 10s. per week in all cases where State children or children with their natural parents are supported by the State.
5. That the qualifications and numbers of the teachers employed in the institutions be up to the same standard as that ruling in the Education Department, and also that the facilities for the children, such as desks, etc., be brought into line with those in use in the State schools.
6. That vocational training, suitable to the mental capacity or adaptability of the children, be conducted in the various institutions.
7. That children of special promise be given the opportunity of pursuing educational studies beyond the ordinary standard.
8. That control of State children, and their earnings, should not necessarily cease at the age of 18 years.
9. That a card system be adopted in regard to children, so that the history of each child coming under the care of the Department should be recorded on a separate card.
10. That special schools and institutions be established for the care of the mentally deficient child.
11. That for the proper administration of the Department a Receiving Home is absolutely necessary.
12. The establishment of Probation Homes.
13. That the detention of children in any gaol or prison should not be permitted.
14. That more Inspectors be employed for supervision work in country districts.
15. That every endeavour be made to recover money due to the State for maintenance of children by persons who are in a position to pay.
16. That, if found necessary, amending legislation be introduced for the enforcement of payment by fathers for children born out of wedlock.
17. The initiation of a system similar to that in existence in New Zealand for dealing with the prenatal and pre-school periods of children.
18. That a system of payment of money to recipients be adopted similar to that prevailing in New Zealand.
19. That inquiry be made to ascertain from New Zealand, and elsewhere, the best methods of purchasing stores in quantity, and, if necessary, establishing a store attached to the Department.
20. That the services of an expert in child welfare be temporarily engaged for the instruction of the officers of the State Children Department.

JAMES M. SMITH,
Chairman.

H. GRIFFITHS.
S. W. MUNSIE.
S. M. ROCKE.
J. F. MULLANY.

P. DRIVER,
Secretary.

10th November, 1920.
Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Operations and Administration of the State Children Department.

MINORITY REPORT OF H. GRIFFITHS.

I wish to add to the report my conviction that the Cottage Home system should not only be applied to the cases of the mentally deficient, but wherever it is possible to bring it into operation it should be given preference to other forms of institutional provision for boys and girls generally.

I further wish to bear testimony to the fine work of the Parkerville Homes, and it is such a system, with any improvements that may be found desirable, that I would wish to see extended.

In regard to the Children's Protection Society, I would point out that the members of this worthy society were the pioneers in the institution of the boarding-out system in this State, and it appears from evidence given to your Commission that there is a tendency of the Department to look upon this body as intruding in this region, i.e., the boarding-out of children. I feel that I must urge that the Department should (if such a view is correct) treat this body as a most useful ally. Utilise it as fully as is possible, remembering that it can often handle cases better from the financial point than can the Department. Another very important matter is that parents often avail themselves of the services of this body, who would not place their children with the Department.

The Children's Protection Society is doing a work that is of the greatest possible benefit to the needy and unfortunate of this country, and should receive the best that the State can give in the way of financial assistance and sympathy.

MINORITY REPORT BY MR. S. M. ROCKE.

Your Excellency,

I am of opinion that, from the evidence and observation, it is possible to find definitely that the friction existing between the Secretary of the Department and the Chief Inspector, and which is commented upon under the heading “Appointment of Chief Inspector,” is due to the fact that Mr. Stewart is not a suitable man for the office of Chief Inspector.

I am confirmed in my opinion, partly because of the fact that the large number of charges levelled against the Secretary by the Chief Inspector during the short space of three months, dating from the time of the appointment of the latter, all of which to my mind are met with a reasonable answer by the Secretary, suggest a motive foreign to the interests of the Department. And partly because of a recommendation made by the Chief Inspector (file 903), that a girl child be allowed to remain in a home which, according to the findings of a Judge sitting in Divorce, must be deemed an unfit place for the proper care and protection of a child, thus proving that the Chief Inspector has not the knowledge necessary for the work in connection with the important question of child welfare. And partly because of my opinion that Mr. Stewart is temperamentally unfitted to perform the duties pertaining to the office of Chief Inspector in the State Children Department.

Mr. Stewart may be a good officer when called upon to fill a position for which he may be suited. I recommend that he be returned to his former position at the Department of Public Health.

WOMEN OFFICERS.

I am of opinion that the inspection of foster homes in the Metropolitan Area, and of State children living in those homes, should be a duty performed entirely by women officers of the Department, and that the instructions issued, demanding that women officers examine the books and accounts of certain persons relating to small businesses, etc., should be withdrawn immediately.

When women were engaged to perform the duties of Inspectresses for the Department, it was not suggested to them that they must possess qualifications in accountancy; and, if the instructions remain, possibly the services of valuable officers may be lost to the Department.

A SERIOUS CHARGE.

I am of opinion that the report of your Commission should include the findings in connection with the death of a child of tender years in an institution.

A serious charge is made by Inspector Murphy against the Secretary of the Department, which is that a child was removed from the mother without due cause. That the child died of malnutrition in an institution by reason of such removal. That the case was “hushed up,” and no inquest held. The charge is not borne out in evidence, nor by Departmental records. In fact, there appear to have been good and sufficient grounds for the removal of the child, whose death occurred from gastro-enteritis on 28th April, 1918. The cause of death is certified to by Dr. Arnold, and no inquest was necessary.

CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL.

The evidence tendered in connection with the treatment or attention alleged to be given to babies at the Children's Hospital is of such a serious nature that, in my opinion, a searching investigation should be made into the administration of that institution.

ADDITIONAL PORTFOLIO.

And, alternatively to the recommendation that the State Children Department be placed under the control of the Minister for Education, I am of opinion that the question of child welfare is of sufficient importance to justify the creation of an additional Minister, the chief duty of whom should be the providing for the betterment of the conditions of life for mothers and children.

S. M. ROCKE,
Member of the Royal Commission.
ROYAL COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY.

STATE CHILDREN AND CHARITIES DEPARTMENT.

REPORT ON THE WORK CONDUCTED IN THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND.

Received and adopted on the 26th day of May, 1920.

With the Compliments of
S. M. Rocke, Member of the Commission.
The Royal Commission,
State Children and Charities Department,
Perth, W.A.

Gentlemen,—

In response to the request of the Commission, I proceeded to the Dominion of New Zealand, and from many sources there made inquiry into the operations of Departments charged with the care of children, and with the administering of relief to widows and children, and now have the honour of submitting my report in accordance with the evidence tendered.

I desire first to deal with the question of assistance granted to widows and children, and later with the departmental activities relating to the control and care of State children.

PENSIONS TO WIDOWS.

The belief prevalent in Western Australia that New Zealand provides for its widows by means of a widow's pension is erroneous in so far as a general application is concerned. It must be noted that the widows in the Dominion are classified under four headings, viz., Civil, Epidemic, Miners' and War. The first is a woman who lost her husband by death through any cause other than influenza during the epidemic, war, or miner's complaint, and her class is certainly in the majority, and her case receives none of the public attention usually attending upon that of Epidemic and War widows. The second is a woman who lost her husband by death during the recent visitation of the epidemic scourge. The third is a woman who lost her husband by death due to miner's phthisis, and the fourth a woman who lost her husband by death due to the ravages of war. The latter is paid 30s. per week, if she is childless, and to the war widow, with one child, 40s. *per week is paid, with an additional 10s. per week per child, up to the age of 16 years, except in the ease of a girl, when the payment may be extended for a period of one year.

The Miners' Phthisis Act, 1915, provides for payment of 12s. 6d. per week during the widowhood of a woman who lost her husband by death due to miner's disease, but no provision is made for her children, except during the incapacity and prior to the death of the father, when the amount paid is 30s. per week, the amount being reduced to 12s. 6d. upon the death of the husband and father. To provide the funds for this pension a tax is imposed upon all gold raised, and the deficiency is made up by the Government.

According to the report of the Pensions Department for the year ending March 31st, 1919, the amount received from the tax was £4,416, and the gross payments, including the allowance under the Finance Act, 1917, amount to £229,997. Under that Act an amount per child is paid, as will be shown hereunder.

The "Epidemic" widow receives 25s. per week, with an additional 10s. 6d. per week for each child up to the age of 14 years.

The Widows' Pension Act, 1913, which is supposed to provide for the civil widow, that is, the woman who lost her husband by death from any cause other than that of war, influenza, or miner's disease, is misleading in its title. The Act, as amended by the Finance Act, 1919, Section 10, subsection 1, provides that the maximum amount payable shall be at the rate of 7s. 6d. per week for each child with an additional 7s. 6d. per week. No person was able to explain satisfactorily what is meant by the "additional 7s. 6d. per week," but the general opinion appears to be that the object is to increase the pension so as the disparity between it and that paid to the "Epidemic" widow shall not be so great. It was explained that the payment of the larger sum to the latter is due to the belief that the plague might have been averted had the Government taken an ordinary precaution and quarantined a ship on board of which were two leading citizens. Be that as it may, the fact remains that no provision in the Widows' Pension Act is made for a childless widow, thus proving that it is not a widows' pension. The Act does not say what the additional 7s. 6d. is for, and the officers charged with its administration interpret it to mean that 15s. per week is payable for the first child, and 7s. 6d. per week for each additional child.

CARE OF STATE CHILDREN AND OTHERS.

The question of how best to deal with children who, for various reasons, and from time to time, are brought under notice of the Government officials appears to have received the earnest consideration of the Government of New Zealand during later years. The children are classified and dealt with by several departments and organisations. Unfortunately, it appears that each principal department is not quite sure of the full functions of the other, and as a result evidence which at first sight appeared to be conflicting in its nature required much additional labour before it became evident that the apparent contradiction was merely the result of departmental overlapping.

The principal department undertaking the care of children is the Department of Education, which deals with the neglected, the destitute, the delinquent, and the dull and mentally deficient child. It appears to me that an advantage is obtained by placing all such children under the care of a Minister holding a portfolio for Education, rather than that of charity, removing as it does in a degree the stigma of charity, and emphasising more clearly that the providing for, and the protection of, child life is a duty of the State.

There is a branch of the Education Department known as the Infant Life Protection Branch, which is responsible largely for the welfare of children born out of wedlock, by providing homes for them, as well as for others received from the Juvenile Court.

Assistant to widows in indigent circumstances, having children, is administered mainly by the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, which has no departmental connection whatever with the larger department referred to above.
The denominational institutions are caring for a large number of children, only one of which receives payment through the Education Department. The others are paid through the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, but on a different basis, whilst some receive no Government aid, and are dependent for support upon private subscriptions.

FOR MOTHER AND CHILD.

Other societies performing remarkably good work for mothers and children, which includes that of a pre-natal character, are the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children, generally known as the Plunket Society, and the St. Helen's Hospitals. The former has its head-quarters at Dunedin, and receives from the Government a subsidy at the rate of 24s. in the £ up to £100 for every Plunket nurse employed, and it is co-operative with, and encouraged in its work by the Departments of Education and Public Health. The St. Helen's are Government maternity hospitals established for the benefit of the wives of men whose incomes do not exceed £4 per week. Patients may be admitted for special treatment before confinement at a fee of £1 per week. Babies are re-admitted for treatment at 10s. per week.

Connected with St. Helen's hospitals are outdoor departments, through which patients may be attended in their own homes, with or without a private doctor. The fee chargeable is £1 for nurse's attendance at confinement and ten daily visits. The medical officers of these hospitals are in attendance at special hours on certain days, when any woman desiring medical advice during pregnancy may have it free of charge, whether intending to be confined in St. Helen's or not. A baby clinic is held weekly for the benefit of all St. Helen's babies, whether born in hospital or elsewhere in the district. Such babies are, if necessary, received into hospital for treatment at the above terms.

BOARDING-OUT AND PROBATION SYSTEMS.

The most favoured methods of dealing with neglected, destitute, and delinquent children are the boarding-out and probation systems respectively. I examined carefully into the operations and find that they are on a sound basis, and have accomplished, and are accomplishing a vast amount of good solid work, not only in the direction of the protection of children, but in preventing them falling deeply into error. The function of the probation system is preventive rather than punitive. At the outset it was found that the child coming into contact with court associations resulting in committal, was injured to such an extent that his reformation was made more remote, and in many cases even problematic. It was therefore decided to attempt to cut off at its source the supply of delinquent children, and just here enters what is known as the probation system, controlled by men and women whose principal qualifications are common sense, and that invaluable gift, the ability to apply the touch of human sympathy.

In New Zealand there is no Children's Court established as we have it in Western Australia. The delinquent child is brought before a magistrate in the room of the latter, where uniformed policemen are allowed to appear. After hearing evidence, if the child is adjudged guilty (and this is where the probation method is superior) the magistrate adjourns the case for a period of three, six, nine, or twelve months, as the case may be, thus preventing a committal. The child then goes to the Probation Home, where he is carefully studied by the probation officer, and made to feel that his interests are all that matter for the time being. After a short stay in the home, if he proves himself worthy of another chance, and few fail in that direction, a private home suitable for that particular child is found, into which he is placed without reference to the Court. He may be placed in the home of the probation officer, or he may be "boarded out" with his own parents; in any case he is under the constant supervision of the probation officer, and, if he makes good, his case adjourned by the Court is conveniently forgotten. At the completion of his school period a position of employment is found for him, to which he goes, eventually taking his place as a good citizen. Although children only to the age of 16 are dealt with as described, provision is made whereby a child is transferable from prison to probation up to the age of 19 years. It does not follow that every case is a success at this stage; some may need further and firmer treatment, in which case they are committed to the State Farm. I had the pleasure of visiting that institution, which is situated at Weraroa, about 70 miles from Wellington. Here I found a large up-to-date farm, where the boys are taught farming in all its branches. There is accommodation in the millling shed for 87 cows simultaneously. Butter and cheese are manufactured; pigs, sheep and poultry raised, crops grown, including vegetables; and the rudiments of bootmaking, carpentry, engine-driving and blacksmithing are taught. But the first step is to teach the lad to respect himself; the old idea of discipline at all costs, including that of self respect, is eliminated, and it is found that kindness with firmness usually wins through. At the time of my visit there were in residence 101 boys, 18 of whom were under the age of 14 years. These latter I found encamped under canvas on the sea beach at Hokio, about eight miles from the farm. The object was to keep the younger boys separate from the elder. They were receiving educational and physical training under the direction of a qualified teacher of the Education Department, from which they appeared to derive much benefit. Right throughout the piece the chief factors appear to be kindness and firmness.

SAVING PUBLIC MONEY.

As a result of the system established, a large proportion of the delinquent children of New Zealand are receiving care and treatment for their reforma- tion, at a cost to the community comparatively small. That is due to the fact that they are taken in hand before commitment, and to the fact that the farm at Weraroa is almost self-supporting. It must be borne in mind that by reason of the cutting off of the supply of the delinquent before committal, as already referred to, only a small proportion reaches the industrial farm; the larger number respond to the good influences of the probation system, one of the chief factors of which is the environment of a suitable home.

Prior to the introduction of this system, the Government conducted five industrial homes for boys and girls; three have since been closed as industrial homes, resulting in a saving of £24,000 per annum. It may be urged that the resultant sum has been merely diverted into another channel of expenditure, but I find that is not the case. Commitments have been reduced 85 per cent., and that fact alone, it is claimed, has resulted in a saving of another sum of
£26,000 per annum of public money. It must be understood that the system applies alike to girls and boys.

It may be interesting to point out here that seven years ago there was no probation system operating in New Zealand, and that the work has stood on its present basis only during the last four years. The question was discussed for a long time before the Government eventually decided to give it a trial. Eventually a gentleman (Mr. Shell) was asked to establish the system, but so half-hearted on the question was the Government of the day, that the fine work would have been killed in its infancy, had it not been for the untiring efforts of Mr. Shell, his faith in children, and his realisation of the value of childhood life. He commenced by taking children into his own home, an experiment which evidently showed signs of merit, because the Government then agreed to pay half the rent of the home, appointed him at a salary of £180 per annum, gave him an office table and a pocket of envelopes, and, later, a pen. As is usual, there was a woman in the case, and had Mr. Shell not the inspiring co-operation of Miss Harvey, probably even he would have dropped his task before the time of fruit had arrived. Mr. Shell is now Chief Probation Officer for the Auckland Province, and Miss Harvey is Matron of the Auckland Probation Home. The following figures will explain themselves. During a period of a few short years (four or five) 554 boys were dealt with in Auckland under the probation system, at a cost approximately, £2,000. Had that number been dealt with under the industrial institution system the cost would have been £22,506. The average period spent in an institution was four years. The moral and intellectual aspect is great, the moral is inestimable. It has been shown that the delinquent child may be placed in the home of his own parents, but such practice is not always applicable in the case of the neglected or destitute child, for the simple reason that the so-called home of such is unworthy of the child, and is deemed to be an unfit place. Children who come under the heading of destitute or neglected are committed to the care of the Education Department, and are boarded out with foster parents in a manner similar to that adopted in our own State.

PAYMENTS TO FOSTER PARENTS.

The amount payable to foster parents for the maintenance of children boarded out with them is, for every child over the age of one year, 15s. per week; under the age of one year, 17s. 6d. per week. In addition, the Government provides dental and medical attention, medicine, and school books, the payments continuing until the school period is completed, regardless of age; that is, if a child gives evidence of marked ability, he or she may be piloted through the High School, and entered as a student of the various branches of Science, etc., the State holding itself responsible for the cost of books, etc., and, if an additional sum for maintenance is deemed necessary, it is paid, each case being considered on its merits. The same system applies to boys desiring to learn an ordinary trade, in which case they are provided with the necessary tools. Girls may receive instruction in typewriting, etc.

EARNINGS OF CHILDREN.

It must be remembered that, although a child upon reaching the age of 14 may be placed out to service, it does not follow that such service must necessarily be farming or domestic, but the conditions and wages must be approved by the Department which controls the money earned, the control remaining until the boy or girl proves the ability to control his or her own money. The control exercised by the Government is regardless of age, and in some cases remains long after the period of manhood or womanhood is reached. Power to confiscate is reserved as an incentive to good conduct. Already the accumulated earnings of service children under State control or supervision is £60,000, all of which is earning interest, which is credited in proper proportion to each child, and is paid, together with the principal, as soon as the owner proves to be trustworthy. This system, I think, is a decided advance upon that of our own, which gives to a child all his earnings upon attainment of the age of 18 years. Evidence was given before the Commission in Perth showing that in some cases only did a boy at the age of 18 prove himself capable of handling his money to his own advantage, and in many cases at that age he received considerably over £100.

DENOMINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

The Denominational Institution System operates in New Zealand in a manner similar to its operation in Western Australia. Although those engaged in the boarding-out system appear to be wedded to the latter, and rarely say a word in appreciation of anything accomplished by the various homes, it is still possible to agree with the contention that an inferior private home is superior to a first class institution. I have carefully examined into the work of the denominational institutions both in New Zealand and in Western Australia, Catholic and non-Catholic, and as a result I am strengthened in my opinion that, if the best of the institutions are closed, as it is hoped in some quarters they will be, it will be a crime against the children; they and the State will be the losers. I am prepared to admit that the boarding-out system is nearer the ideal, but I am not satisfied that the ideal is readily attainable. Departmental officers controlling the boarding-out system assured me that it was an easy matter to find a good private home for every needy child, and the officers of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, who control in a measure the institutional system, say it is not possible to secure sufficient suitable homes. The weight of evidence favours the latter, and from my personal observations both in New Zealand and in Western Australia, I have no hesitation in saying that both systems are doing a wonderful amount of good work in the interests of the child and the State. All institutions are not first class. The inferior should be abolished at the earliest possible moment, as we advance towards the ideal.

I referred earlier to one exception where the institutions do not come under the jurisdiction of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board. The exception is the Catholic Homes, which receive from the Education Department the sum of 7s. per week per child. No witness was able to say why the institutions were under different Departments, but it appears to be the general belief that it is because the Catholic is the older established. The Salvation Army is one of the institutions receiving its proportionate amount of maintenance money from the Charitable Aid Board. The Army claims that it costs 11s. per child per week for maintenance in an institution, a portion of which is received from public subscription, and the balance, about 5s. 6d., is paid by the Board.
PUBLIC SPIRITED CITIZENS.

It is claimed that the people of New Zealand are the most generous in the world in their response to appeals made on behalf of children, and it is urged further, that if the institutions were abolished, the flow of money from that source on behalf of the children would cease. A case is cited in proof, where a home for children was built and given to the Army by a widow, instead of following the useless practice of erecting a costly tombstone to the memory of her late husband. The city of Auckland in particular is bright with the evidence of its possession of public spirited citizens. Hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of property has been given for the free use of the people, as parks and gardens, one of the latest being a beautiful park, on which has been built by the donor a well equipped school, the ground floor of which is used as a kindergarten, where children from two years and nine months up to five years of age are received. The upper floor is used for the instruction and observation of dull and mentally deficient children.

CHARITABLE AID BOARD—REVENUE AND SERVICE.

The Hospital and Charitable Aid Board receives its revenue from what may be termed a charity tax upon the rateable property in its province. It does not directly levy the tax, but notifies each local governing body in the province of the amount of its requirements, and fixes the quota to be paid by the local governing body. The local governing body then strikes a rate for that specific purpose, and the total amount received by the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board is subsidised by the Government on a basis averaging about £ for £, though until recently the subsidy was 24s. to the £.

The Board deals also with the question of rendering assistance to widows with children and to families in indigent circumstances. The method is not much advanced when compared with that operating in our own State; if the application for assistance is successful, the applicant is merely the recipient of charity, nothing more. As is usual in such Departments, the charity officer develops the diagnosis faculty without recognition of the relationship between ethics and economics.

The order of assistance rendered is, firstly, food; secondly, house rent; thirdly, clothing, and in that manner any pension paid by the State is supplemented. Rations are issued to cover a period not exceeding seven days, and the number of rations to be issued is according to the requirements of the family. One ration consists of 4 lbs. of bread, 2½ ounces of tea, one pound of sugar, and eighteen penny-worth of any of the following articles:—Potatoes, butter, cornflour, cocoa, condensed milk, candles, flour, matches, oatmeal, rice, saus, soap, treadle or syrup.

Here is an example of the assistance which may be rendered per week to a woman having four to six children, and being without male support. Food, 25s.; rent, 20s.; cash for clothing, etc., 20s. If the woman is a widow, the amount she receives from the Pensions Department is taken into consideration, and the assistance from the Charitable Aid Board reduced accordingly. It will now be readily observed that three large Government departments extend their operations to the welfare of the child, and although each is doing good work, one of the results is the confusion and overlapping referred to.

RECEIVING HOMES AND FOSTER HOMES.

The probation and boarding-out systems have been operating on their present basis for a period of 3½ years only. The efficacy of the work must be accepted, and the evidence that commitments have been reduced by 85 per cent., and by the saving of so large a sum of public money through the closing of three industrial schools, without impairing efficiency.

The centre around which the system revolves, and without which it would be impossible to continue, is the receiving home, which is a clearing house. It is a comparatively small establishment, performing several functions. Here is located the office of the Infant life protection branch of the Education Department, one of the duties of which is to find good homes for children of very tender age, including those born out of wedlock, the maintenance of which is a matter for agreement between the natural and the foster parent. Unfortunately, the burden usually falls upon the mother; though the Department endeavours to place it upon the shoulders best able to bear it, the endeavour is frustrated by the unwillingness of the mother to divulge the name of the father of her child. In going through the receiving homes, and in conversation with the officers, including the nurses, one cannot avoid noticing that the impelling force is their affection for helpless children, and that spirit is in evidence in West Australia as well as in New Zealand, in denominational institutions and in Government departments, and that, to my mind, is the factor responsible in a large degree for the success of the work.

Children are sometimes received in a condition so deplorable that the ordinary senses revolt at the task of giving attention, but the faithful service rendered by women of ennobling ideals soon brings its reward, and in due time bonny children are ready for transfer to good homes, where they are regularly visited by the nurses and inspectors of the Infant Life Protection Branch. The opportunity was afforded me to visit several such homes, and they certainly were of a high order. One in particular impressed me. A large private home, situated in the Hutt Valley, and having its own milk, butter, and fruit supply. Here I found nine State children, all more or less delicate constitutionally, several of whom were tubercular, but it is hoped that by reason of the country air, the good wholesome food, and the motherly attention of a good woman, the children may overcome their predisposition to the fearful malady. This home is the fortunate possessor of a motor car, which is used liberally for the benefit of the children, not one of whom hesitated to say be or she would not like to be taken away. The foster parents appeared to be greatly attached to the big brood; the foster father was formerly a resident of Perth.

WOMEN INSPECTORS.

It is the policy of the Department to place the children of one family in the same home if possible. None but women officers are employed as inspectors of foster homes and boarded-out children; it is claimed that they are quicker than men to detect detail in a home which may be opposed to the interests of the child. The receiving home is conducted in such a manner that the girls who pass through are encouraged to feel that it is their home when they are enjoying a holiday from their employment. I met there several fine young women, respected and honoured, whose fate would have been too sad to contemplate had not the open door of the home, and
the good influences of the officers, come to the rescue at the time of helpless childhood. The same applies to the work of the good women in the institutions of each denomination working for the benefit of children.

One of the three industrial schools, that situated at Te Orange, which was closed as a result of the operations of the probation system, has been reopened as a home for elder girls of the unruly type and of weak morals. By a careful scrutiny of each case, and the application of different methods of treatment of the individual girl, the numbers were reduced to a minimum. At that time about 30 girls were licensed out in situations in and around Christchurch. Adequate provision was made for their supervision by the appointment of a woman special officer, whose duty it was to visit the girls at their places of employment, and generally to keep in close touch with them. Of the 30 referred to, 23 did well, which proves that the so-called lawless nomadic characters, when placed in good homes with selected women, respond to the human touch. At the time of my visit one was employed on the clerical staff of the Defence Department, and another is about to be married.

CHECKMATING THE PROFITEER.

Early in the operations of the re-organised work on behalf of children, it was found necessary to checkmate the machinations of the profiteer, whose depredations were a menace to success. Consequently a central store was established and has proved a complete success. Standardisation of necessary was aimed at and accomplished, except in the case of clothing, when uniformity is absolutely forbidden, the object of which is that the State children shall appear just as those more favoured. Since the establishment of the store three years ago, goods to the value of £38,000 have been supplied to the various branches. The estimated saving on these supplies is £15,200, and the present wholesale value of goods in stock is £7,562 over and above the original cost to the Department, thus showing a total saving of £22,762 of public money.

RECOVERY OF PUBLIC MONEY.

The serious question of recovering maintenance costs from parents or guardians who are able but unwilling to pay, dealt with in a systematic manner, and it is estimated that the sum of £30,000 will be recovered during the current financial year.

The following figures, representing the cost of dealing with 4,497 children during the year 1918, and the recoveries, etc., may be of interest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>£14,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Upkeep</td>
<td>£19,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling</td>
<td>£2,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnishing, Repairs, etc.</td>
<td>£3,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paymant for children boarded out</td>
<td>£25,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£74,479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2

Recoveries from parents and others: £24,879
Sales of produce, etc.: £3,610
Earnings of past inmates paid into public account: £1,005

Net cost £42,985—9 11s. 2d. per child for the year.

EX-BABIES.

A new departure in child welfare is now in process of organisation and will deal with the care of all children, known as ex-babies, that is those between the ages of one and five, or prior to the school age. Dr. Wilkins has received the appointment to the office of Director of School Medical Service in the Educational Department.

At present there are nine medical men and women giving their attention to this branch of the work, but the organisation is imperfect and incomplete. It is hoped speedily to eliminate the imperfections, and to complete an organisation which will be charged with the oversight of children, regardless of their social position.

It is proved that the average parent responds to instruction given when put attractively, and that they are anxious for information and guidance. The object is to devote special attention to the pre-antial and pre-school periods. Dr. Wilkins points out that here inspection is not sufficient, the need is to educate and to act. It is hoped that this Branch will link up with the Plunket Society, which is performing wonderful service in teaching and helping mothers to care for their babies in an efficient manner, particularly regarding the preparation of food, which is resulting in the saving of a large number of invaluable lives.

CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED CHILD.

The care of the feeble-minded child, although being attempted during a period of twelve years, is only now being put on a proper basis. Until recently it has been worked upon without plan, and the result has been disappointing. It is now recognised that the feeble-minded can derive no benefit from attendance at an ordinary school, nor can be associate with the normal children of his neighbourhood. Special schools are being established to which attendance by the feeble-minded is compulsory. One such school is on the upper floor of the Gift Kindergarten in Auckland, already referred to. The child is allowed to do as much as he pleases until he understands the lesson of obedience. He is then instructed by a process requiring infinite patience on the part of the especially trained teachers; the instruction is of a simple nature, and considered suited to the limited intelligence. It is largely of a manual character, as it is found that the children advance very slightly in the arts of reading, writing, and counting. Only in very exceptional cases, if in any, can it be expected that feeble-minded children can be brought up to a standard approximating to that of even the less efficient members of the ordinary community. It has been found that those who most closely approach the ordinary standard of intelligence and capacity run greater risks and are subject to greater dangers than those of a very low grade of intelligence. Care must be taken that the term "feeble-minded" is not confused with the terms "dull" and "backward," the latter certainly make good progress under proper treatment, and that progress is often mistakenly credited to the feeble-minded, the position of whom appears to be extremely sad and hopeless.

After careful observation in the special class the rejects will be removed for segregation and placed under the care and control of the Government for the term of their natural life, if necessary.

It appears to me that there is a basis at least upon which we may work out the solution of the all im-
portant problem of preventing the unfit from the reproduction of their species. The segregation of the female at the age of puberty is considered the essential, because it is found that in almost every case the feeble-minded girl or woman is afflicted with nymphomania, hence she easily becomes, when at large, the victim of some unscrupulous male person, with the result that another generation of feeble-minded is produced and cast upon the State.

RELATION OF OFFICER IN CHARGE TO THE MINISTER.

I have already pointed out that in my opinion there is some advantage in having the work of Child Welfare attached to the Education Department, but I believe that advantage would be intensified if a complete sub-department of the Education Department were created, with a permanent head having direct access to his Minister. I am strengthened in that opinion by the simple but significant fact that during a conversation with the Director of Education (Dr. Anderson) that gentleman frankly admitted that he did not know much about the work, and referred me to the special officer in charge of the children's work (Mr. Beck), to whom I am extremely grateful for information. The Director no doubt is a gentleman of scholastic training and attainment, which is not necessarily the essential factor required in the work of dealing with the delinquent, the feeble-minded, the destitute, or the neglected child. That portion of the Department set apart for this work consists of 67 officers of all ranks, which includes a large proportion of women. It comprises the Head Office Staff, Inspectors, Probation Officers, District Agents, Visiting Nurses, Managers of Receiving Homes and their Assistants, Stores Branch, etc., the total annual salary of which is £14,230, made up as follows:—

Salaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer in Charge and Chief Inspector</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant in Charge and Chief Inspector</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Inspector (Woman)</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Officers (4), average £280</td>
<td>1,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Probation Officers (3), average £250</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Officer (Woman)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding Out Officers (Women) 6, average £200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Agents under Infant Life Protection Act (Women) 4, average £200</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Nurses (4), average £180</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers of Receiving Homes (Women) 4, average £275</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Managers of Receiving Homes (Women) 4, average £200</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager Training Farm</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Clerk</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks, general (11), £200, £200, £140, £95, £120, £180, £230, £250, £335, £60, £65</td>
<td>1,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk in charge (Maintenance)</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (7) in Charge (Maintenance), £200, £180, £165, £140, £120, £95, £65</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk in Charge (Statistics)</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (3) (Statistics), £190, £95, £65</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk in Charge (Stores)</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (3) (Stores), £200, £140, £120</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmaker and Buyer</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storeman</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistants (Stores) 3, £120, £120, £50</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>£14,230</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minimum salary paid to married male officers is £187 per annum, with a bonus of £15 per annum up to a salary of £500. Unmarried officers receive a bonus of £7 10s. per annum.

**MILK SUPPLY.**

The Wellington City Council is one of the latest organisations to interest itself in the question of child welfare, and is giving attention to the provision of a pure milk supply. Nearly the whole of the supply is compulsorily brought to a depot, where it is analysed and pasteurised under exceptionally good conditions, thus rendering it almost completely immune from the possibility of causing disease. But, unfortunately, at that point the good work ceases, because the milk is sold to private distributors, thus once more entering a channel of the possibilities of contamination. This serious weakness is recognised by the Council, which intends undertaking the work of distribution, and by way of compensation to the present vendors it is supplying them with milk at twopenny per gallon below cost. The private vendors have 18 months left in which to ply their calling; during that time their method of distribution is capable of much injury to the community.

**THE OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES.**

After a careful examination of the system operating in New Zealand for the treatment of children less fortunate than others, and after satisfying myself of its effectiveness, my mind naturally turned to find, if possible, the officer or officers responsible. I have already mentioned Mr. Shell as the father of the probation system, but the central figure is certainly Mr. John Beck, who directs the work from the Wellington centre. Mr. Beck is a comparatively young man, and, in my opinion, is on top of his job. Possessing a good knowledge of every branch of the work, imbued with a zeal for the protection of child life, realising fully its value, he is able to inspire his officers to such an extent that they all appear to love the work upon which they are engaged, and which calls for a display of patience, kindness, and firmness perhaps not needed to such an extent in any other walk of life.

In the event of our Government deciding to reorganise the Department in Western Australia, I would urge the Commission to give consideration to a recommendation that the Government of New Zealand be approached with a view to securing for a short period the services of Mr. Beck, so that the State and our officers may receive the benefit of his knowledge, and our Department be started afresh on a proper basis.

**CAUSATION.**

In the fact of the existence of the neglected, the destitute, the delinquent, and the feeble-minded child, we have the effect of some cause, and I believe it to be the duty of those charged with the welfare of our race to ascertain, if possible, that cause.

In New Zealand I found the opinion expressed by professional and laymen and women was overwhelming in defining the cause in the order given as alcohol, syphilis, and misfortune. When questioned for their reason of placing the factors in that order, it was explained that alcohol is largely responsible for the weakening mentally and physically of the child before its birth, and responsible in a large measure for the two remaining factors. It is admitted that both may be present where alcohol is non-existent, but in that case to defeat them is a comparatively easy matter.
APPRECIATION.

I desire to record my appreciation of the kindness of the officers too numerous to mention individually, from the Department of the Prime Minister downward, who deemed it a pleasure to supply me with the information you desired me to obtain, even when I detained them in their offices long after the hour when they are due to retire; also my gratitude to members of Parliament, private citizens, including natural and foster parents, and last, but by no means least, to some of those who have been safely piloted through the difficult and helpless period of life, and who now have an honoured place in the social fabric, which is the undeniable right of every child.

S. M. ROCKE,
Member of the Royal Commission.

By Authority: FRED. WM. SIMPSON, Government Printer, Perth.