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REFORM OF REFORMATORIES AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

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REFORM OF REFORMATORIES.

It would be difficult to find in the whole range of English administration a more curious anomaly than that exhibited in the methods whereby the State discharges its duties towards children of the criminal class. The explanation must be sought in history.

The Origin of Reformatory Treatment.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century only two methods, hanging or imprisonment, appear to have been in vogue for treating the youthful criminal. About this time, however, thoughtful observers began to see the necessity of some departure from this simple rule. They estimated that about sixty per cent. of the habitual criminals matriculated in their professional career before the age of fifteen; and in consequence they urged upon the legislature the need for submitting youthful offenders to an extended course of reforming treatment rather than to continued short sentences which only confirmed them in their course of crime. Accordingly a more enlightened policy was adopted, and some of the younger offenders were granted a free pardon conditional on their entry into a philanthropic institution, such as the Philanthropic Society's school or the reformatory at Stretton. Such schools were, however, few in number (the two mentioned were, I believe, the only ones) and very limited in accommodation. The best known was that belonging to the Philanthropic Society, which was started in 1787 in Hackney, transferred to St. George's-in-the-Fields in 1792, and in 1848 taken out to Red Hill (in imitation of the famous French reformatory colony at Mettray), where it still flourishes. At these schools only a very small proportion of the convicted children could be taken, and imprisonment appears to have been the fate of the rest. In 1837 the State attempted to deal with the matter by converting the military hospital at Parkhurst into a reformatory prison for young offenders. Only boys over fourteen, and over 4 feet 6 ins. in height, under sentence of transportation, were taken with a view to improving their character before exporting them. The discipline was very strict, and all the inmates wore irons. Parkhurst was thus rather a juvenile prison than a reformatory. Girls, and boys under fourteen, were still neglected by the legislature. In 1844 106 boys between the ages of seven and fourteen were sentenced to transportation. These sentences were never carried out, as, according to the Governor of Millbank, no one was transported under the age of fifteen. The problem was still pressing for solution, and many public-spirited men and women, notably Mr. Barwick Baker and Miss Mary Carpenter, were earnestly trying to solve it.

The Rise of Reformatories.

In 1852 Mr. Baker founded a private reformatory school at Hardwicke, the first inmates being young London thieves specially selected. Other schools at Saltley, Kingswood, and Droitwich were started almost at the same time. In 1854 at Hardwicke there were seventeen young thieves, who worked in the fields and at basket-

Reformatories - United Kingdom.

making, and were taught to read and write. At this time so rife was juvenile crime that competent observers computed that in London alone there were 20,000 children living by pilfering and begging. Many of these had been convicted and re-convicted, often up to eleven times. These reformatories attracted so much notice that in this year many meetings were held and petitions forwarded requesting that "schools of reformation" should be "fostered and multiplied" by Parliamentary aid. The result was that the same year an Act was passed issuing certificates to these private reformatories, and enabling magistrates to sentence boys and girls under sixteen to fourteen days' (or more) imprisonment, *plus* a period of from two to five years in a reformatory. Treasury contributions to these institutions were authorized, and parents of children sent to them were also compelled to contribute. In 1857 another Act enabled quarter sessions and borough councils (the old prisons authorities) to contribute to and to contract with outside reformatories for the reception of juvenile criminals. The same Act also empowered reformatories to let out their inmates on licence on expiration of half their sentence.

Reformatories were thus fairly started on their career in 1856. At first they confined their attention to those who had been previously convicted. By this means they obtained possession of the gang-leaders, and by keeping them were generally successful in breaking up the organized gangs of young thieves; a task which was previously considered impossible. The following table will show how successful the reformatories were in their early years in reducing the number of juvenile offenders:

Year.			Boys Convicted.			Sent to Reformatories.
1856	...	...	11,808	...	...	534
1857	...	...	10,822	...	...	960
1858	...	...	8,837	...	...	700
1859	...	...	7,582	...	...	745
1860	...	...	6,765	...	...	886

In 1863, owing to the successful operation of the reformatories, a juvenile prison was considered unnecessary, and Parkhurst was accordingly closed.

The Law of Reformatories.

In 1866 a Reformatory Act was passed consolidating previous legislation. As most of this Act is still in force, it is necessary to consider it at some length. Under its provisions children between the ages of ten and sixteen convicted of an offence punishable with penal servitude or imprisonment might be sent to prison for a minimum period of ten days or more, and after that to a reformatory for a period of from two to five years. The reformatory must be selected by the court which passed sentence from among the certified reformatories whose plans and rules had been approved by the Secretary of State. Although the court must select the reformatory, the Act expressly states that no reformatory could be compelled to receive any particular child. The reformatories might under this Act be established and maintained by private individuals or by the local bodies which then constituted the prisons authorities, or such

local bodies might contribute towards the expense of the private reformatories. The Treasury was also allowed to contribute, and the parents might be placed under contribution for a sum not exceeding five shillings weekly. The reformatories were to license out such children as they thought fit after eighteen months' detention. An Act of 1891 allows reformatories to place children out with employers at any period of their detention, the consent of the Home Secretary being necessary unless twelve months have expired.

In 1893 Lord Leigh's Act was passed. This raised the minimum age at which a child might be committed to a reformatory from ten to twelve; children under twelve being only eligible if previously convicted. The minimum period of detention was raised from two to three years, the maximum remaining at five years, but with compulsory discharge on reaching the age of nineteen. This Act also allowed a magistrate to remand juvenile criminals to the workhouse instead of to prison, and made imprisonment before removal to a reformatory optional. A later Act in 1899 abolished this preliminary imprisonment completely, so that a child is now committed directly to a reformatory.

Statistics of the Inmates.

At the end of 1900 there were in Great Britain forty-eight of these certified reformatories, tenanted by 4,054 boys and 630 girls; 927 other boys and girls were still nominally under detention, but had been liberated on licence, making a total of 5,611. The high-water mark as to numbers was reached in 1881, when there were 6,738 so detained. During the last ten years the numbers have only varied very slightly. Considered with reference to the increase of population, this means that the percentage of committals to reformatories must be decreasing. This is attributable to two main causes; firstly to the decrease in the number of younger children who are now generally sent to industrial schools instead of reformatories; and secondly to the use of the Summary Jurisdiction Act of 1879 and the First Offenders Act of 1887, under whose provisions juveniles are often bound over to come up for judgment when called on. Of late years there has been a tendency among magistrates to emphasize the responsibility of the parent and to commit children to these schools only as a last resource. Those now committed are the residuum with whom it is impossible to deal otherwise; and it seems unlikely that in the near future the number under detention will fall much below its present level.

The vast majority of these juveniles are admitted between the ages of twelve and sixteen, either with one previous conviction or without previous conviction. It would, however, be a great mistake to imagine that those sent without previous conviction are first offenders. They are really old offenders who have hitherto managed to evade the clutches of the law, or have been previously charged but, with a view to leniency, not convicted. The genuine first offenders among juveniles are rarely, except on very serious charges, sent to either reformatory or prison. The average sentence served before release on licence is nearly three and a half years, so that the average age on release would be nearly eighteen.

Origin of Industrial Schools.

The industrial schools were designed to provide for children who were not yet criminals but were likely to become so. They first appeared in Scotland, and received their statutory recognition in 1854. The earliest school of this type in England was Feltham, founded in 1854 for juvenile offenders between the ages of seven and fourteen, in Middlesex. The first general Act in reference to these schools in England was passed in 1857. Under this Act children between the ages of seven and fourteen charged with vagrancy might be committed, but could not be detained beyond the age of fifteen. The schools were certified by the Privy Council Committee on Education. In 1860 the control was transferred to the Home Office. In 1861 the range of the Act was extended, and in 1866 a Consolidating Act was passed unifying the legislation on this subject. In 1870 the Elementary Education Act creating School Boards authorized them to contribute to and found industrial schools.

The Law of Industrial Schools.

Children committed to these schools must be under the age of fourteen, and cannot be detained beyond the age of sixteen. Begging, found destitute, consorting with thieves or prostitutes, are causes for such committal. A child under twelve charged with a punishable offence, who has not been previously convicted, may also be sent to an industrial school, as may also a refractory child charged by its parents with being beyond their control. Under the Education Act of 1876 children whose education is neglected by parents, or who are wandering or not under control, must be proceeded against by the School Board, and an order made by the magistrate for the child to attend school. Should this order not be complied with, such non-compliance not being the fault of the parent, the child may then be sent by the magistrate to an industrial school. This has led to the establishment by some School Boards of a separate class of industrial schools, viz., truant schools. To these only truants are sent, and the periods of detention are short. Under this Act industrial day schools were also instituted.

In general character the reformatories and industrial schools are similar, the distinction between them now being mainly that of the age of the inmates. Both are subject to the same governmental inspection, and the subjects taught are similar. More prominence is given to school work in the industrial schools, only about three hours per day being devoted to mechanical work. In the reformatory schools, naturally, more time is spent in the field or workshop and less in the class-room. The functions of reformatory and industrial schools overlap for children below the age of fourteen, and the diminution in the number of younger reformatory inmates is due to the increasing tendency to send such children to industrial schools.

Industrial School Inmates.

At the end of 1900 there were in Great Britain 142 of these schools, containing 17,088 inmates. In addition there were 2,015 on licence. There were fifteen truant schools, with 1,332 inmates, and 4,283 on licence; and twenty-two day industrial schools, with

3,253 inmates, and 417 on licence. The numbers under detention have continued to gradually increase during the last twenty years.

The average sentence actually served in industrial schools proper is nearly four years; and the vast majority are between the ages of ten and fourteen on admission. The average age of discharge is thus about fifteen and a half.

Where the Money Comes From.

Reformatory and industrial schools may be instituted and maintained by private individuals and societies, or by certain local authorities, such as School Boards and County Councils, or they may be carried on by a combination of private persons and public bodies. Practically, the first method is the one in use. In 1900, out of 227 industrial and reformatory schools, only nineteen were in the hands of public bodies; ten of these were under School Boards, eight under County or Borough Councils, and one under the Corporation of Birmingham. These nineteen are all industrial schools, not a single reformatory being owned by a public body. The remaining 208 schools were under private management; so that at the present day at least ninety per cent. of these schools are under the administration of private individuals and societies. Yet though this is the case, over eighty-three per cent. of the money spent on these schools is supplied from public sources. The balance sheet for the reformatory schools in 1899 showed a total expenditure of £113,396 raised from the following sources:

Treasury	£72,073	equal to	63·5 per cent.
Rates	24,940	„	22·0 „
Parents	6,237	„	5·5 „
Subscriptions	2,014	„	1·8 „
			92·8 per cent.

The remaining 7·2 per cent. and a small balance was supplied mainly by the sale of articles manufactured in the schools, hire of labor from the schools, and by interest on investments.

For industrial schools the total expenditure (excluding day schools) was £428,648 in 1899, provided thus:

Treasury	£193,798	equal to	45·2 per cent.
School Boards	108,845	„	25·4 „
Other Rates	53,905	„	12·6 „
Subscriptions	30,221	„	7·0 „
Parents	19,214	„	4·5 „
			94·7 per cent.

The remaining 5·3 per cent. was supplied mainly as in the reformatories by the profits of the industrial department.

Thus of the expenditure of reformatories 83·5 per cent. is supplied from public funds, and 1·8 only by private individuals; of industrial schools 83·2 per cent. is supplied by public funds, and 7 per cent. only by private individuals.

The money thus provided by local bodies is accounted for in two ways; firstly, by direct expenditure upon industrial schools under their control; secondly, by payment per head to other schools for

inmates sent from the districts administered by these bodies. Thus, during the year ended Lady Day, 1900, 690 children were sent to industrial schools proper at the instance of the London School Board. Of these, only 132 were sent to the Board's own institutions; the remaining 558 were dispersed to 63 industrial schools in every part of the country.

In return for this considerable grant of public money the only public control ensured (excepting of course in the eleven schools directly owned and governed by public bodies) is the occasional appointment of members of School Boards, etc., on the committee of management of these institutions (the rest of the committee being elected by the subscribers, or, practically, by a few of them), and the inspection of these schools by officials appointed by the Home Office. A report is published yearly by the Chief Inspector as a Government Blue Book. In addition, many of the schools are inspected by officials appointed by those local authorities who send children to them. At present, the Home Office inspection appears to be really good, and to be inspired by a thorough desire for efficiency.

Results of Starving the Schools.

In their early days, when reformatory institutions were practically penological experiments conducted by a few enthusiasts, it was perhaps right that they should be under private control, so that the "researchers" might have a free hand to test their theories; but now that these schools have passed out of the experimental stage and become a fixed component of our criminal system, it is surely time for the nation to recognize that it should itself be the owner of its places of legal detention. The wave of philanthropic feeling, too, that led to the foundation and support of these schools by private individuals and societies appears to have subsided. In 1860 subscriptions to reformatories accounted for more than a quarter of the total cost, in 1900 they provide rather less than a fiftieth part. Subscriptions have flowed into other channels, and left these schools stranded on the beach of economy.

Thus it happens that, in spite of the large national and local subsidies, many of these institutions suffer severely from lack of funds. Urgent reforms cannot be carried out, nor can necessary extensions be added. Overcrowding is another concomitant evil, for the Treasury grant is a fixed sum per head, so that more boys than can well be accommodated are often taken in order to obtain the extra grant. Voluntary inmates, paid for by guardians or relatives, add to the overcrowding. Taking the 1899 Report of H.M. Inspector, we find that of the thirty-nine reformatories inspected, no less than fifteen were adversely criticized as regards accommodation and sanitation. A few extracts from this report will illustrate the point.

NORTH-EASTERN REFORMATORY.—"The buildings are full of defects, and it is difficult to say where improvement should begin. The crowded state of the dormitories certainly calls for urgent attention."

STRANRAER REFORMATORY.—"The general domestic arrangements of the school are not satisfactory; fleas appear to have got the upper hand, especially in the crowded attics. The school takes more boys than its buildings justify, and in the struggle to make both ends meet the interests of the boys are apt to be lost sight of."

BOLEYN CASTLE REFORMATORY.—"Much of the building is extremely old and in a tumble-down condition, while the sanitary arrangements are probably as contrary to modern ideas as they well could be."

WARWICK GIRLS' REFORMATORY.—"The house is old, and parts are in a rotten condition. The ventilation of some of the rooms, notably the schoolroom and kitchen, is far from perfect, and the situation is most undesirable. A move to a more modern house in a better neighborhood is not only desirable but imperative."

ST. JOHN'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, WALTHAMSTOW.—"The older parts of the building are in a state of bad repair, and indeed require rebuilding. The dining-room is gloomy and disagreeable, the kitchen is inadequate and in need of a good range, while the dormitory on the top floor is never likely to be quite free from obnoxious insects. Other parts of the premises, notably the recreation room, are in need of cleaning and painting."

CHADWICK MEMORIAL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.—"The dormitories are overcrowded and should be relieved at once. To the overcrowding may in some measure be attributed the ill-health of the past. The basement must be insanitary; through the rotten woodwork, swarming with insects, the effluvia from the baths and troughs of the lavatory, and even to a certain extent from the slop-drains, penetrate into the main building and vitiate the atmosphere."

It is only fair to add that since the issue of this report extensive improvements have been made in four of these schools; the question of rebuilding the fifth on a new site is under consideration. In the sixth no improvement has been made or considered.

The unsatisfactory financial condition of these schools, too, renders them too susceptible to the fluctuations in the number of admissions. When the number diminishes the loss of income is felt, when the number increases the accommodation is found to be inadequate. The rise in committals to reformatories during 1900 appears to have caused severe pressure on the accommodation of these schools.

Want of Technical Training.

The second point deserving serious attention is the industrial training provided for the inmates. When these schools were started the promoters' idea appears to have been that useful work of any kind would prove the herald of salvation. Accordingly no serious attempts were made to teach good trades or provide efficient technical education. Wood-chopping and gardening were considered sufficient for the boy, needlework and the wash-tub for the girl. This certainly saved a great deal of expense, and often proved a source of considerable income to the school. But the evil effect on the child was soon obvious. Discharged at a time when he should be beginning to earn his living, he had no equipment for any work involving skilled labor, and was thus compelled either to swell the ranks of the unskilled laborers or to return to that home from whose degrading associations the industrial school was designed to rescue him. An attempt had consequently to be made to teach boys trades which would be useful to them as a means of earning a livelihood on their discharge. This attempt, however honestly it may have been made, can only be characterized as a failure. The main trades taught have been farming and gardening, tailoring, shoemaking, carpentering, baking, printing, etc. The inspectors, however, agree that the boys on their discharge do not follow the trade which has been taught them; and the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Committee of 1895 were compelled to report adversely, thus: "No one connected with these schools came before us to praise the trade

instruction given at these schools. On the other hand there were a number of witnesses who, speaking from their large experience, pronounced that it was of little or no value." The plain fact is that that these institutions cannot, as at present carried on, afford to provide proper technical training. Cheap tailoring and bootmaking, such as they generally teach, is useless as a means of livelihood, machine work in these industries having displaced hand labor. Recognizing to some extent the futility of this training, many schools appear to rely upon their wood-chopping, which, although of no value commercially or educationally to the boys, at all events yields a fair profit in an establishment where the labor costs nothing. A few schools provide really good trade instruction. At Feltham School, the property of the London County Council, the technical training is both varied and thorough, but the expense is too great for most schools. The cost of maintenance per head at Feltham is £35 14s. per annum, whereas the average cost throughout England is only £21 5s. 2d. per head. Thus really good industrial training is far beyond the reach of privately administered schools, *i.e.*, of ninety per cent. of the whole number.* This is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs; it is imperative that a boy who is kept till, say, eighteen in these institutions should at all events be fitted to take a fair position when he is discharged. In his evidence before the 1895 Committee, Mr. Ricks, Inspector of Reformatories for the London School Board, said, "Industrial training is often rather a question of money-making than proper training. More often than not commercial considerations are allowed to interfere with a proper selection of industrial training." The boy from an industrial school or reformatory has in this matter a legitimate grievance against the State that sent him there; it is our duty to provide really sound and efficient technical training in these schools, no matter what the cost.

Poverty and Morale.

Poverty and overcrowding in these schools have also a distinctly bad effect on the health, the discipline, and the general tone of the inmates. The death-rate is considerably higher in Roman Catholic than in Protestant schools; and it is exactly these schools that we find poverty-stricken and overcrowded. In these schools, too, the percentage of re-convictions (reaching thirty-nine per cent. in one school, and twenty-eight per cent. in another, as compared with a total average of fourteen per cent.) is much higher than in the Protestant schools. Both the high death-rate and the high number of re-convictions are attributed by H. M. Inspector to the lack of funds for proper administration. The Treasury grant is of course given to all schools impartially; but this alone is insufficient, and the philanthropic aid that should furnish the extra sum seems in these cases to have spent itself in other directions. It is obvious that on the present system many of these schools must in a short time either lose their certificates or close voluntarily.

* The high cost of Feltham is not entirely due to the technical training. Other special causes also operate. Municipal schools are often sinners in the matter of industrial training. The worst case of wood-chopping is in one of these schools.

The industrial schools are, speaking generally, in a more flourishing condition than the reformatories, owing mainly to the fact that they have the School Boards at their back. The School Board payments are second only to the Treasury and form more than a quarter of the total receipts. Out of a total of 2,929 boys committed in 1899, 2,013 were sent at the instance of the School Boards, 667 being sent at the request of the London Board alone. The latter has under its control three ordinary industrial schools, two truant schools, and two day industrial schools. Two others are in course of construction. These School Board and County Council schools set a standard to which other schools must strive to attain.

The Outcast Degenerates.

The third point to which I wish to direct attention is the selection of boys and girls by these institutions. Legally, no school is compelled to receive any juvenile offender. The consequence of this is that it is difficult to secure entry into a reformatory or industrial school for many children who need it most. There is no reformatory in Great Britain that will knowingly take a mentally deficient child, or one deformed, or subject to fits, or with a diseased heart. Nor is there one which will take an immoral girl. Such cases, epileptic children charged with stealing, girls of fifteen and even under that age leading an immoral life, are not uncommon in our metropolitan police-courts. Before such cases a magistrate is powerless: no certified reformatory or industrial school will touch them, and committal to other institutions is useless, as residence in these is purely voluntary.* Should a deficient child by oversight gain entrance to one of these institutions, he can still be got rid of by discharging him as "unfit for training." In 1899, in England and Scotland, 106 children were so discharged. Mental weakness, lung or chest diseases, fits, cancer, sore eyes, heart-disease, etc., are among the causes assigned for these discharges. The reformatories do not want degenerates: they entail great trouble and expense, and generally bring in nothing beyond the government grant. So these deficient children are neglected by the State and by the institutions which the State supports. They return to their old haunts; and, as abnormality in mind or body is often accompanied by tendency to crime, *i.e.*, moral abnormality, they lead a miserable or criminal existence till they are old enough to go to prison. It is probably right that a "deficient" child should not be placed with others of the normal type: the results of contact are bad for both; but what is urgently needed is a separate school (or rather schools) for these abnormals. Such a school would be much more costly than the ordinary reformatory or industrial school, for it would require a resident staff of

* Extract from *Daily Chronicle*, Monday, April 28th, 1902:—"DEFECTIVE CHILDREN. MAGISTRATE'S COMPLAINT.—Mr. Fordham had before him, at North London, a boy who was charged with a petty theft, and who, having been previously convicted and being beyond the control of his parent, was a fit subject for an industrial school. The school officer, however, reported that the boy was subject to fits and mentally deficient. No industrial school would take him in consequence, though sometimes such boys were got into private homes.—Mr. Fordham: It seems very cruel. Just because this boy is afflicted and wants special care, there is no provision made for him. I can do nothing to assist him, and he must be discharged."

medical experts, and the period of detention for the inmates would be necessarily much longer than for normal children. It is rather improbable, therefore, that such a school would be taken in hand by a voluntary agency. These schools should be national and should form a part of a national scheme for the segregation of the degenerates.

Three main defects of the present system have now been briefly discussed. They may be summed up as follows :—

- (1) The deterioration of health and tone owing to the financial starvation of many of these schools ;
- (2) The lack of proper industrial training for the inmates ;
- (3) The abandonment of the physically and mentally unfit.

Suggestions for Reform.

(i) PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE.

In the first place all these institutions should be under public administration, either by the central government or by local authorities, and should be financed entirely by them. In this way only can the income necessary for a thorough handling be properly provided. Common sense, too, suggests that it is only fair that institutions which are supported almost entirely from public funds should be under public control. More money is urgently needed, but even if an increased allowance is made from public funds, the provision of proper technical training and of differential treatment for deficient children will continue to be burked by the voluntary managers. The nation undertakes the care of its adult criminals ; it should surely deal also with its juveniles. The duty is too important to be delegated to a few well-meaning but irresponsible individuals.

(ii) REORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING.

Secondly, training should be provided which will enable the inmates to be practically self-supporting when discharged. For this purpose it may be necessary to raise the limit of age up to which inmates may be retained. Before 1893 this limit in the case of reformatory inmates was twenty-one, but Lord Leigh's Act in that year reduced it to nineteen. There are many objections to this reduction. In the first place, the time of service in the school is often insufficient to impart the amount of trade teaching requisite to enable a boy to earn his living on discharge ; secondly, at the age at which he is discharged, he is not old enough to be really self-maintaining. The average age of discharge from reformatories is rather over seventeen years, and from industrial schools rather over fifteen years. The majority of those discharged must, therefore, be of the hobbledehoy stage, unfit equally for man's and for boy's work. It would surely be better for all concerned if they were discharged between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one.

(iii) THE WIDENING OF THE AGE LIMITS.

At present no child over fourteen can be admitted to an industrial school, and none over sixteen to a reformatory. Above the age of sixteen then the only way of treating a juvenile offender is to commit him to prison.

Of late years it has been doubted whether this is a correct mode of treatment, and in view of the success of reformatory education, it has been suggested that the age of committal to reformatories should be raised from sixteen to eighteen or nineteen; so that a juvenile offender of seventeen or eighteen could be committed to a reformatory until the age of twenty-one. The Rev. M. C. Vine, Warden and Chaplain of the Red Hill Reformatory, a large and successful institution, in his evidence before the 1895 Committee, condemned the restriction of the age to nineteen, and recommended the raising of the age of admission to eighteen, and that of discharge to twenty-one. This recommendation has been endorsed by the Council of the Association of Industrial and Reformatory Schools, which includes all the certified schools in Great Britain. Abroad this principle has been adopted; in France the maximum age of admission is sixteen, as in England, but detention extends up to the age of twenty; in Germany juveniles may be admitted up to the age of eighteen and retained till twenty; in Belgium admitted up to eighteen and retained till twenty-one. Moreover, the report of the Departmental Committee on Prisons recommends that the age of admission to reformatories should be raised to eighteen, and the ultimate limit of detention to twenty-one.* In the first place, from sixteen to twenty-one appears to be the critical age for juvenile criminals. The convictions between these ages are three times those between twelve and sixteen. One burglary in every three and one robbery in every four is committed by juveniles between sixteen and twenty-one; though such juveniles form only one-tenth of the population. The extension of the age of detention in reformatories should surely diminish this excessive criminality. Again the raising of age limit and consequent increase in period of detention would enable better trade instruction to be given, and the inmates would be discharged at an age when they could maintain themselves.

(iv) THE CONSEQUENT INCREASE OF NUMBERS.

Such a raising of both lower and higher age limits would necessitate a considerable increase in the number of reformatories. In 1899, 15,212 young persons between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one were received into prison; assuming that one-third of these were under eighteen, we get an estimate of 5,000 new cases eligible for reformatory treatment. During the same year 11,695 juveniles under sixteen were convicted. Of these 1,358 were sent to prison, and 1,296 to reformatories. Assuming that the equality between the numbers sent to prison and to reformatories would also hold between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, the estimate of 2,500 is obtained as a likely increase in the number of admissions to reformatories consequent on raising the age of admission to eighteen. That is to say, the number of admissions would be practically trebled. Raising the upper age limit to twenty-one would also increase the number of inmates, so that the effect of the suggested change would be, at the least estimate, to treble the number under detention. This would necessitate the building of new reformatories, and the extension of the existing ones. Such a change could not

* *Juvenile Offenders*, by W. D. Morrison, p. 298.

possibly be carried out under the present voluntary system. Arguments in favor of raising the age limits are consequently arguments in favor of altering the present system.

(v) THE QUESTION OF CLASSIFICATION.

Lastly, a proper system of classification of the schools is much needed; as is also a proper method of allocating the juveniles committed to suitable institutions. At present the only distinctions by which the schools can be classified are as follows: by sex, boys' schools and girls' schools; age, reformatories for the elder and industrial schools for the younger; religion, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish. None of these provides other than a rudimentary classification. Under present arrangements, a child who is to be sent to an industrial or reformatory school is remanded till the officer has found a school ready and willing to receive him. To this school he is sent, and once there has to take whatever training the institution can afford. This is wrong; the habits and circumstances of each boy should be carefully studied before allocating him. For this purpose a few receiving institutions should be provided, to which the youthful offenders should be in the first instance committed. The necessity of keeping them under remand would be thus obviated. In these institutions they should remain for a time until their physical and mental characteristics and previous training, aptitude, etc., had been determined. From these the youths should then be drafted off into the institutions most fitted to receive them. To facilitate this, reformatory and industrial schools should be united into one class under the name of industrial schools, as recommended by Mr. Morrison.* These schools should then specialize as to age, industry, etc. Separate schools should also be provided for the physically unfit and mentally deficient, and also for backward children, *i.e.*, children of later development. In these special schools the period of detention should be capable of extension. In order to provide for individual attention on the part of instructors, the industrial schools should not be large; and certainly not more than a hundred boys or eighty girls should be taken at one school. As it is not good for older and younger boys to be mixed indiscriminately, there should be an age limit to each school, and as a boy grew too old for his present school he should be transferred to another for older boys. Only a few trades should be taught in each school, and the instruction should proceed as far as was considered suitable considering the age limit. A useful addition to such a scheme would be the establishment in large towns of municipal homes, to which on discharge the boys might go to secure lodging and obtain work.

(vi) PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: CENTRAL OR LOCAL?

At the first glance, such an arrangement seems to require central administration both as regards finance and as regards classification of schools and inmates. The objections to such administration are, however, great. It would tend to stereotype the schools, and leave no opening for local initiative. It would also fail to secure the interest and co-operation of local workers who can often assist largely in the success of an industrial school.

* *Juvenile Offenders*, p. 303.

On the whole, it seems better that these institutions should be in the hands of the county and county borough authorities who at present have the power to contribute to and even to build reformatories and industrial schools; or in the hands of a joint board formed by these and by the School Boards, who are at present the chief local authorities concerned with industrial schools. By this means local initiative in experiment and reform could be safeguarded, and the assistance of interested persons could be secured by placing them on the committee of management, just as is at present done in the committees of public libraries.

That such a transference from private hands to public bodies would not be unwelcome, at all events, to many of these schools is apparent from the following abstracts from letters of managers of industrial schools:—

Our position is absurd, and we are always looking forward to the time when we come under a school authority or the prison authority, and have a responsible and properly financed position. Being half paid and scraping the rest together is a galling condition.

The increase of industrial training is almost impossible for voluntary committees. They have no funds. County and borough councils ought to take up the schools.

It is hard work scraping along on our grant and about £90 voluntary subscriptions.

As to the finance, the money should be supplied by the rates, assisted by a grant in aid from the Treasury. Parents' contributions must be continued. Under the Youthful Offenders Act, which came into operation on January 1st, 1902, the methods of enforcing these contributions are considerably simplified; and they should consequently be much increased. The local authorities, not the Treasury, should collect and enforce parents' contributions.

Summary of Suggestions.

The following brief summary gives an outline of proposals recommended in this paper for the future development of these schools:—

- (1) Transference from private hands to local authorities; and merging the two classes into one.
- (2) Raising the lower age limit to eighteen, and the upper to twenty-one; and consequent increase in the number of schools.
- (3) Thorough revision of the industrial training provided; with a view to making the inmate practically self-supporting on his discharge.
- (4) Proper classification of schools and provision of receiving houses for those committed to these schools; and of municipal homes for inmates discharged on licence.
- (5) Provision of separate schools for the treatment of "deficient" youthful offenders.

A Bill should be passed providing that the Home Secretary may order any reformatory or industrial school under private management to be transferred from its private committee to the Town or County Council most concerned. The committee of any school should be empowered to request the Home Secretary to put the Act into force in regard to its school, and it should be his duty to put it into force without request in respect of any school which may be

adversely reported on by the inspectors. A schedule to the Bill could indicate to which county or town council each school should, if necessary, be allotted.

In order to obviate the objection that the support of the schools would fall on the rates of certain places only, whilst others would bear no equivalent charge, it should be provided that the payment made for every child sent to a school from an outside district should be in every year a full proportion per head of all charges falling on the rates. Thus, each area would pay for its own children, although only some of the areas had the management of schools.

Meantime, the Home Office, if desirous of putting an end to private management, could do much by Departmental pressure without fresh legislation.

This proposal does not readily lend itself to a systematic classification of the schools, but on the whole a certain deficiency in this respect is less important than the dangers incident to completely centralized management. Thorough classification is only possible under complete Home Office management, and this would entail the absence of the local control so necessary for the prevention of official abuses and for providing personal interest in starting children in useful careers.

The Bill should also embody the other reforms indicated above.

Working on these lines, we may succeed in the task of transforming the potential criminal or loafer into a useful and efficient citizen, applying his energies in a social instead of an anti-social direction. The schools will become true industrial schools, fitting their inmates to rank on discharge with the average of their class and able to perform a due share of the nation's labor.

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