

## THE CANADIAN

## PRISON SUNDAY

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## Recommendations of Ontario Prison Reform Commissioners.

## JUVENILE CRIMINALITY.

1. *Compulsory Education, Truancy, etc.*—That such changes be made in the school laws as are requisite to give full effect to the provisions which require all children of a proper age to attend school for a reasonable period in each year; the law in this respect to be rigorously, but, at the same time, judiciously enforced; so that the attendance at school of all children whom such a law should reach may be secured, and yet no injustice wrought or hardship inflicted. . . . The rigorous enforcement of such a law is an imperative necessity in laying the foundation of all preventative measures relating to juvenile criminality. . . .

2. *Day Industrial Schools.*—That the establishment of one or more day industrial schools in every city and large towns be made compulsory; that provision be made in these schools for the control and instruction during the day of disorderly or neglected children belonging to what is generally described as the "Arab Class," of habitual truants, of those who cannot be controlled by parents or guardians, or who otherwise require special supervision, and of destitute and forsaken children who may not be proper subjects for constant residence in charitable institutions, but require partial assistance in obtaining proper food and clothing; and for carrying on work of a simple kind for the industrial training of these classes.

3. *Children on Street at Night—Playground for Children.*—That cities, towns and villages be empowered to pass by-laws forbidding, as is now done in the county of Waterloo, the running at large of boys and girls in the streets after dark, and to enforce such laws effectively through the agency of the police and truant officers, and that the parents or guardians be held responsible in such cases, and after one or more warnings, be punished with a fine if they allow their children to remain on the streets after the time appointed, unless there be some good reason therefor, or unless they show that they cannot control their children. That in order to furnish amusement and exercise, chiefly for children of these classes, suitable playgrounds, with a gymnasium attached be provided in every city and town, and that an officer be appointed to attend during certain hours of play and exercise, and prevent all disorderly conduct and the use of profane or obscene language.

4. *Second-hand Shops.*—That the inspection and regulation of second-hand stores, pawn-brokers shops and junk shops be made so strict by law as to prevent the purchase of any goods that may be stolen, and that the exposure of goods for sale be so regulated that children shall not be tempted by the opportunities for pilfering which it affords.

5. *Immigrant Children.*— . . . That such precaution be taken as will effectually prevent the bringing into this country of children of parents known to be criminal, or of children who have spent their whole lives in an atmosphere of vice and crime; who are so saturated with evil and know so little of good that their reformation, if at all possible, must be a work of much time and of patient, skilful, charitable effort.

6. *Child Saving.*—As the hearty co-operation of the charitable and philanthropic is essential to the success of any effort for the prevention of vice and crime, the Commissioners recommend that all practical measures undertaken for that purpose by any association or charitable organization receive the most cordial encouragement and assistance from the municipal and other authorities interested in the saving of children.

7. *Arrest and Trial of Children.*—That no child under the age of fourteen shall be arrested and taken through the public streets as a prisoner when it can possibly be avoided. If the offence committed is of a trivial nature, and the policeman knows the child's parents or guardian, they shall be summoned to produce the child at such time and at such place as may be directed. If the offence is of a serious nature, and it is necessary to place the child under arrest, he or she should not, if at all possible, be committed or remanded to a common goal, but should be detained in a place provided for the purpose, and entirely separate and away from a police station, and, if practicable, in the house of a police officer or other person who will be responsible for the child's appearance before the magistrate or justice at the time and place appointed. That no child under the age of fourteen be tried in public on any charge, but that the magistrate or justice hold a special session at a convenient time and place for the trial of such offenders, and that none be permitted to be present except the officers of the court, the necessary witnesses, the truant or probation officer, and the parents or guardians of the children to be tried.

8. *Children Found Guilty.*—If a child under fourteen years of age is found guilty of the offence with which he is charged, commitment to a common goal should, under no circumstance, be made, nor should the child be committed to a refuge or reformatory until all other means of correcting or reclaiming such child have been tried. In the cases of children convicted of first offences of a trivial nature, full authority should be conferred on magistrates and justices to discharge with an admonition, particularly if parents or guardians will undertake a more careful supervision of them. The system of suspended sentence, under the surveillance of the police, should also be more availed of, unless the environments and general surroundings of the children are extremely bad. Above all, it is urgently recommended that a law be enacted giving full effect to the Probation System, as now in operation in the State of Massachusetts and other States, with such modifications as the circumstances of this Province and the ideas and habits of its people may render desirable. The truant officers, referred to in the first recommendation, to act, as far as possible, as probation officers in respect of this class of juvenile offenders.

9. *Industrial Schools.*—That the immediate erection of industrial schools, sufficient for the accommodation of all children whom it may be found necessary to place in such institutions, be provided for, and that in any district in which there is no large city, and the erection and support of such a school would be too great a burden on one county, certain counties, having geographical proximity, be grouped together for the purpose of founding and maintaining an industrial school for all the municipalities within such group. . . . that the means of giving a good technological training, to such boys as will not adopt farm life, be furn-

ished; that the literary and the moral and religious instruction of the boys and girls detained in such schools be carefully attended to; that the boys and girls be detained in industrial schools only so long as may be absolutely necessary to render them fit to be placed in a private family, either as apprentices or boarders. That those who are not thoroughly vicious should be so placed out, even before they have received such literary instruction as is absolutely necessary for their future well-being, provision being made for their attending school when placed out. That a vigilant and kindly supervision of the children so placed out be constantly maintained, and that the managers of the school, with the approval of the proper provincial officer, may recall any child so placed out, or remove him or her from one family to another.

10. That in addition to any provincial grant to aid in the acquisition of land and the erection of buildings for such industrial schools, the provisions of the charity Aid Act in respect to the maintenance of refuges be made applicable to industrial schools.

11. *Reformatory for Boys.*—That the Reformatory for boys be removed, as soon as practicable, to a more suitable locality, where the cottage system, a proper classification of the boys, a thorough system of industrial training, the mark system, and other approved reformatory methods, can be introduced, and that when this has been done, moral restraints be entirely substituted for those material restraints which still do so much to make the atmosphere of the reformatory that of a prison. That a larger number of the boys be employed in practical farming and garden work, and that means of giving a thorough technological training be at once provided. Such a school to be of real value should be a hive of active, earnest, unremitting industry, in which every boy should learn how to do as much work as is expected of any boy of his age on any farm or in any factory or workshop, and to do it at least as well. That the laws be so amended also, that all boys shall be sent to the reformatory under what is known as the indeterminate sentence, and every boy be enabled to earn a remission of a portion of the extreme penalty attached to the offence which he has committed, by his industry, his diligence and general good conduct, whether under a mark system, or such a system as that of Lansing, Michigan; that when the superintendent, chaplain, schoolmaster, and farm or trade instructor report that a boy has earned such remission, and is entitled to it by reason of the proofs he has given of being really reformed, the Attorney General of the Province, or some one acting on his behalf, should be empowered to remit the remainder of the penalty, or to allow that boy to go out on license or parole, subject to being arrested and taken back to the reformatory if he violate any of the conditions of his parole.

12. *Refuge for Girls. Industrial School for Girls.*—That the refuge for girls be entirely separate from the Mercer Reformatory, and that an institution which may serve as a reformatory for girls of less than fifteen years of age, who have entered upon a dissolute career, or who have committed serious offences, be established in a suitable locality; that a quantity of good land be attached to it so that the girls may be taught farm and dairy work and all kinds of house work. And that one or more industrial schools be established in suitable positions to which girls who commit petty offences, girls who are homeless or destitute, and girls who, because of the misconduct of their