

Borstal System

from a lack of early training at home, which has not been fully assisted by the church, the school, and social organizations interested in the welfare of youths. The majority of these youths have been guilty of crimes of acquisitiveness:—theft, burglary, housebreaking, and embezzlement. Less than one-quarter of them have been guilty of crimes of passion, i.e., sexual offences, indecencies, assaults, and crimes of violence.

2. Largely on account of the reasons abovementioned, and the acquisitiveness of their natures, these youths have displayed an utter disregard for the rights of property. It is therefore the duty of the penitentiary service to as far as possible correct existing conditions.

3. In a large number of cases, these youths have been guilty of offences, and have been released on suspended sentence; a repetition of the offence, or a new offence, has caused them to serve terms in industrial schools, reformatories or jails, and the courts have finally decided that a long term of confinement in a penitentiary is necessary. There are youths, however, whose first known offences are of so heinous a character that the public sense of decency demands that they be confined over a considerable period, the courts deeming it inadvisable to commit them for a short term of imprisonment, believing that a long period is required for an all-round programme of training.

4. It is the duty of the penitentiary to make an assay of the youth, in an effort to discover his possibilities and to develop them as far as the limitations of an institution will allow. It is platitudinous to state that reformation must begin with the youth himself. The institution can only provide him with the opportunities and assistance in bringing about a change of outlook and a better standard of morals and ethics.

5. The management of youthful convicts is an interesting and fascinating duty, but should only be attempted by optimistic persons who are not discouraged by failing to obtain the results aimed at. The training of youthful convicts is of necessity based on the belief that there is a very large amount of what is known as "good" in each youth, and that if the proper chords are touched, that favourable reactions will follow. The supervisors of youths require a genius for understanding and exceptional gifts of leadership.

6. The following excerpts are taken from "The Principles of the Borstal System," published by the prison commission. Home Office, 1932:

" . . . The task is not to break or knead him into shape, but to stimulate some power within to regulate conduct aright, to insinuate a preference for the good and the clean, to make him want to use his life well, so that he himself and not others will save him from waste. It becomes necessary to study the individual lad, to discover his trend and his possibility, and to infect him with some idea of life which will germinate and produce a character, controlling desire, and shaping conduct to some more glorious end than mere satisfaction or acquisition.

A Borstal institution is not an end in itself, but a laborious means to the reformation of offenders between the ages of sixteen and twenty one. The training necessary for a change at that age cannot be completely effected during the two or three years spent within the

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walls. The lad leaves his institution robust in figure and of confident mien, sometimes a shade too confident, but no one knows whether he is reformed, for no man may call himself a swimmer until his feet are off the ground."

7. The following excerpt is taken from "The Modern English Prison," page 185:

"The routing of the institution is that of an active day of 15 hours, beginning with physical training, continuing with eight hours work in workshop or outdoor party, and ending with 1½ or 2 hours of school or study. To place first things first, the work a lad does during his training falls into three stages. First with the cleaners, doing the necessary domestic work; then, while awaiting a vacancy in the trade party to which he has been allotted, he may have a spell of heavy outdoor work with a labouring party, which is good both for his character and his physique. Finally, he passes into a trade party. In the workshops good class work in carpentry and metal work is carried out with power machinery, and employment is also found at tailoring, shoemaking, cooking (especially training for sea cooks), gardening, farming (some institutions have farms of considerable size, all have some land and stock), various adjuncts of the building trades, and other minor trades. . . ."

8. The foregoing is in effect in penitentiaries, with the exception of the study period at the end of the day abovementioned. The appointment of supervising officers will meet this requirement, for these officers would be principally employed in work with the youths from the closing of the shop in the afternoon up to 8.45 in the evening.

9. Equipment for study and gymnasia training can readily be arranged in the corridors of those places segregated for the confinement of youthful convicts.

10. A widely varied syllabus of education presently exists, which provides elementary education for the exceptionally backward and correspondence courses for the more advanced, and can readily be adapted to include branches of education not presently touched.

11. The separate training of youthful convicts should include at least one hour per day of physical training, in addition to volunteer evening classes in gymnastics, the intention being not only to improve physical fitness, but to teach the correlation of mind and body. The physical side might be developed to include certain recreational activities, either as a part of, or in addition to, the regular physical training.

Appendix "B"

Segregation and Classification

1. All youthful convicts in penitentiaries at the present time are in either of the following classifications:

(A) Convicts having no previous conviction, under twenty-one years of age;

(C) The large intermediate class, having had experience in reformatories, gaols or penitentiaries.

2. It is submitted that all youthful convicts should be segregated into one building, or a segregateable part of the building, in each penitentiary, for the purposes of observation and re-classification, so that selection may be made of those for whom it is considered treatment as youthful convicts would have beneficial results.