

CHAPTER 4.

THE NAVAL TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

During the early 'seventies the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States found it necessary to establish special schools for the training of recruits so as to secure a sufficient supply of seamen for their merchant navies. New Zealand as a maritime country dependent on the sea as her great highway, watched their experiments with intense interest and in 1874 passed a "Naval Training School Act" which enabled her to establish similar institutions.

The Melanesian Trust Board, realising that the vacant Mission buildings would be ideal for the purpose, put them in good repair and offered them to the Government together with the reconditioned "Southern Cross II" as a training ship. (The schooner then eleven years old, had just been replaced by a new vessel.)

An agreement was reached by which the Government took a lease of the following for £100 per annum: the stone buildings; the schoolroom and furniture; the two-storied dwelling house; 6 acres of land between the sea and the lagoon; the schooner "Southern Cross" together with her stores, sails, gear etc.; and one lifeboat and its gear.

In September 1874 the Marine Department were fortunate in securing the help and advice of Lieutenant Tilly R.N., the former "Southern Cross" Captain, who agreed to act as their Auckland agent in establishing the institution. Through him the Department obtained the services of a capable manager, Lieutenant G.R. Breton, R.N.

The institution was designed for boys between the ages of ten and fifteen who fell into the following groups: those who were found begging, wandering or destitute; those who were charged with a punishable offence; those whose parents were unable to control them and desired them to be admitted; and those whose parents, because of their inability to maintain or educate them in such a manner as to enable them to earn their livings, voluntarily requested that their sons might be admitted. Boys were not to be admitted if they were unfit mentally or physically or had been convicted of felony or imprisoned for any other crime. Magistrates were required to examine the parents' ability to pay a contribution towards the maintenance and training of their sons but it was found that no parents in the position to do so wished to send their boys to such a school

Though the school was designed primarily for instruction in seamanship and maritime affairs, the inmates were to receive general education as well and were to be taught shore trades, for no boy was to be forced to go to sea against his will. The Naval Training School Act provided that, if a boy were unfit for a sea life or did not desire it, he might be apprenticed to

some trade or calling with fit and proper persons, with whom he was not obliged to stay after reaching 18 years of age. A boy wishing to go to sea was to be apprenticed to the master or owner of a British ship registered at or trading with New Zealand for such time as he agreed upon, the period not to extend over his eighteenth birthday. The Manager or the parent was to act as guardian. Apprenticeship was not to begin until a boy was 12 years of age or had been in the institution for 18 months. No boy was to be detained at the school after he reached 15, except by his own written consent.

The school was opened in December 1874 and at first poorly patronised. Though it could accommodate 60 boys at a time, the roll number by April 1875 had risen only to 19. Of these 8 had been committed to the school by Auckland Magistrate 5 were from the Auckland Industrial School and 6 were from Dunedin. With a view to securing more inmates, the Marine Department published an article in the "Daily Southern Cross" of April 13th to enlighten the public on the nature of the school and the type of boy admitted. It was explained that the physical and mental standard required for those seeking enrolment debarred the worst type of waifs and strays from admission. Magistrates were asked, too, to exercise discretion "in not allowing too large an amount of juvenile rascality" to be sent there to corrupt and infect those who had not been tainted by crime. It was thought that the name "Naval" Training School had probably given many people the impression that the institution was for the training of cadets for Her Majesty's Navy whereas, it was explained, the aim was to instruct lads for the colonial Mercantile Marine in which they might eventually become Officer and Masters. The article evidently achieved its purpose for by June 30th of that year admissions had increased to 40 and a year later to 80.

Statements issued by the Marine Department and reports of the Manager give a great deal of enlightenment on the progress and activities of the school. The first of these was a report issued by the Commissioner of Customs on September 2nd 1875. He says:

"In April last I paid a flying visit to Auckland and was highly gratified to find that the selection of Captain Breton had been a most fortunate one. He has his heart in the work and I have no doubt the institution will prove a great success under his management. I found the boys well disciplined, happy and proud of their occupation. They also showed considerable proficiency in working the "Southern Cross" during our short trip, doing everything themselves, even to steering the vessel. I found them also well trained in sculling a boat. While their nautical training had been attended to, they had not been neglected in other respects; they were receiving a liberal education and were also being taught the art of swimming."

The "liberal education" referred to seems to have consisted merely of reading, writing and spelling as most of the boys

had had no previous schooling whatever. Practical subjects which they received training were tailoring, gardening and farming pursuits such as milking and haymaking.

Tailoring classes began in May 1875 and continued for 4 ½ years under the instruction of Mrs. Speight. During these classes, the boys made household articles such as pillowcases and most of their own apparel - flannel underwear, brown drill Jumpers and trousers, and waterproof garments.

The gardening and farming classes grew all the vegetables required by the school and, after a few years when 23 more acres were leased beyond the lagoon, supplied it with meat and dairy produce. The produce grown on the premises helped to keep the daily rations cost (food, fuel, soap and lighting) down to 6-1/8d. per boy.

Weekly religious instruction was given to the Protestant boys by the Reverend Dr. Kinder of St. John's College and to the Catholics by Mr. George Cutts, a layman, who managed a stud farm at Kohimarama. Occasionally Father Fynes took the classes. Services were held at the school nearly every Sunday, most of them being conducted by Captain Breton according to the ritual of the Church of England. These services were made more enjoyable by the gift of a seven stop harmonium donated by Miss Charlotte Yonge, Bishop Patteson's cousin who had formerly contributed so generously to the fund for constructing the Mission buildings. After the arrival of the harmonium, Mrs. Breton trained a school choir. Sometimes the boys were taken to services in the city. On week days prayers were held night and morning and attendance was compulsory for all pupils.

Unfortunately the morning prayers were followed immediately afterwards by the allocation and administering of punishments for the offences of the previous day. Captain Breton, who was a strict disciplinarian, would allow none of his staff to punish the boys, but received their reports on the boys behaviour and caned the culprits before the school. Some offenders would be committed to the "gaol". According to reports, Captain Breton's punishments were very severe but, in spite of this, he is said to have endeared himself to the boys because of his kindly personality.

The physical welfare of the boys was in the hands of Dr. Goldsbro'. a well known Auckland physician, who held weekly Inspections at the institution.

The "Southern Cross" proved of little use for practical training in seamanship. She was taken out for short cruises until the state of the rigging compelled the Manager to discontinue the practice. She was then used for berthing a portion of the boys and for such nautical instruction as could safely be conducted on board of her. A survey held on her hull in 1876 showed her to be in so unsound a condition as to render it inadvisable to refit her and Captain Breton had to appeal to the Marine Department for another vessel. In 1878 the "Southern Cross" was handed over to the Mission Trustees who

changed the name of the vessel to "Santa Cruz" and sold her to an island trader for £200.

Many kindly people endeavoured to give pleasure to the boys by contributions of fruit, sports goods, books, etc. These benefactors included Lady Martin and Miss Charlotte Yonge who sent boxes of books from England, Mr. William Atkin and the Rev Kinder who supplied fruit, Mr. George Cutts who gave tins of jam, Captain and Mrs. Tilly who presented cricket sets and other games and toys, the Hon. W.H. Reynolds who gave foot and tennis balls and fruit and Dr. Goldsbro', Mrs. Speight, Mrs. Breton and P.D. Yonge Esq. who supplied books and illustrated papers.

Like other schools, the Naval Training School held an annual sports day. One account of the 1877 event, held on Boxing Day, describes swimming sports and a cricket match in the morning and athletics in the afternoon for which Captain Pennal, the schoolmaster, acted as handicapper. The patrons of the institution gave donations towards prizes.

In 1880 the House of Representatives asked the Minister of Education to enquire into the management and working of the school and to submit a report to the House. The report was asked for because of the publication of a letter in the Auckland "Evening Star" in which allegations were made against Captain Breton by a former sub-manager, Mr. H.D. Bezer: and because of the very frequent changes in the school staff, there having been 66 dismissals and resignations in 68 months, since the founding of the school.

While making investigations the Minister stayed at the school for 25 hours to obtain a first hand knowledge of the daily routine and Captain Breton's management. Besides this, he interviewed numerous former staff members who had found it difficult to work under the Manager whom they accused of being overbearing and arbitrary.

The conclusions of the Minister were that Captain Breton was blameless, but that being a strict disciplinarian, he would tolerate no insubordination from his staff. Moreover, he considered that the Manager was seldom provided with efficient subordinate officers as the isolated position of the school, the lack of accommodation for married men, and the poor salaries offered, were hindrances in securing well qualified persons. The Sub-Manager's salary was £150 per annum, the Schoolmaster's £120 and the instructors' £84 while the cook was paid thirty shillings weekly.

The Naval Training School continued to function until 1882. In January of that year 48 of the boys were either sent to sea or apprenticed to shore trades. As only 12 of the younger ones remain, all of them orphans or neglected children, and no more new recruits were available for marine training, it was thought advisable to use the school premises for a boys' industrial school and transfer the remnant of the inmates to the new institution. The changeover was made on April 1st and Captain Breton and his family and staff departed.

The Kohimarama Industrial School.

The Auckland Industrial School, which was established in 1869 for the care of destitute and neglected children, was first conducted in buildings at Fort Britomart, but was later moved to Howe Street. In 1882 with the passing of an "Industrial Schools Act" which gave the Government control of the institution, another change was made; the boys and girls were separated, the girls being left at Howe Street and the boys being transferred to the Naval Training School buildings at Mission Bay. The boys' school was placed under the management of Mr. George P. Hogan who, together with his wife, had for a time managed the Howe Street institution. Mr. Hogan many years before had served in one of the Imperial regiments in the Crimean War and by his gallantry had won a commission. After that campaign he was transferred to the 4th West Indian Regiment in which he remained for a few years before he retired and emigrated to New Zealand. On his arrival in this country he joined the Armed Constabulary in which he served as a sergeant until he was appointed to the Industrial School. He was a man of great personal determination and force of character and was conscientious and upright in execution of duty. His Army training made him a strict disciplinarian and was reflected in his school. For instance, his boys were marched into meals and were marched out again and on Sundays the boys were taken in whaleboats to Auckland and marched in military style through the city to Mr. Hogan's Church, the Baptist Tabernacle - all except the Roman Catholics who were visited by Father Walter McDonald of Panmure.

The Kohimarama Industrial School began with a roll of 67, the twelve who were transferred from the Naval Training School and 55 from the Howe Street School who were brought to Mission Bay on April last two of Crowther's buses. The boys' ages ranged from three to eleven years. By the end of the year the numbers had soared to 90 and by April 1883 to 94. Accommodation was so taxed that many of the children were sleeping two in a bed. Congestion was relieved from time to time when the older boys were placed out in country situations, a practice in which the Government believed, for they were of the opinion that the lads would thrive better under conditions of home life than in any other way.

By 1885 it was reported in the press that though many of the inmates of the Industrial School were the offspring of criminal and dissolute parents, yet, under the influence of regular habits, cleanliness, outdoor exercise, liberal diet and fresh air, they enjoyed excellent health, sickness being almost unknown among them.

The boys received schooling from visiting teachers, the first of whom were two sisters named Gibbs. These were followed by a Misa Neild and a Mr. Hamilton who rode down and stayed several days at a time. Mr. Hogan's own children - he had seven altogether, five of whom were born at Mission Bay - attended classes with the institution boys until they were old enough to travel the long distance to the Tamaki West School. All



THE KOHIMARAMA INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL

which functioned at Mission Bay from 1882 to 1893. Mr. Hogan, the headmaster, is the third figure from the right. The photo was given to the author in about 1950 by a daughter of Mr. Hogan.

the inmates were required to do some form of outdoor work as well, such as milking cows, scrubbing pigs - these were kept very clean and white - or working in the vegetable garden or orchard.

But Mr. Hogan did not believe in all work and no play. Rounders, cricket and swimming were all popular pastimes and frequently entertainment and concerts were given in the schoolroom. When there was no visiting talent available, Mr. Hogan himself would entertain the boys with his magic lantern, a great luxury in those days.

In 1893 the Government decided to transfer the inmates of the Kohimarama School to Nelson - all except those of tender age who were sent to the girls' school in Howe Street.

It was with great regret that Mr. Hogan's family left Mission Bay. However, one remained in the district, his daughter Alice, who, in about 1887, married Captain James Biddick junior. At the time of the closing down of the school, she and her husband and their young children were living in the house at the eastern end of the beach, formerly reserved for the Captains of the "Southern Cross". Later, before moving to their final home in Bastion Bay, they occupied the two storied cottage to the east of the old schoolroom, the house in which her parents had lived for eleven years. Mr. Hogan's sons were later prominent citizens of Auckland; one became its Harbour Master, one its Traffic Manager, and a third took an active part in the work of the Returned Services Association.



Bastion Bay, Feb 12, 1921

Also called Biddick's Bay.

There was quite a little colony here at this time before the road came through.

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