

*Henry Horsford Prins*, sworn, saith : I am the medical attendant at this institution, and have been so for twelve years. I am of opinion that the boys have never been overworked. I have never seen any evidence of it. I have never seen any of the boys engaged in domestic work. I have never seen any evidence of undue chastisement. Mr. Van Asch once told me that he had had to chastise one boy for telling lies and stealing. It had a very good effect. I cannot say anything as to No. 5. So far as I knew, they have all been equally well treated. I have never seen either you or your daughter chastising the children. I have never seen anything in the children to induce me to believe that they had bad or unsuitable food. The children had often been brought to me by Mr. and Mrs. Van Asch when they had been suffering from trivial ailments. Mr. and Mrs. Van Asch were always much concerned about the children. Nothing has occurred here which may not have happened to any family of children.

*By Mr. Crofts* : Originally I attended once a quarter, and when sent for for any illness ; but during the last three or four years I visit only once a year and report, and come to the institution when I am sent for. The children are brought to me in Christchurch whenever any little illness attacks them. My visits last an hour, or, perhaps, less or more. The Director did not know the time of my visits. If children had been overworked I should have known it by the appearance of the children. I do not remember boys being brought to me with swollen knees. Daniels was brought to me with indications of rheumatism. Unless I was brought here to see any one I could not have been here in either January or February, 1891. Children had been frequently brought to me showing symptoms of irritation of the skin. At the same time the Burnham children showed similar symptoms. That was within the last eighteen months. If the children had been put on salt provisions and had no vegetables, it would produce such a breaking-out. I questioned Mrs. Van Asch if the children had vegetables ; she said they had.

*By Mr. Van Asch* : I did not notice anything more wrong with the girl Jones than with any other child. She was here many years.

*Joseph Edward Stevens*, sworn, saith : I am a school-teacher in this institution. Mr. Crofts borrowed £15 from me in November, 1888. He repaid that in December in the same year. He also borrowed £6 of me at the same time that he borrowed the £15. He was to pay interest. He also borrowed £3 at the beginning of 1889. He has not paid me £9 and the interest. When we used to live together we had a common purse to the extent of a few shillings. The loan was altogether outside of that, as it bore interest at, I think, 7 per cent. Mr. Crofts has borrowed money from me since that time. On the 14th March, 1891, he borrowed £47 of me on a mortgage of some land. That bears interest at 8 per cent. My solicitor drew up the mortgage. Mr. Crofts still owes me £9. I have no security for that except a promissory note. I have not seen the land.

*By Mr. Crofts* : You did not ask me for the loan of £47 ; I lent it to you. I knew you were being pushed.

*John Charles Allan*, sworn, saith : I am the head assistant in the school. Before the 14th June, 1890, Mr. Crofts borrowed £18 from me. He also borrowed £2 from me before the 13th April, 1891. He has paid me £10 out of the £20. Besides that, he owes me £20. I signed a bill for him for £50 he indorsed. I found £20 of the money to pay that bill.

*By Mr. Crofts* : I signed the bill because you said you were pushed, and I believed it. You have at times lent me a few shillings. These had always been repaid.

*Herbert Edwin Crofts*, sworn, saith : I am a school-teacher at the Deaf-and-Dumb Institution. I acknowledge having borrowed that £20 from Mr. Moorhouse. That £20 was repaid to Mr. Van Asch on the 8th October in the same year. With reference to the £6 from Mr. Simpson, I acknowledge that. I was in the North Island for the holidays, and ran short of money. My agent, who was receiving my money here, should have forwarded it to me. He neglected to do so. My wife was at Feilding when I returned from Waiwera. The reason I did not pay Mr. Simpson in Wellington was because I had to expend the money in taking the children from Wellington to Christchurch. That money was not refunded to me till May. Mr. Simpson told me I could pay him at my convenience. The reason I have not paid him since is because I have been pushed. That is the reason I have not paid Mr. Allan and Mr. Stevens.

*William G. W. Mills*, sworn, saith : I know nothing of my own knowledge as to Mr. Crofts being pressed.

*Herbert Edwin Crofts*, sworn, saith : Mr. Van Asch has lent money on mortgage to Mr. Becker, farmer, of Southbrook. The boys are overworked to such an extent that the parents have complained to me, and have said that they would complain to the department only that they had been deterred from doing so by the fact that there is no other institution in the colony of its kind. They felt that if they complained the children would suffer for the complaints of the parents. Mrs. Belcher complained to me in that strain. Mrs. Belcher is at Kaiapoi Island. I asked her to attend. She replied that she could not attend because they had not paid up the amount of the boys' school-fees, and she was afraid that if she came and said anything against Mr. Van Asch he could make it very unpleasant for them. [The witness had attempted to put in a letter from a member of the House of Representatives stating that some one had complained to him that their child was overworked. I refused to receive that evidence.] The boys had to do all the outdoor work of the institution, such as the gardening, looking after the horses, cows, pigs, and fowls, as well as the heavy drudgery of the inside domestic work. Considering the limited number of the larger boys, they are overworked. The boy Daniels suffered from swollen knees, caused by the amount of scrubbing he did. Bertie Payne suffered in the same manner. Boys and girls had been taken out of school during school-hours to do the domestic work of the institution. Mr. Van Asch has on several occasions used undue severity in chastising the children. A boy named Bone was