

boy in his room. I never saw you chastise any children unduly. I remember Dow stealing and telling lies; he was thrashed for that. The food is always good here. You used to dine with the children. Bertie Payne comes to our house to brush boots. Have never seen any partiality shown to any of the children. Salt mutton was used, but not to excess. I am friendly with Miss Buckingham. I never travelled with deaf children, except that I once took C. Horton to Auckland.

By Mr. Crofts: I have a private pupil; he is living with us in our house privately. I only know that I teach him. I do not remember boys being fetched out of school to harness the horse, or to get my horse ready for a ride.

Elizabeth Graham, sworn, saith: I lived at Sumner, next door to you, Mr. Van Asch—next door to your school. Have lived there for several years. The children seemed to me to be very happy; they look well, not starved. Never saw any of your family torment the children. Had seen the children 'working after school-hours. I consider you and Mrs. Van Asch kind to the children.

By Mr. Crofts: I have not been over the institution or the schoolroom.

Clement L. Wiggins, sworn, saith: I keep a school here in Sumner. I have known Mr. Van Asch for twelve and a half years. I have frequently met the deaf children. They look happy and properly nourished. If I had a deaf child I should intrust it to your care with confidence. I have been once in the school during the working.

By Mr. Van Asch: I have heard the children talk.

William Payne, sworn, saith: I have two children at school—one fourteen and one fifteen. When they first came here I lived in Auckland. I lived there four years when the boys were at school here. I should like the children to come home during the holidays. There is no evidence that the children are overworked. I am quite satisfied with the work they do. I do not object to their brushing boots, or to the one boy going to your home to brush boots. The boys never complain about your treatment. I am grateful for the education the boys have received. The boys are always eager to return to school. McWatters is a wild boy, I know.

By Mr. Crofts: My boys speak well.

Thomas Avery Wren, sworn, saith: I have resided in Sumner for seven years. I see a good deal of the deaf children. They look well, happy, and contented, and appear to be well fed. I know Mr. Crofts. I would not intrust a deaf child to him. In dealings I have had with him I have found him anything but a straight man in a pecuniary sense. I would not take his word in the smallest matter.

By Mr. Crofts: I supply the institution with coal. I have done a good deal of work for the institution during the last three years. I never said I would do anything to injure you.

Emily Van Asch, sworn, saith: I am the wife of Mr. Van Asch. I superintend the domestic arrangements of the institution—especially the girls. I do not receive any remuneration from the Government for it. I act under the instructions of my husband. Charles Horton has been with us eleven years. I never tormented Horton. He is strong now. He objected to the darkness at first as a little boy. He has a candle now when he goes to bed. He puts it outside the door. I never saw any of my daughters go into his bedroom after he had gone to bed except to bring the candle away, when he was a child. We have not salt meat alone. There is always fresh meat with it. Many of them prefer salt meat. No children ever complained to me about the food. The girls iron on Tuesday afternoon from 3 to 4.45 p.m. Miss Kerr was engaged to superintend the Boys' Home. She had domestic work, and was a servant at a month's notice. Afterwards she came to assist me with the girls. She behaved unpleasantly. She gave me notice, and left. We have the same food at our own family that the children have.

By Mr. Crofts: The children were suffering from breakings-out at the beginning of last year. They often do at the beginning of the year. I never saw Ford's ears marked.

THURSDAY, 18TH AUGUST, 1892.

Gerrit Van Asch, sworn, saith: I am the Director of the institution. I contradict John Bone when he says that I thrashed Dow for stealing a pencil in 1883. Dow was caned before that time for lying and stealing. The pencil in question belonged to one Ford, who lost it. The schoolroom was searched without result. I suspected Dow of the theft. I took him outside, and said, if he told the truth I would not whip him. I then asked him if he had taken it. He said, Yes, and showed me the pencil. I then told him he was a good boy for telling the truth. I deny McWatters's statement that he said he wanted to go home. He said he would stay at the school. Bone did not have to drive to town every Monday or Friday. Sometimes he used to drive to Woolston on a Friday afternoon. To the charges of punishing Fortune, Irving, Ford, Bone, and others, I say that these boys have left the institution some years ago, and it is now difficult to remember the circumstances; but I say that punishment was never administered without sufficient cause, and then not unduly. The fact that my daughter and Mr. Allan received lessons with the children from Miss Budden was necessary, because she could not teach the children without the assistance of some person who could communicate with the children. Moreover, I apprised the department of the fact that they were to be present, and participate in the lessons, they being the most qualified for that purpose. Mr. Crofts denied to the department that he ever borrowed from either the parents of the pupils or those persons connected with the institution. The date of his letter is the 11th June, 1892. The original is in Wellington; I produce the copy. [Exhibit H.] The Education Department is aware that gardening is going on here, and that the children are employed in it; also,