

ROLAND HENRY POPE, examined on oath.

21. *Mr. Harley.*] What are you?—I am in charge of the clerical branch of the Education Department relating to industrial schools.

22. Do you know the exact number of resident boys at St. Mary's School?—The average number is, I think, 125; somewhere about that.

23. And of this number how many are paid for by the Government?—The last account was for fifty-nine boys.

24. How are the others supported?—They are chargeable to the Charitable Aid Boards of the districts from which they come.

25. Do you know how many are supported by other than Charitable Aid Boards and the Government?—No.

26. Does the department receive any account how the 7s. a week is spent?—No. The money is paid monthly by the Treasury to the Manager of the school, on the department's certificate as to the number of boys.

27. You do not inquire what becomes of it?—No.

28. *Mr. Fell.*] Have you visited the school for any purposes of inspection at any time?—I was never directly instructed to inspect the school. I have been there once, in December last, on an official visit.

29. Was that for the purpose of going into the accounts, or looking at the school?—I came to Nelson for the purpose of examining the Wages Accounts of the service inmates. In the course of this visit I went to the school.

30. Can you tell me anything as to the condition of the boys, or what you observed?—I was not specially instructed to inspect the school. I went out for another purpose—to ascertain whether the number of boys shown on the official roll of the Department as in residence were actually there. I was at the school about an hour. It was raining hard. I went over the school in a casual way. The boys assembled for the purpose of roll-call.

31. Did they know you were going to the school on that particular occasion?—Yes; I had been in Nelson many days. According to a statement made to me by Dean Mahoney, the boys would have broken up that afternoon, but they remained for my visit.

32. I suppose they had their best clothes on?—I do not know.

33. Were you all alone with the boys?—I went about with Dean Mahoney.

34. Did he appear to be on good terms with the boys?—Very good terms, I should say.

35. Did you hear any complaints?—No; I did not put myself in the way to do so.

36. We had a boy named Albert James here. Can you say whether there is another Albert James in the school?—No; not under Government control. There is a boy named James James, a brother of Albert James. I think they were both committed at the same time, and both were at the school on the 30th June.

37. *Mr. Hogben.*] You keep all records in the Department connected with Industrial School inmates?—Yes; I have done so since 1891.

38. All details of the management of Industrial Schools are necessarily within your knowledge, and you have to carry out most of the details, and make, at all events, most of the preliminary inquiries?—Yes.

39. With regard to the Wages Account, you came to Nelson for the purpose of auditing the accounts of the service inmates. Though not ordered to inspect the school, you nevertheless felt yourself free to report any irregularities that came under your notice?—Yes.

40. You did report orally to me some general impressions, so that the Department had the advantage of what might come under your notice?—Yes.

41. You would not be unprepared to recognise places where irregularities might occur?—No.

42. You had a conversation with me on your return, principally in connection with the keeping of the Wages Account?—Yes.

43. Are those boys chargeable to the Charitable Aid Boards also under the control of the Government?—Equally with those whom the Government pay for, according to section 16 subsection (1) of the Act. When parents contribute, the Department collects the maintenance in exactly the same way as though the boys are chargeable to the Government, and the Department makes a refund to the Boards of the money so recovered.

44. *Mr. Wardell.*] No deduction is made?—No.

45. *Mr. Hogben.*] You know the regulations for punishment in Government Industrial Schools? What means are taken to see that these are carried out?—The Manager of the school is required to send monthly to the Department a statement showing all the punishments inflicted, both in the day-schools and in the Industrial Schools proper. It is part of my duty on receipt of this return to carefully read it, and if I see anything showing undue severity, or anything that I think should be brought under the notice of the head of the department, I am responsible to see that it is done. I initial each sheet. If there is nothing irregular it is filed away.

46. *Mr. Wardell.*] And if necessary a departmental inquiry is held?—Yes.

47. Do you get such returns from private industrial schools?—No.

48. *Mr. Hogben.*] Would it be an advantage if such a record were kept in connection with private schools?—Yes.

49. Are you aware that for some time past it has been the intention of the Department that such record should be kept in connection with private industrial schools?—I have heard you express your opinion that they should be kept.

50. This was before the report of the visit of the Charitable Aid Board to Stoke was made known?—Yes; last October.

51. Can you recollect whether the decision was in the direction of asking for such returns?—I think it could hardly be called a "decision." It was left, I think, as a matter to be further con-