

SESSION II.
1906.
NEW ZEALAND.

WALTHAM ORPHANAGE.
(COMMISSIONER'S REPORT.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable William Lee, Baron Plunket, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

I, the Commissioner appointed by Your Excellency's Letters Patent of the 27th November, 1905, which Letters Patent were extended on the 22nd December, 1905, and further extended on the 23rd January, 1906, and by which I was to inquire into any complaints or charges which might be duly formulated and laid or preferred before me by any person touching the management and working of the Waltham Orphanage, an institution under the control of the Ashburton and North Canterbury United Charitable Aid Board, with a view also to throw light on the working of the existing law with respect to the management and administration of Orphanages and similar institutions by the governing bodies thereof, have to report as follows :—

Throughout the inquiry Mr. Cassidy appeared as solicitor for Mr. George Scott, Mr. Lane for the Charitable Aid Board, and Mr. George Harper for Mrs. Carpenter, the Matron of the Orphanage.

Mr. Cassidy formulated the following charges and complaints :—

CHARGES AND ALLEGATIONS.

Made pursuant to an Order of H. W. Bishop, Esq., S.M., Commissioner, on the 8th day of December, 1905.

1. That the Charitable Aid Orphanage is and has been improperly managed and controlled.
2. That the Charitable Aid Board has in its management and control of the Orphanage departed from the real purpose of such Orphanage, inasmuch as instead of it being used entirely as a home for orphan children it has been made in very many cases a receiving-home to pass them along to other institutions and places.

3. That there is and has been an absence of sound moral training and teaching, apart from controversial doctrines, in the bringing-up of the orphan children in such Orphanage, and no effort is made or has been made to form and strengthen the character and develop the intelligence of the children placed therein.

4. That the example and influence of those responsible for the children do not tend to implant in the children such foundations of conduct as are essential to make them good and upright and useful members of the community.

5. That the Matron of such Orphanage has been unduly harsh in the treatment of certain of the children, inmates of such Orphanage.

6. That she has dressed orphan children in grotesque costumes, with the intention of holding them up to ridicule and merriment.

7. That she has taunted children with the fact of their relatives belonging to the unfortunate class of the community, and called them mockingly by the names of such relatives, and made flippant references to them.

8. That the persons or person responsible for the internal arrangements and economy of such Orphanage have been incompetent, inasmuch as there have been no proper feeding and no proper dietary arrangement, or system, or fixed hours for meals, and distinction is and was made at such meals by having the table divided into two departments, containing different quantities and kinds of food.

9. That the children were improperly punished, and for trifling offences, by long periods of silence.

10. That there was no proper superintendence of the children, particularly in the bathroom and bedrooms.

11. That the Matron had used bad language and objectionable names to the children.

12. That the children Gerty Andrews, Emma Andrews, May Burbury, Eva Bashford, and Ellen Attwood have been ill treated by those in charge at the Orphanage.

13. That neglect and inattention has been manifest in the care of the boy Percy Whittle during his illness and antecedent thereto by those in charge of such lad at the Orphanage.

14. That permission is asked to refer to other matters which form part of the grounds of complaint, and are set out in the report of the proceedings at the Charitable Aid Office.

Christchurch, New Zealand, 19th December, 1905.

In accordance with Your Excellency's direction, before entering upon any inquiry in respect of these charges and complaints, I caused copies thereof to be served upon Mrs. Carpenter and upon the Charitable Aid Board at least twenty-four hours before I entered upon any inquiry.

As the result of such inquiry, I offer my opinion on these charges and complaints, taken seriatim, as follows :—

(1.) *Re IMPROPER MANAGEMENT.*

It will be convenient under this heading to give a short history of what is here termed the "Charitable Aid Orphanage." The Ashburton and North Canterbury United Charitable Aid Board came into existence after the passing into law of "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885." In due course the Lyttelton Orphanage, so named under the heading of "Charitable Institutions," contained in the Second Schedule of the Act, came under the control of the Board. For several years the Board carried on this Orphanage with increasing difficulty and varying success. The number of children provided for therein ranged from a maximum of 102 in 1886 to a minimum of 0 in 1895. The building was old, inconvenient, and in every way unsuitable for its purpose. Changes in management occurred from time to time. On the 1st May, 1900, Mrs. Carpenter was appointed to the charge of the Orphanage. She was then, and had been for some time, Inspector, under the Board, and continued the duties of that office, in addition to those pertaining to the Orphanage, up to December, 1902, when she was relieved of her duties as Inspector, and was appointed solely as Matron of the Orphanage. On the 25th March, 1904, the Orphanage was destroyed by fire, and after some temporary provision, the children, to the number of eleven, were located for some thirteen months in a building in Lyttelton, rented for the purpose. In April, 1905, the Board purchased, for a sum of £1,200, the property now known as the Waltham Orphanage, in Austin Street, Sydenham. After the building had been somewhat altered, and the necessary furniture procured, the children, numbering eleven, were brought from Lyttelton and duly installed in their new quarters, with Mrs. Carpenter still as Matron in charge. They took possession on the 10th May, 1905. At the present time there are eight children in the Orphanage, one girl and seven boys. The total cost of the Orphanage, including alterations, furniture, &c., has been about £1,600. This has been provided for out of a sum of £2,080, which was the amount for which the old Lyttelton Orphanage was insured. There is still a sum of £528 15s. 1d. to the credit of the Orphanage Account.

The allegation that the Charitable Aid Orphanage is and has been improperly managed and controlled practically covers the whole scope of the inquiry; and, speaking generally, there can be no doubt that it is substantially proved. Matters dealt with hereafter under other headings all go to show this. The weak spot throughout, in my opinion, has been the apparent inability of the majority of the members of the Board to grasp and deal with the fact that the Matron was in every way unsuited for the position she had been placed in. Very little interest in the Orphanage and its internal arrangements and working would, I think, at any time, have conclusively settled this fact. Mrs. Wells's

evidence, which there is no reason to doubt the absolute correctness of, makes this quite clear. And still matters were allowed to drift. And then came the inquiry held by the Board on the 13th September, 1905, which would appear to afford ample material for prompt action. And still nothing was done. The Board could scarcely have imagined at this stage that the matter would be allowed to remain where it was left, and further inquiry was inevitable. Doubtless many members of the Board were influenced in their views on the real merits of the question by feelings of respect and regard for Mrs. Carpenter, and by a strong desire to avoid doing anything to injure her or to prejudice her future prospects. Events have shown that it was a most mistaken kindness, for the position in which she is placed to-day is a most unfortunate one in every respect. She is the victim of circumstances, and can only thank her friends for it. Whatever action with regard to her the Board may hereafter decide to take, there are certain matters personal to herself which cannot but redound to her discredit, as the result of this inquiry. And all this might so easily have been avoided.

As touching the question of management and control, it will be convenient here to state that I have personally visited the present Orphanage. I found that the only drainage is by means of a slow-flowing stream within a few yards of the house, and this is really nothing else but an open sewer at the present time. The weather was cloudy and cool on the occasion of my visit, but still the stench of the drain was most offensive, and its appearance most repulsive. What it would be like on a hot, sunny day can be best left to the imagination. The Matron informed me that its existence was a constant source of unpleasantness and anxiety to her. Her fear of the effect of the nuisance upon the health of the children was so great that she constantly kept them away from its neighbourhood. This seems to show a great lack of interest on the part of the Board, for the most casual inspection would have detected the nuisance. It is only fair to Mrs. Carpenter to say that she asserts that she has more than once mentioned the matter to the Secretary of the Board.

Another matter that struck me was the apparent insufficiency of the sanitary arrangements. This is a matter that cannot be too strongly insisted upon, where children are concerned.

Inside the house I was impressed by the absence of what I may term neat and suitable table appointments. The crockery was of the most meagre and mixed description. All this seemed to me to show an entire disregard for those little amenities that go so far towards encouraging and developing an innocent love of refinement.

So far as the children themselves were concerned, they seemed healthy, happy, and free from undue restraint.

The site of 3 acres on which the Orphanage stands might be very much better utilised than it is, and made more attractive in appearance.

(2.) *Re* DEPARTING FROM REAL PURPOSE OF ORPHANAGE.

I do not think that this affords any real ground of complaint. A very wide discretion must necessarily be allowed to the Charitable Aid Board as to whether certain, and what, children shall be admitted to the Orphanage, and the time during which they shall be allowed to remain there. I presume that the reference herein made is to the fact that at the time the Lyttelton Orphanage was taken over there were 102 children resident therein, and that there are now only eight at Waltham. This is the result of the policy of the Board to gradually cease to use the Orphanage as an institution, in the strict sense of the term, and to board out the children committed to their care. This policy, to my mind, in this particular instance, is one to be commended. It has certainly been successful, in a general way.

(3.) *Re* ABSENCE OF MORAL TRAINING.

I am afraid that there can be no doubt as to the truth of this allegation. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that the conception of duty towards the children in the Orphanage on the part of those responsible for them, or to whose care they have been committed, has been almost entirely limited to housing and feeding. Nothing practical or systematic in the shape of moral teaching has been afforded them, and no attempt whatever has been made to form and strengthen the characters of the children; or to develop, in any way, their intelligence. Those old enough have attended the neighbouring public school, and on Sunday some of the children have been to various Sunday-schools. As Mrs. Wells has stated in her evidence, "There were no 'pleasant evenings,' no games, no pictures, no music, no stories told to them"—a deadly dull routine from day to day, varied, perhaps, by an occasional whipping or period of "silence."

(4.) *Re* LACK OF "EXAMPLE AND INFLUENCE."

There can be no doubt that this is true. It is unfortunate that those in authority over the children did not have a higher conception of what their duty really was to those children. The Matron has been

deplorably lacking in those qualities that would tend, by example and influence, to develop the highest qualities of mind and conduct in those who are at the most impressionable age of their lives, and must inevitably take their tone and style from one being who, standing to them as a mother, can in their eyes "do no wrong." It has been just that element of true motherhood that has been so terribly lacking, and the Orphanage has never been, under Mrs. Carpenter, what an ideal Orphanage ought to be—that is, the nearest possible approach to a natural home. There would be nothing extravagant in such an ideal in respect of the Waltham Orphanage. At no one time have there been more than fourteen children, of both sexes, under the charge of the Matron. Therefore, whether the Orphanage were regarded either as an institution or as a cottage home, there would seem no possible reason why these children, unfortunately deprived as they were of their natural parents, should not have been treated and trained in such a manner as would tend to make them, as the first aim of such treatment and training, good and upright and useful members of the community. In the regulations laid down by the Charitable Aid Board in respect of the boarding-out of destitute children, it is provided *inter alia* that the "foster-parent" will endeavour "to train such child in habits of truthfulness, obedience, personal cleanliness and industry, and to such suitable domestic and outdoor work as may fit him or her to earn a livelihood, and become a useful member of the community." This would appear to be a sensible outline of the duties of the "foster-parent" from the Board's standpoint. It certainly cannot be called extravagant. And yet, to my mind, the treatment at the Orphanage has fallen far short of it.

(5.) *Re* HARSH TREATMENT.

I do not think that this charge is substantiated in a general sense. Mrs. Carpenter, however unsuited she may be by training and disposition for the proper discharge of the peculiar and trying duties of Matron of an Orphanage, is shown by the evidence to be of a most kindly nature, and a most unlikely person to treat children with deliberate unkindness. I prefer to say that, in my opinion, any acts of hers which appeared to be inconsistent with this account of her qualities were due to grave errors of judgment.

(6.) *Re* GROTESQUE COSTUMES.

It is clear that two of the children had the misfortune to be dressed, on occasions, in somewhat grotesque costumes, and on this account formed the subject of remark, if not of ridicule and merriment I do not gather that this was the result of a deliberate intention on Mrs. Carpenter's part. According to the evidence she is a woman of no taste whatever in the matter of dress, and in that respect is lacking in sound judgment. She was therefore unable to see that in these two instances the result of her lack of taste was so atrocious, both in colours and style, that the unfortunate children were at times the butts of rude criticism.

(7.) *Re* TAUNTING CHILDREN.

It is very greatly to be regretted that Mrs. Carpenter has at times referred to the unfortunate relative of two of the children, within their hearing, under such circumstances as laid her open to the implication of a deliberate intention to taunt them with the relationship. It is so extraordinarily inconsistent with the disposition of Mrs. Carpenter, as described by several witnesses who are least in sympathy with her methods, that I find it hard to believe that these lapses were anything more than further instances of a far from unusual lack of judgment on her part.

(8.) *Re* INTERNAL ECONOMY OF ORPHANAGE.

There certainly has been room for improvement under this heading, but it all harks back to the same cause—that is, the entire unsuitability of the Matron for her position, and the consequent lack of method and system in the general control of the domestic economy of the Orphanage.

(9.) *Re* PUNISHMENT OF SILENCE.

This refers to a matter on which there will undoubtedly be a difference of opinion as to the propriety or advisability of this form of punishment. Mrs. Carpenter certainly gave very long periods of silence by way of punishment. It would appear to be a very favourite form with her. It is in evidence that some girls were kept in silence for a week, and even a month, continuously. This would appear to be altogether excessive, and the fact that the punishment was so frequent would go to show that it was ineffective.

(10.) *Re* PROPER SUPERINTENDENCE OF CHILDREN.

It is abundantly clear that there was an entire lack of proper superintendence of the children, and especially in connection with the use of the bathroom. In an orphanage containing children of various ages and mixed sexes there can be scarcely too much supervision and care exercised to prevent possible mischievous results. This supervision should specially extend to the bath and bed rooms.

(11.) *Re* USE OF BAD LANGUAGE.

There is ample proof of the truth of this charge, both by the evidence of several witnesses and by the partial admissions of Mrs. Carpenter herself. It is quite unnecessary to refer to details. One can only deeply regret that the extreme impropriety of many of Mrs. Carpenter's expressions was not fully appreciated by the Board after its inquiry, even though the language proved there was not so serious as in the present instance.

(12.) *Re* ILL TREATMENT OF CERTAIN CHILDREN.

I cannot say that this allegation is satisfactorily proved to the extent implied in the charge as formulated. There was undoubtedly a want of discretion shown in the treatment of several of the children, but there was no deliberate ill treatment. There was very little thought or discrimination on the part of Mrs. Carpenter in dealing with individual cases, and in the case of May Burbury the real condition of the child, in the instance which has been so much referred to in the course of the evidence, was undoubtedly not properly appreciated by the Matron; and there seems no reason for doubting that the child was really ill when she went to Mrs. Peachey's house; and the evidence of several witnesses would go to show that her condition in the morning ought to have been sufficiently apparent to have insured her being kept from school, and so have saved the unpleasantness of what afterwards occurred. There is evidence that corporal punishment was freely inflicted by Mrs. Carpenter when she deemed it necessary, and under conditions as to holding down, &c., that would seem to show that the punishment was pretty severe. I do not think that at any time it amounted to actual ill treatment. The necessity for the infliction of corporal punishment on children is a matter upon which opinions greatly differ. As any opinion which I could express would only be that of an individual, I refrain from expressing any.

(13.) *Re* NEGLECT OF PERCY WHITTLE.

I am inclined to think that there has been no such neglect in this case as would call for special comment. It is quite clear that Percy Whittle's condition would appear very much worse to the lay observer than it really was, and, in fact, the lowness of his condition seems to have struck several persons who saw him with a sense of shock; but the evidence of Dr. Croke and others goes to show that the lad was very delicate and abnormally thin, but that there was nothing in his condition or appearance that would warrant an opinion that he had been neglected.

(14.) *Re* OTHER MATTERS.

There is nothing of any moment that can be referred to under this heading.

GENERAL.

The very important question has, of course, inevitably arisen in connection with this inquiry, and that is, as to the best method of dealing with orphans and other dependent children. In Dr. MacGregor's report on hospitals and charitable institutions of the colony, in the year 1889, he referred to this question as one of great complexity. It seems very little less difficult to-day. Fortunately, however, of late years the great importance of the subject has attracted the attention of the leading social thinkers and workers throughout the civilised world, and the result has been that we have the advantage of profiting by the well authenticated results of various experiments, all undertaken with the object of ascertaining what is the best and at the same time most economical (in the long run) method of dealing with our dependent children. Under the present system in this colony, by which the cost of providing for and maintaining dependent children is thrown upon local Charitable Aid Boards, to be paid for out of rates, the nature and extent of the provision must necessarily be affected by considerations of economy; and herein at once arises the danger of the true interests of the children being subordinated to the necessities of the balance-sheet. This danger apparently struck Dr. MacGregor in 1892, for the following passage occurs in his report for that year: "The State might take over the whole cost of the children who are now paid for partly out of rates, and who are being boarded-out by the Boards, or otherwise provided for in a very parsimonious fashion." And again, in 1896, he writes as follows: "The children must first of all be dealt with, and saved from contamination" (i.e., the contamination of pauperism). "Under proper safeguards to prevent the break-up of families, all neglected and orphaned children ought to be made wards of the State, instead of leaving them, as at present, to be victims of our absurd system of local government."

In 1899 Mrs. Grace Neill wrote: "In dealing with deserted and neglected children there is room for reform. . . . There is no definite or comprehensive State guardianship of children, responsible for their development into healthy, self-respecting members of the commonwealth."

It might, I think, form the subject of very serious consideration, if only as the result of this inquiry, whether our present system of dealing with this class of children is not wholly at fault : whether, in fact, some comprehensive scheme of a national order should not be devised and carried out, even if at some considerable cost to the State, to take the place of the somewhat haphazard and unsatisfactory method of dealing, as at present practised by the various Charitable Aid Boards throughout the colony.

To deal satisfactorily with a problem so all-important as the bringing-up of a very large number of dependent children, with a view (1) To give them the very best possible substitute for the normal family life ; and (2) to train them to become good and valuable citizens, is almost the work of experts. Very few indeed of the members of the various Boards would probably claim to be this ; and, fully alive as so many of them are to the important issues involved, I believe they would cordially welcome any change that would relieve them of what at present is the source of so much anxiety.

There is a passage in Dr. Devine's work, "The Principles of Relief," which seems to me to emphasize the point I wish to make. It is this : "To care for dependent children is a more difficult task than to care for the normal children of an average family, difficult as this also is. Oftentimes essential qualities are lacking in the child, and it is a matter requiring extraordinary experience and skill to develop them. A trained expert is needed to detect the traces of abnormality and degeneracy. Even for the child who is entirely normal there must be found some substitute for the painstaking attention which fathers and mothers may naturally be expected to give to the development of their offspring."

It seems to me that no Board could be more theoretically alive to its responsibilities in this matter than the Ashburton and North Canterbury Charitable Aid Board. It has the special advantage of a Chairman of wide sympathies, great experience, and varied knowledge, and the presence amongst its members of three ladies of a progressive type, all of whom have made a special study of this particular subject. And yet we have almost an admission of failure ; and, if not that, then certainly a falling far short of what might be reasonably expected. Could any stronger argument than this be adduced to show the necessity for a change ? It seems to me that the policy pursued at present is very liable to attach to the child the pauper stamp, as a sort of mark and origin of its start in life. And the danger of this is that the child, after going out into the world, sooner or later, and more often sooner, falls back, as a natural consequence, into a pauperised condition.

Whether, however, the care of the dependent children shall be assumed entirely by the State, as a matter of special duty and on a comprehensive basis, or whether matters shall continue to be left as at present, the interesting and all-important question will still remain as to the very best method to be adopted to secure a maximum of good results. I may perhaps be allowed, as the result of this inquiry, to discuss the matter at some little length. I speak with a considerable amount of diffidence, but I can plead as my excuse that the subject is one in which I take very great interest, and its importance can scarcely be overestimated.

There are three well-known and recognised methods of providing for dependent children, and these are : (1) Institutions ; (2) boarding-out ; (3) cottage homes.

1. INSTITUTIONS.

This system has been almost universally condemned of late years, and finds no place amongst modern proposals. Institutionalism has been aptly described as "a combination of rote, routine, and dead-levelism." It has been said by one writer that there is obviously a wide and deep gulf between such a system and the sense of responsibility felt by a conscientious father for the development of the personality of his sons and daughters, or the love of a mother for her individual children. Numberless instances could be cited to prove how utterly out of touch with modern methods institutionalism is.

2. BOARDING-OUT.

This system has many advantages and, with proper safeguards, may be made most valuable ; but, without these, is liable to become mischievous in the extreme. It ought to prove the most natural substitute for real home-life ; but the dangers and drawbacks are so great that one may well hesitate to regard it as the ideal solution of a most difficult question. The great aim, as I have already stated, is to free the children entirely from the fetters of pauperism, and cause them to be absorbed into the general population ; and this can only be done by giving them the full benefits of family life. The first practical difficulty is, of course, to find suitable homes, with foster-parents ready and willing to receive children for what must necessarily be, in the interests of the ratepayers, a somewhat limited remuneration. The majority of available homes would undoubtedly be those of somewhat needy persons, or, in other words, of persons who looked to make some sort of profit out of the children's presence. The second practical difficulty would be the obtaining of the requisite number of candidates, with reasonable security that the true interests of the children would be safe in their hands ; and the third great difficulty is supplying the necessary supervision, without which abuses would inevitably creep in.

I do not say that any of these difficulties are insuperable, but they are certainly so real as to induce one to seek whether there may not be a third system that will be more devoid of risk.

As touching this question of boarding-out, may I be here permitted to again quote from one of Dr. MacGregor's reports. In the year 1891 he said: "There has thus grown up, in an irregular, unsystematic way—*i.e.*, so far as one general plan is concerned—a boarding-out system, managed by each Board for itself. After having visited in their homes all the children boarded-out in the chief centres, except Auckland, I have come to the conclusion that, while there is no doubt that the boarding-out system is the best, yet it ought not to be left to the local Boards to manage. It is absolutely necessary that a comprehensive system of supervision should be established, and in our present circumstances I believe this can be done effectually only by the Education Department, whose existing machinery ought to be developed and strengthened to deal with this work. As things are at present, I fear that the parsimony of the Boards is being allowed to affect disastrously the children. . . . I am convinced that it is mistaken economy to deal in this way with the young. Be as hard as you like with the adult sturdy beggar; but it will save a great deal of future expense in our gaols, hospitals, and asylums if we deal generously with the children." These remarks are as true to-day, and as well worthy of deep consideration, as they were fifteen years ago, when they were penned.

3. COTTAGE HOMES.

It seems to me that this is the ideal system of dealing with dependent children. There is abundant evidence that wherever these homes have been established in England, properly equipped and properly managed, they have been an unqualified success. I am aware that the matter of expense will be urged in this connection; but where the results are so admirable, surely we need not scruple over some slight extravagance for the benefit of the "little children."

I have lately read most interesting articles under the heading of "The Children of the State," in "The Municipal Journal" and in "The Councillor and Guardian," being mainly descriptive of what is termed "The New Policy," as evidenced by the establishment of cottage homes. One of these articles, which is headed "Sheffield's Successful Experiment," will well repay perusal by all those who are interested in the subject. I can well imagine the Waltham Orphanage being turned into and kept as a model cottage home, quite up to the standard of those I have referred to. All the elements of success are there. They only require the right handling and development.

It may, of course, be considered impossible, on the score of expense, to carry out the cottage-home system on a large scale throughout the colony; but it would, I think, be a most distinct advance upon the present condition of things if the three systems to which I have referred were worked together on a modified scale. There would seem to be nothing whatever to prevent this.

Re TECHNICAL TRAINING.

I may say, too, here that I feel very strongly that no system can possibly be complete, and in the best interests both of the child and of the State, that does not provide for the technical training of dependent children at a suitable age.

Re OLD-AGE PENSIONERS.

A very great deal of evidence has been given in the course of this somewhat lengthy inquiry, and the greater portion of it will well repay perusal and study. Looking to the importance of the subject, to the general interest aroused, and to the fairly wide scope of my Commission, I did not deem it desirable to shut out any matter that might be considered, even in a remote degree, cognate to the inquiry. Considerable reference was made, at one stage, to the treatment by the Board of old-age pensioners in the homes, as regards the cost of maintenance, &c. This was only admitted as showing the methods of the Board, and with a view to test the accuracy of certain other returns put in by the Board in connection with Orphanage matters. The result has been to emphasize the need for the whole question being put on a proper footing—fair both to the Board and to the pensioners.

Re WOMEN MEMBERS OF BOARD.

Another question much discussed has been the presence of women—"progressive women," as they have been termed—on the Board, and their treatment by some of the more conservative of their fellow-members. It is no part of my duty to criticise the actions of any individual members of the Board, but I may perhaps be permitted to venture the opinion—a very diffident one, and as a "mere man"—that the presence and work of these women on the Board has been of distinct advantage. All reformers are necessarily enthusiastic, and these particular "progressives" have, no doubt, shown themselves

very zealous and active. They can only, however, be fairly judged by the result of such reforms as they have been able to carry out, and they will doubtless be satisfied to be so judged. Any one who reads the evidence of Mesdames Wells, Henderson, and Black, given during this inquiry, must be at once satisfied as to their special qualifications for membership on a Charitable Aid Board.

Re ELECTION OF BOARDS.

Another matter to which some prominence has been given is the present mode of election of members of the Board. There would seem to be ample ground for suggesting that the time has arrived when it should be very seriously taken into consideration whether the system of election should not be on a more popular basis, and whether the period for which the members are elected should not be at least three years. These are matters to which I can do no more than thus briefly refer, in the hope that they may be deemed worthy of further serious consideration.

The full evidence taken before me is forwarded herewith.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 15th day of February, in the year 1906.

H. W. BISHOP,
Stipendiary Magistrate and Commissioner.

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