

In connection with the general treatment of the girls, I must here mention a matter which, during the course of the inquiry, created a most unpleasant impression in my mind. The fact was elicited in evidence that the Manager is in the habit of using bedroom chambers for the purpose of keeping articles of food in for the use of the institution. I satisfied myself as to the truth of this by visiting the storeroom and seeing these things in use. I cannot too strongly condemn such a practice. There is not a shadow of excuse for it in any way. The objection is not a mere matter of sentiment. These articles are only identified in the public mind with one species of use, and that use is uncleanly, and certainly not of an alimentary nature. The endeavour should be to refine and elevate these girls, and not to cause them to believe that we appraise them so low in the domestic scale as to store their food in a vessel that is not even mentioned in ordinary polite society.

I desire also to state here that there is absolutely no fault whatever to find with the food supplied for the use of the inmates. It is good, wholesome, and ample in quantity. The healthy and robust appearance of the girls generally is conclusive proof that they thrive well upon the food supplied. A dietary scale is in use, and to my mind it is thoroughly liberal and satisfactory.

(c.) THE STAFF.

The staff at its full complement consists of a Sub-matron, a non-resident school-teacher, five attendants, and a gardener. One attendant has clerical duties to perform in addition to those of relieving-attendant. So far as I am able to judge, the duties are fairly well distributed, and certainly do not entail any undue hardship. The hours worked seem to me to be somewhat long, but each attendant, when giving evidence, although pointedly invited to speak fully and freely on the subject, expressed herself as perfectly content with all the conditions of her employment. I am bound, therefore, to assume that everything is satisfactory and sufficient for the purpose.

(d.) RELATIONS BETWEEN MANAGER AND STAFF.

Judging by the evidence given by all the resident members of the staff, their relations with the Manager are of the most cordial nature. Not a single discordant note was sounded. The school-teacher, who only visits at certain stated hours, complained somewhat of what she described as a lack of sympathy with the work of the school on the part of the Manager, and she thought that, given better conditions, she would show better results. I think that the true explanation of any little friction that may arise from time to time is, as suggested by Mrs. Branting, due to the fact that the teacher looks to the syllabus and nothing else, and that her enthusiasm in her work causes her to regard the school results as of the first importance. The school-work can only be regarded as auxiliary to the general work of the institution, and the peculiar elements composing the school, the mixed ages of the scholars, their antecedents, general backwardness, &c., make it quite impossible to seriously regard the school-work from the standpoint from which an ordinary primary day-school would be expected to be judged. The teacher can be content to know that she is doing excellent work, and that her section is a most important and very valuable adjunct to the general scheme of the institution. It is quite impossible to come in contact with the staff without feeling that their heart is in their work, and that, under most difficult circumstances and conditions, they are doing really good service.

A good deal of evidence was given in regard to an ex-attendant and the circumstances under which she left the institution. She elected not to bring her particular case before me as a special matter for inquiry, and wrote to me to that effect; but, having been summoned to give evidence generally as to the working of the institution, the whole facts incidentally were elicited, but the witness appeared to mainly direct her attention to attacking the Manager personally, on account of a feeling that she had that the Manager had tried to do her an injury. This resulted, of course, in recriminations. I do not propose to refer to this case in very much detail. The Education Department thought proper to terminate the engagement of this attendant, and I cannot say that it was without reason. It was quite impossible, under the circumstances, that she could be allowed to continue her employment. It may be, and very probably was, that she was the victim of unfortunate circumstances; but the fact remains that her retention in the institution would have led to serious consequences, with dire results to the discipline of the school. There is no doubt that this attendant was labouring under a sense of grievance against the Manager, and this was mainly due to the loose manner in which she was engaged, both in the matter of definition of duties and clear statement of salary to be paid, immediate and prospective. This sense of grievance was intensified at a later stage by the unfortunate failure of the Manager to fully appreciate the serious nature of an illness which subsequently seized this attendant. There seems very grave reason to doubt whether she was at any time physically fit for the duties that she was expected to discharge at the school, but which she alleges she never had any idea of undertaking at her engagement. Then, later, came the accusations made against her by a number of the