

39. *Mr. Salter.*] You say, if the Matron errs she errs on the side of leniency: what opportunities have you had for judging that?—This is my third visit. I have stayed in the house, and that is the only way in which you can really judge the work of the institution.

40. You say an inquiry such as this is detrimental to the best interests of the institution?—Yes.

41. Inquiries such as this are necessary occasionally: how are they detrimental?—I was not speaking as to the necessity for it at all, but as to the influence it has on the inmates.

42. *The Commissioner.*] I may take it you have not had any close experience of reformatories pure and simple?—No.

43. And you will admit there is no very strict analogy between your girls, generally speaking, and the inmates of an institution of this sort?—Very little.

44. I take it when you use the term “incorrigible” you mean girls to whom your methods are not so applicable as to others?—It is not strictly applicable. I meant to say “appear to be incorrigible.”

45. What percentage do you suppose you send here?—I think I have sent about ten or twelve altogether.

46. With regard to classification, of course you will admit that the success of the working of an institution, either here or anywhere else, depends very largely on the facilities for classification. How do you classify your inmates?—I do not classify mine. The better children are boarded out, and the children who are not amenable to the discipline of a foster-home reside in the institution, and then when they appear to be incorrigible I transfer them to Te Oranga. That is the classification I have.

47. Your inmates, generally speaking, are of the better class, to whom you are really foster-mother?—Yes.

48. At what ages generally are they committed to you?—All ages. I have had them as young as five days.

49. Then you are really a receiving home?—Yes; but, still, I have resident inmates. I have them committed to me as old as fifteen. The police very often consult me about cases, and I say whether it is advisable to send them to me or to Mrs. Branting. If a girl has been associating and living with women of really bad character I do not have them at all, for the sake of the younger children.

50. Then you try as far as possible only to have untainted girls?—Yes.

51. Have you ever given any thought to the question of classification here?—I thought the idea of having a third class an excellent one. I thought it was to be carried out in the first instance.

52. Do you not recognise the fact that classification, if properly carried out, might very well do away with the necessity for some of the existing punishments?—It might to a certain extent. I quite agree with you it would be a good thing to try it.

53. It is your duty to exhaust all possible means of dealing with these girls before resorting to corporal punishment?—Yes; but if it came to a final issue between that and these girls, even of twenty, going into the streets and leading a bad life, I would even do that.

54. I do not quite follow your mind in regard to the effect of corporal punishment. I should like you to point out to me in what way you think any possible benefit could result from the infliction of corporal punishment on a young woman of twenty?—No benefit, but it might prevent her from trying to get away.

55. But it will only be a very short time before she is an absolutely free agent?—I say I have had no practical experience of that.

56. Personally, you rather object to corporal punishment?—I do.

57. I suppose you keep in touch a good deal with your girls after they leave you?—Yes.

58. Do you find that the girls who voluntarily write, either to the Matron or to members of the staff, after they have been discharged or whilst they are in service, by so doing show their desire to keep in touch with a better life?—I have lost sight of very few of my girls altogether. I generally know whether their letters are true to fact or not, and the girls generally know me pretty well. They generally speak the truth to me.

59. I have had an opportunity of perusing sixty or seventy letters written by ex-inmates of the school to the Matron, and many of these letters are of a very pleasant nature indeed, and evidence a great regard for the school and for school life, and express the writers' gratitude for the training they have received here. I want to know whether you, as an experienced Matron, would say these are a fair index of the desire of the girls to lead a better life?—I certainly should.

60. You mean they are not just written for a purpose?—I do not think so to Mrs. Branting, and I am sure not to me.

61. And you have no doubt as to the general results of the industrial-school system as at present carried out by the Education Department?—No. I think the results speak very well. I know cases of girls who have married and who are bringing up children of their own. They are bringing them up much better than the children of the class they belonged to, and very much better than they could have been brought up themselves but for these Homes. I can see the result of their training in the training of their own children. I have seen a good many of what I can call my official grandchildren.

FREDERICK PHILIP FENDALL examined on oath.

1. *Mr. Russell.*] You are a clergyman of the Church of England, living at Rangiora?—Yes.

2. You wrote the letter appearing in the *Lyttelton Times* which started this agitation?—Yes.

3. Before you wrote that letter, which on the face of it makes a most serious charge against the Department, what precautions did you take to verify your information?—I had no opportunity to verify it except by my informant.