

117. If a girl makes a complaint about a member of the staff, what is the procedure adopted?—I hear the other side of the question first, and then I hear what she has to say, and then I tell the girl I will talk to her about it later.

118. Have you ever had to blame the staff as against the girls?—Sometimes.

119. And in such a case you have not hesitated to express your opinion?—Oh, no.

120. But you probably do not do so in front of the girls, for obvious reasons?—That is so.

121. The girls say you take the opportunity to speak of their faults before all the other girls at prayer-time: will you explain what your procedure is in regard to that?—If there is something flagrantly wrong going on amongst the girls I generally talk about it to them. We have ten minutes' conversation almost every day when I am taking prayers at night, and it is considered a privileged time for the girls and myself to discuss anything that is going on in the Home. If I think there is something wrong going on—something sneaky, or stealing, or lying, or bad conduct—we have it out together, and it is never considered that I am holding up their faults to them.

122. I suppose your object is to make an impression on all the girls of the school?—Yes, generally. There may be a girl who is doing something very bad, and the other girls have complained to me about it, and I usually say, "I will just take this opportunity to tell you so-and-so."

123. The girl C—— A—— says she absconded from Mrs. Buchanan's place because you told a lot of matters about her sister: do you remember anything about that?—I do not remember very much about it. I told her I did not wish her to have anything to do with her sister; that her sister was not likely to do her any good, from what I had heard. I had heard some years previously from a lady who had charge of a home in Wellington that she had tried to get this girl E—— A—— into her home, and she would not go. Afterwards I heard—but I could not prove it—that this girl was not doing as well as she might be, and I did not think she would do C—— any good. I do not think I said any more about her than that.

124. Is it true, as the girls say, that if they talk at table they are sent out without their meals?—I think on one or two occasions they may have been sent out when they have been most persistent talkers, and after they have been warned over and over again. They are not often sent out without their meals. I may say, it is most disturbing to the reading to have conversation going on.

125. With regard to the last lot of girls who tried to abscond and were found in the loft: were you satisfied from the evidence you obtained that the girls really meant to abscond and go to a bad house?—Yes.

126. Who was the ringleader in that?—H—— M——.

127. Any other girl?—E—— S——.

128. Had H—— M—— tried to get away before?—She was always trying to abscond.

129. How many of them were strapped?—Four. I gave H—— and E—— twelve strokes each and the other two girls six each.

130. Whose hair was cut off?—H—— M——'s and E—— S——'s.

131. Had you authority to do that?—I wrote to Wellington, and asked them to wire me authority, and they did so.

132. Was the authority wired at once, or was time taken to consider the matter?—I forget, but I think the wire came the next day.

133. What did the girl say when her hair was taken off?—She said she did not like her wool coming off, but it stopped her from running away.

134. Have you had any trouble with her since?—Yes; she has been very troublesome.

135. The girl E—— S—— went away, and you found she was living with a man for nearly a month?—Yes.

136. When she came back was she looking thin?—She was thin, and I thought she had not had enough to eat.

137. Was there anything about her to suggest she was ill?—No, except that she was thin.

138. How long had she been back when you strapped her?—Two days. She came back on the Tuesday and I strapped her on the Thursday.

139. How many days after that was it that she developed appendicitis and was taken to the Hospital?—On the Sunday she complained of pains in her head, and I put on a barilla pack, and she seemed easier, and slept for an hour in the afternoon. She seemed better the next day, and then she got worse again, and got so bad that I said we must have the doctor in.

140. Did the doctor suggest that her disposition was in any way accelerated or made worse by the strapping?—No. The doctor spoke to her, and she said she had had a very bad time when out, and she was glad to be back in the Home.

141. Where is that girl now?—She has again absconded.

142. When did she leave here?—On Saturday evening.

143. Who did she take with her this time?—I—— E——.

144. Has I—— E—— absconded before?—Yes.

145. Is this the second time E—— S—— has absconded?—The third time.

146. Have you any idea where they are?—I found out where they were on Monday morning, and I sent the police there, and I have since been informed that as the police went to the front door the girls left by the back.

147. You do not know where they are?—I do not.

148. With regard to the girl A—— G——, you had some difference with Mrs. Bean about her?—Yes.

149. Mrs. Bean said you were determined to keep her and she was determined to get her out: will you tell the Commissioner why you wanted to get that girl back to the Home when the Matron of the Samaritan Home had reported she was fit to go to Mrs. Bean's?—Well, I was responsible