

drop?—No, I did not. I said I would keep an open mind on the subject, and that the girls were liars.

411. You did not intend to let the matter drop?—No, I did not, most certainly.

412. You have admitted the girls are liars: then, why did you believe them on this occasion?—Because they were acting contrary to the things I have ever known them to do—they were acting against their own interests. I know they would swear your life away if they could get anything out of it, on occasions.

413. There has been something said about the money deducted from the girls' mark-money for church offertory: what deductions are made?—2d. per month from the Protestants and 1d. per month from the Catholics.

414. Is there any record made of the deductions?—The clerk should keep it.

415. Has there ever been any record?—Yes; I think we could trace it right from the very first, and find out exactly how much money should be in hand.

416. But if it is deducted for church purposes, why is it not applied for church purposes? Why is it kept in hand?—It is not necessary to put it in the plate for church purposes. There are many things in connection with the church that it is nice to give a little to.

417. Is a proper account of that kept?—I think so. I have always instructed Miss Hunt and Miss Howden to keep an account.

418. I think you subscribed 5s. to a presentation to Mr. Seaton when he went away?—I suppose so. I do not remember.

419. Was that a personal gift?—No.

420. Is it a fact that this 5s. was taken out of the church money?—I suppose it was.

421. You told Miss Howden to take it out?—I expect so. It was the girls' money, and it was for the girls' benefit that Mr. Seaton came here and gave them lectures and a singing-class once a week. I thought it was a proper thing to do with their money. Mr. Seaton was not a personal friend of mine.

422. Is it a fact that you practise a very rigid economy in conducting the Home?—No, I do not.

423. One of the attendants—Miss McPherson—said the bread and dripping and bread and jam were rather scantily spread: do you agree with that?—No.

424. You can produce books showing the amount spent per month for groceries and meat and bread?—Yes.

425. Do you think the meat supplied for the Home is ample for the purpose?—We are all very well, and we all eat the same meat.

426. The inmates get as much as you think they ought to get?—I do. In addition to meat, we give them poultry and eggs, of which they all have their fair share.

427. Is it a fact that private letters have been written by you to Sir Edward Gibbes in connection with Home matters?—I may have written about two in connection with the institution. They might all be published for anything I have written.

428. *The Commissioner.*] What is the object in marking them "Private and confidential"?—I do not know that I have written anything of a very confidential nature to the Department.

429. Nothing you have written has been with the idea of taking an unfair advantage?—No.

430. *Mr. Salter.*] Do you remember saying to Miss Howden you always knew how to act, because Mr. Pope had told you to write to Sir Edward Gibbes and make your letter private and confidential?—I have no recollection of it.

431. Have you any understanding with the Department about writing confidential letters about matters?—No.

432. On this particular occasion you did not write a private and confidential letter on this subject?—If I did, I do not mind the Department showing my letter. I do not remember any letter.

433. It would not be on the file if marked "Private and confidential"?—No doubt they would have it.

434. You have admitted you told Mrs. Bean about this girl being a bad character?—I did not.

435. You said she was of immoral tendencies?—That was giving her true character.

436. How did you know this girl was of immoral tendencies?—Her sister told me, and said she was very glad A—— was in the Home.

437. And you believed it?—I did. She came to me and said she was thankful to think she was in the Home.

438. Is it your practice when a girl is going to service to tell her mistress all that is bad about the girl?—Certainly not. I did not want that girl to go to service, and I did not think Mrs. Bean would make any use of the information I gave her. I thought she would have respected my confidence, but she appears not to have done so.

439. So far as the 5s. given to the postman is concerned, your minute on the voucher, when it was questioned by the Audit Department, is not true?—I said to Miss Howden, "Distribute it." I did not give her any particular thing to put down.

440. *The Commissioner.*] You were asked to account for the item, "Dinners, 10s.," and you said you had to go to town to meet several service girls, and had to get your dinner. Either that is true or false. It was to cover up that 5s. to the postman that that explanation was made?—No, it was not to cover anything.

441. Why did you deceive the Department? It was not a correct explanation?—I had no intention to deceive the Department. All I intended to do was to save the vouchers coming up and down from Wellington to know about this and that and the other.

442. It was to put a stop to the irritation of getting the vouchers backwards and forwards that the explanation was made?—Yes.