

27. You consider Mrs. Branting was acting in the best interests of the girl when she wished to have her back at Te Oranga for a further period?—I think so. I thought she was right, because I did not think the girl was fit to go to service if she could not stand for a short time the discipline of Te Oranga Home.

28. Is there anything in the discipline that is severe?—Nothing for the class of girls that you have.

29. Do you consider the Home is doing good work for the girls so far as you can see?—Most undoubtedly. I am not saying this now without having said it before. I have stated publicly before that the Dominion was fortunate in having two such managers as Mrs. Branting and Mr. Archey.

30. So far as you can see, the Home and grounds are well equipped by the Department for the children?—Yes; I have seen them on their play-nights, and there has been no fear. When I see them they are just as much at home with the Matron as I was with my mother.

31. Dr. Symes made the suggestion that the girls thought themselves outcasts: is there any feeling of that kind?—I have never heard of it, nor has it been expressed to me. I would like to say, in reference to some of the girls who have been examined, that E—— S—— told me she could barely expect such kind treatment from the Matron as she received after what she had done, and that she would always look upon the Matron as her friend. H—— M—— complained to me because she thought the Matron might let her come up both on Sundays and Wednesdays. She said she never felt so comfortable as when she came to see the Matron. Z—— McG——, of all the girls who have spoken to me, has paid more compliments and been more grateful in connection with the Matron than any one else. She would come down in the tram with me, and all the way she would be singing the praises of the Matron, and would always effusively kiss the Matron on arrival at the Home.

32. Has any girl on any occasion spoken to you except in good terms of the Matron?—Never.

33. I now want you to give us your opinion on the question of punishment. In the first place, supposing when a girl's time is approaching to a close she is more difficult to deal with, would you consider it a proper thing for the Magistrate, upon application made and proof such as he would require, to keep that girl for an indeterminate period in the Home?—Decidedly. That is not a new idea. I put that before the Minister of Education last year. It was brought up at the Conference.

34. Will you tell us your ideas in regard to corporal punishment?—I believe in it for certain girls.

35. But what about girls, say, over eighteen years of age?—I would not do away with corporal punishment. I think it would be a dangerous thing for these girls to know it was done away with; but I would put any restrictions on the Matron that might be thought necessary—that it should only be inflicted under the authority of the doctor or in the doctor's presence. I know cases where the punishment has done good; and I remember a very serious disturbance in the female gaol at Lyttelton that would have been stopped instantly had the Matron possessed authority to administer corporal punishment to the offender. I know Mrs. Branting has told me that punishing the girls puts her about very much. I once saw Mrs. Branting after doing it, and I have not the slightest doubt she felt it more than the girl.

36. Can you suggest something which might be an equivalent and as efficacious as that? Supposing we get another wing in which to put refractory girls, could we then, in your opinion, dispense with corporal punishment?—I should not obliterate it from the punishments of the Home until I saw the working of the new building.

37. Would you say that no punishment of that nature should be inflicted until the case came before the Magistrate?—I am quite agreeable to that.

38. *The Commissioner.*] You come into contact with the girls at the time of their committal, and you are able to judge the demeanour of these girls and compare it at a subsequent period with their appearance and behaviour?—Yes.

39. Have you found the difference marked?—Yes.

40. You find the discipline and treatment at Te Oranga has the humanising effect that is desired?—Yes.

41. Of course, you know the criminal classes and prostitutes about Christchurch?—Yes.

42. Have you come in contact at any time with girls who have been at Te Oranga, but who have gone back?—I have known girls I have been doubtful about. I could not say the girl was on the town, but I had an idea things were not right.

43. What proportion of them?—Very small indeed.

44. And these are girls who probably under any circumstances would relapse?—Yes.

45. That is to say, they are sexual degenerates?—Yes.

46. You agree, then, that it is desirable, in the interests of the State, that if a girl has shown herself to be impervious to reformatory treatment at Te Oranga she should not be turned loose on the community at twenty-one?—Certainly.

47. How would you safeguard that?—I should have the law so made that she should again be brought before the Magistrate and dealt with. It would be the same as a Judge giving an indeterminate sentence, so that her discharge would ultimately depend on her conduct after that further committal.

48. Naturally, the fact of that hanging over her head would have a beneficial effect?—A very good effect.

49. What about the other forms of punishment?—I would continue to cut the hair. There is nothing that a girl can use so well to disguise herself as her hair. The effect of the hair-cutting has been to keep them from running away. It has the same effect as the punishment dress. In my opinion, too, when a girl has her hair cut off she is a bit of a hero amongst the other girls, and has a kindly time from them.