

4. You are constantly paying visits to these different homes throughout the country?—Yes, as frequently as I can.

5. Ever since this Home started you have been here in the performance of your duties?—Yes; many times.

6. I think the Department takes a very great interest in this question of the reformation and care of children generally?—The Department regards it as one of the most important branches of its work. I have repeatedly heard the senior officers of the Department say that.

7. Is the Department niggardly in the matter of funds in regard to these homes, or does it give all that is required?—I have jotted down one or two figures. Since 1900 and the present reclassification of industrial schools we have spent on the industrial schools and the school for deaf-mutes, in capital expenditure and buildings and properties, over £54,000, and the Department is now committed to works that it must carry out in the very near future which will amount to another £25,000, or probably nearer £30,000. We spend annually on these institutions something like £40,000.

8. How much does this Home cost to maintain annually?—Something under £2,000. That, of course, is the net expenditure.

9. So far as you can see, apart from the question of buildings and classification, is this Home well supplied with everything that could possibly be wanted for the care and comfort of these children?—I really think so, having regard to the fact that we must study the taxpayers' pocket.

10. Is there anything you can think of that, by the further expenditure of money, of course, on proper consistent lines, would add to the well-being of the children?—It is a somewhat difficult matter. You have to remember that if you spend too much on these institutions you may probably to some extent undo the work that you have in hand, because you must bear in mind we are trying to fit these girls to take up a position in the world, and if we bring them up on lines superior to what they will be likely to meet with in their ordinary walks of life outside, we may do more harm than good.

11. *The Commissioner.*] That does not cover the ground. Clearly, every girl you reform through the machinery prepared by the Department is a clear gain to the State, and every girl you do not reform is a clear loss and expense to the State, and therefore the interests of the taxpayers should scarcely be considered. Mr. Russell's question is more in this direction: Can you suggest any further method—and here is an excellent opportunity to do so—that would help forward the work of reformation at Te Oranga?—Manifestly, we need more buildings.

12. *Mr. Russell.*] I mean, altogether apart from buildings, because they, we understand, are practically approved. I want to know whether you can suggest any further expenditure of money under present circumstances by which the work of reformation would be made quicker and better. First, do you consider all their physical wants are provided for?—Yes, I think so.

13. The food is plain and good?—Yes; the Matron has absolutely no interest whatever in providing anything but the best. The contract conditions are that the best shall be supplied.

14. You are satisfied that, so far as the quantity and quality of the food are concerned, they are all that the children could want or should want?—I have very frequently seen the food here, and I have on more than one occasion eaten some of it, and it has always struck me as being very much of the same quality of food as one would get outside.

15. Taking the rank of life from which these people come, I suppose you consider the conditions here are at least as good as those in the majority of their own homes?—Well, the food would, I think, be plainer, but it would be more sensible food. I think it is quite likely some of these girls would get more luxuries outside, and probably less of the necessary food.

16. But the Department does not think that is necessary so long as they get wholesome food?—I think the dietary scale of these institutions is such as would make healthy young women.

17. Does the scale provide for a girl who may be delicate or may want something better in the way of food? Is there any elasticity in the regulations?—The Department practically supplies anything that the Medical Officer or the manager suggests for the physical benefit of an inmate.

18. So, if a delicate child was not getting what was wanted it would be because the Medical Officer or Matron had not applied for it?—I may say we have paid as much as £1 per week for board outside the institution, so as to give a girl a suitable chance.

19. You are at this Home pretty often?—Yes.

20. And not only have a general knowledge, but an exact knowledge of what goes on here?—Yes.

21. And does your Department, in addition to taking a general interest in the children, take an individual interest in the case of each child?—The Department takes an individual interest. I think the Commissioner has had an opportunity of seeing the way we do things, and I feel the Commissioner, from his knowledge, will give us credit for trying to do our best. The system here is exactly the same as at Burnham.

22. You keep an account of each child, and watch its progress?—Yes.

23. You have been visiting this Home for eight years and a half, and the Matron has been in charge of it the whole of that time?—Yes.

24. Have you ever, on any occasion, had to complain or object to anything she has done, or to her administration or treatment of the children?—I think that, without exception, I have always felt that the Matron's actions have been prompted by a strong desire for the very best interests of the inmates in the Home.

25. Are you of opinion that she has a personal interest in each child, and that her great endeavour is to get them on?—I am absolutely certain about that.

26. So far as you can see, does the Matron love the work, and is she a woman whose desire is not so much to earn a salary as to assist in the reformation of these girls?—I would say that Mrs. Branting is absolutely wrapt up in her work.