

104. Have you ever given any girl any article of clothing?—No.

105. Nothing at all?—I do not remember ever giving any girl any clothing. I believe I have given the Matron something to give to one of the girls.

106. Did you leave the Home of your own motion?—No.

107. You were dismissed from the Home?—Yes; I was asked to resign.

108. Rightly or wrongly, because certain statements were made by the girls that you had incited them to mutiny, or next door to it. You know what the girls have said, because you had an opportunity of seeing the statements?—Yes.

109. I want to read to you from this statement: "From the time H—— had her hair cut, Miss Howden was always saying the girls were treated like beasts, and made us all dissatisfied. She constantly took me to her room, and used to ask me what went on in the Home, saying that neither Matron nor the staff let her into any of the secrets." Did you take that girl to your room?—Yes; she used to brush my hair sometimes. She was on my room for a month.

110. Have you ever asked her questions about what went on in the Home?—No.

111. "One Sunday, coming home from church, she asked M—— and I if we knew anything about the papers": Is there any truth in that?—No; I never mentioned papers to the girls.

112. "I said I heard A—— say a few things, but not much. She then told us a few of the things that were going on": Did you do so?—No, I did not.

113. "She wished she had her way, and she would have an inquiry, and see who came out on top. She then began talking about Mr. Smail, and said he always sided with the Home, whether it was in the right or in the wrong. She said the Matron called the girls beasts." Did you tell the girl that?—No; I never heard that before.

114. "Another Sunday, after E—— came home, she said Matron never told her E—— had absconded, and she thought it a dirty sneak's trick, as some of the staff knew." Did the Matron tell you E—— had absconded?—Yes; when I came in from church the Matron told me E—— had absconded. That was the same night that she absconded.

115. Then this girl is not telling the truth there?—No.

116. "She then asked me if I would like a good dress and blouse she showed me." Did you show her a dress and blouse?—No.

117. "If ever the girls were insubordinate, and attempted to abscond, she stuck up for them, and said they wanted their freedom. She was always running Miss Hunt down, and calling her a nigger-driver." Did you ever call Miss Hunt a nigger-driver?—No.

118. "Miss Howden was always putting me against the Home, but I told her I could not go against the Home because I had been here so long. She was always talking to Z—— McG——." Is there a word of truth in that statement, from beginning to end?—No, not one word, of truth. Why did not the girl produce the dress and blouse I gave her?

119. I do not think she got the dress?—If she has the Matron must know.

120. "Miss Howden said also she could not trust any one here, staff or any one, and asked me where she could hide the keys of her drawers. She said either Miss Dean or Miss Hunt took her blotting-paper. She said not only were the girls light-fingered, but also the staff. She never kept any of the institution's rules, and incited us to break them." Did you lose any blotting-paper?—I did.

121. How did the girl know anything about it?—Because the belongings of every girl were searched. I first spoke to the Matron about it.

122. Did you express an opinion that one of the staff took it and not the girls?—I certainly expressed the opinion the girls had not taken it.

123. You have seen the charges signed by H—— M—— and F—— B——?—Yes, I have seen them months ago. These things were talked about, and the Matron decided she would take a broad view of the matter, and let it drop. She put them in her drawer, and kept them there until I asked to be relieved of the attendant's duty, and also asked for the salary the Department had first offered. Then she took my letter, wrote one of her own, and sent up these statements—which were supposed to be done with—to the Department. We talked over these statements, and the Matron said to me herself that the girls were liars, and would swear your life away.

124. I will read the letter Mrs. Branting sent to the Department: "The Secretary for Education, Wellington.—SIR,—When Mr. Pope was here on Monday, the 30th December, 1907, I showed him the enclosed statements, and asked him what I should do in the matter. He said he had no hesitation in saying they should be forwarded to the Department, as the matter referred to is in connection with the late attack on this Home. You will see that Miss Howden denies everything. On the morning following Mrs. Kaye's investigation Miss Howden spoke to me, and said the girls had told her of the proceedings of the previous evening. After some conversation I sent for the three girls, and they, in Miss Hunt's and my presence, told Miss Howden that it was quite true—that they had nothing to gain by telling, and much to lose, as she had given them many things lately, &c. It was to me a painful scene, and the first time anything like it has happened here. Miss Howden said the girls lied and the girls said Miss Howden did. Miss Howden said it was a plot—on whose part she did not say. Knowing the character of the girls, and that they are most unscrupulous if they can gain anything, but I have never known any of them to act against their own interests, as in this case. Several girls have since said they also were talked to by Miss Howden in the same way. I told Miss Howden that the only course, if this were true, would be instant dismissal; but that knowing the character of the girls, I would keep an open mind on the subject for a time. As I have been publicly attacked, and the Home commented upon, in most of the New Zealand papers, it seems advisable to ask for your assistance in the matter, as you will readily see that to work with a member of the staff accused of disloyalty at a time when one wants to be sure of loyalty, especially among the inmates, to sit at table and talk things over in a friendly way, makes confidence almost impossible." You see, Mrs. Branting