

another Syrian of 5 years and 1 month. The others, apparently, in this list are all British subjects, but many are fatherless or motherless. Some have mothers who have to go out to work. There is one child of 5 years and 3 months whose parents are unknown.

7. Do you find that the numbers are increasing in the school?—The numbers in the Walker Street School are remaining approximately about the same, but we have purified Walker Street during the fourteen years we have been at it. In the other school the number is increasing.

8. And in your opinion there is scope for much further work?—Yes, in the poorer parts of the town.

9. During the fourteen years have you received no support from the Government?—No.

10. Are the schools in New South Wales that you referred to exactly similar?—Yes, I think they are exactly the same.

11. *Mr. Foulds.*] If this petition were granted you realise, of course, that the grant would need to be applicable all over the colony?—Yes, and I think we ought to encourage these schools all over the colony. I should only be too glad to see a subsidy granted wherever there is need for it.

12. If these grants were made, of course, definite regulations would be needed. You would not recommend that the age-limit should be made five, I suppose, but think it should go up to six?—I think it would be very unwise to restrict the age to five, because there are cases where the children are not fit to go at that age into the primary school.

13. To get the best results, as far as the State is concerned, you think it might be necessary to keep them a little longer?—Yes, that is our experience.

14. *Mr. Rutherford.*] You deal at present with all races and mixtures?—Yes, all races.

15. It is not proposed by your association to differentiate in any way?—No, not in any way.

16. *Mr. Bennet.*] I think you said that sometimes these children have to be fed as well as educated?—That is so in some cases.

17. Up to the present you have had no means of housing them?—No, we could not do that.

18. Do you not think that might be urged?—I only wish it could. I might say that I have known some of the ladies to go into the homes of these poor children and actually scrub the floors for the mothers.

19. Of course the improvement will not be complete until there is a home?—That is somewhat outside of our work. It is a matter that the State might consider.

20. But you could not give the full benefit of your institution to these children if they have to go home to their squalid surroundings?—That would raise the large question as to whether it would be wise to separate them from their mothers. In some instances the effect has been good on the mothers after we have trained the children.

21. *Mr. Alison.*] The petition asks a pound-for-pound contribution by the State?—Yes.

22. Do you propose that the State shall have any supervision or control of these kindergarten schools?—We would rejoice at State inspection and a State report upon our work; but I would impress on the Committee the value of the free work now being done, especially the constant visitation and overlooking done by these ladies.

23. Do you not think that if the State contributed pound for pound there should be provision for management or inspection by the State?—I think there should be inspection; but it would not be wise for the State to take the management, because I believe the local management is much more effective.

24. But you think there should be inspection?—Yes, and regulation if necessary.

25. *Mr. Rhodes.*] Is it in any way a denominational institution?—The children get a certain amount of religious teaching, but we make no discrimination. I consider that a certain amount of training in religion is necessary. So far as the committee of the association are concerned, they are perfectly undenominational—they are gathered from all sorts.

26. *The Chairman.*] They are not connected with any church?—Absolutely none.

27. *Mr. Bennet.*] What is approximately required to keep the schools going?—I think these two schools could be kept going for £300 a year. If we launched out it would be more expensive. If we were to re-establish the system of training teachers, as we did at first, it might cost a little more.

28. *Mr. Alison.*] We have four centres in the colony, and, of course, this kindergarten or rescue work could very well be undertaken in each of them, as also in smaller towns. If the State is to vote pound for pound for this purpose for any part of the colony would it not be well that there should be a limitation of the amount the State may be called upon to provide, so that the objection could not be raised that it would be a large demand on the State funds?—Subsidies always are limited, and no doubt they would be limited in this case by reason of the pound-for-pound contribution. Although the petition is from Dunedin, and refers to one place only, I feel certain that every one connected with the association would be only too glad to know that it was made general, and the same good work undertaken in other places. They would not object to the subsidy being made general.

29. Supposing the subsidy were limited to pound for pound, would the limitation, in your opinion, act to the detriment of the work as time goes on?—I do not think it would be any detriment to us if it were limited, and I think perhaps it would be wise to limit it. Any help to us would be an encouragement, even if it be limited.

30. What limitation would you suggest?—If we are only to run these two schools the State might grant us up to £200 to start with.

H. D. BEDFORD, M.H.R., examined. (No. 2.)

31. *The Chairman.*] Have you anything to urge in favour of this petition?—Mr. Allen has given us such an exhaustive view of the matters contained in the petition that I feel that there is