

5. That the Matron of such Orphanage has been unduly harsh in the treatment of certain of the children, inmates of such Orphanage.

6. That she has dressed orphan children in grotesque costumes, with the intention of holding them up to ridicule and merriment.

7. That she has taunted children with the fact of their relatives belonging to the unfortunate class of the community, and called them mockingly by the names of such relatives, and made flippant references to them.

8. That the persons or person responsible for the internal arrangements and economy of such Orphanage have been incompetent, inasmuch as there have been no proper feeding and no proper dietary arrangement, or system, or fixed hours for meals, and distinction is and was made at such meals by having the table divided into two departments, containing different quantities and kinds of food.

9. That the children were improperly punished, and for trifling offences, by long periods of silence.

10. That there was no proper superintendence of the children, particularly in the bathroom and bedrooms.

11. That the Matron had used bad language and objectionable names to the children.

12. That the children Gerty Andrews, Emma Andrews, May Burbury, Eva Bashford, and Ellen Attwood have been ill treated by those in charge at the Orphanage.

13. That neglect and inattention has been manifest in the care of the boy Percy Whittle during his illness and antecedent thereto by those in charge of such lad at the Orphanage.

14. That permission is asked to refer to other matters which form part of the grounds of complaint, and are set out in the report of the proceedings at the Charitable Aid Office.

Christchurch, New Zealand, 19th December, 1905.

In accordance with Your Excellency's direction, before entering upon any inquiry in respect of these charges and complaints, I caused copies thereof to be served upon Mrs. Carpenter and upon the Charitable Aid Board at least twenty-four hours before I entered upon any inquiry.

As the result of such inquiry, I offer my opinion on these charges and complaints, taken seriatim, as follows :—

(1.) *Re IMPROPER MANAGEMENT.*

It will be convenient under this heading to give a short history of what is here termed the "Charitable Aid Orphanage." The Ashburton and North Canterbury United Charitable Aid Board came into existence after the passing into law of "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885." In due course the Lyttelton Orphanage, so named under the heading of "Charitable Institutions," contained in the Second Schedule of the Act, came under the control of the Board. For several years the Board carried on this Orphanage with increasing difficulty and varying success. The number of children provided for therein ranged from a maximum of 102 in 1886 to a minimum of 0 in 1895. The building was old, inconvenient, and in every way unsuitable for its purpose. Changes in management occurred from time to time. On the 1st May, 1900, Mrs. Carpenter was appointed to the charge of the Orphanage. She was then, and had been for some time, Inspector, under the Board, and continued the duties of that office, in addition to those pertaining to the Orphanage, up to December, 1902, when she was relieved of her duties as Inspector, and was appointed solely as Matron of the Orphanage. On the 25th March, 1904, the Orphanage was destroyed by fire, and after some temporary provision, the children, to the number of eleven, were located for some thirteen months in a building in Lyttelton, rented for the purpose. In April, 1905, the Board purchased, for a sum of £1,200, the property now known as the Waltham Orphanage, in Austin Street, Sydenham. After the building had been somewhat altered, and the necessary furniture procured, the children, numbering eleven, were brought from Lyttelton and duly installed in their new quarters, with Mrs. Carpenter still as Matron in charge. They took possession on the 10th May, 1905. At the present time there are eight children in the Orphanage, one girl and seven boys. The total cost of the Orphanage, including alterations, furniture, &c., has been about £1,600. This has been provided for out of a sum of £2,080, which was the amount for which the old Lyttelton Orphanage was insured. There is still a sum of £528 15s. 1d. to the credit of the Orphanage Account.

The allegation that the Charitable Aid Orphanage is and has been improperly managed and controlled practically covers the whole scope of the inquiry; and, speaking generally, there can be no doubt that it is substantially proved. Matters dealt with hereafter under other headings all go to show this. The weak spot throughout, in my opinion, has been the apparent inability of the majority of the members of the Board to grasp and deal with the fact that the Matron was in every way unsuited for the position she had been placed in. Very little interest in the Orphanage and its internal arrangements and working would, I think, at any time, have conclusively settled this fact. Mrs. Wells's