

(11.) *Re* USE OF BAD LANGUAGE.

There is ample proof of the truth of this charge, both by the evidence of several witnesses and by the partial admissions of Mrs. Carpenter herself. It is quite unnecessary to refer to details. One can only deeply regret that the extreme impropriety of many of Mrs. Carpenter's expressions was not fully appreciated by the Board after its inquiry, even though the language proved there was not so serious as in the present instance.

(12.) *Re* ILL TREATMENT OF CERTAIN CHILDREN.

I cannot say that this allegation is satisfactorily proved to the extent implied in the charge as formulated. There was undoubtedly a want of discretion shown in the treatment of several of the children, but there was no deliberate ill treatment. There was very little thought or discrimination on the part of Mrs. Carpenter in dealing with individual cases, and in the case of May Burbury the real condition of the child, in the instance which has been so much referred to in the course of the evidence, was undoubtedly not properly appreciated by the Matron; and there seems no reason for doubting that the child was really ill when she went to Mrs. Peachey's house; and the evidence of several witnesses would go to show that her condition in the morning ought to have been sufficiently apparent to have insured her being kept from school, and so have saved the unpleasantness of what afterwards occurred. There is evidence that corporal punishment was freely inflicted by Mrs. Carpenter when she deemed it necessary, and under conditions as to holding down, &c., that would seem to show that the punishment was pretty severe. I do not think that at any time it amounted to actual ill treatment. The necessity for the infliction of corporal punishment on children is a matter upon which opinions greatly differ. As any opinion which I could express would only be that of an individual, I refrain from expressing any.

(13.) *Re* NEGLECT OF PERCY WHITTLE.

I am inclined to think that there has been no such neglect in this case as would call for special comment. It is quite clear that Percy Whittle's condition would appear very much worse to the lay observer than it really was, and, in fact, the lowness of his condition seems to have struck several persons who saw him with a sense of shock; but the evidence of Dr. Croke and others goes to show that the lad was very delicate and abnormally thin, but that there was nothing in his condition or appearance that would warrant an opinion that he had been neglected.

(14.) *Re* OTHER MATTERS.

There is nothing of any moment that can be referred to under this heading.

## GENERAL.

The very important question has, of course, inevitably arisen in connection with this inquiry, and that is, as to the best method of dealing with orphans and other dependent children. In Dr. MacGregor's report on hospitals and charitable institutions of the colony, in the year 1889, he referred to this question as one of great complexity. It seems very little less difficult to-day. Fortunately, however, of late years the great importance of the subject has attracted the attention of the leading social thinkers and workers throughout the civilised world, and the result has been that we have the advantage of profiting by the well authenticated results of various experiments, all undertaken with the object of ascertaining what is the best and at the same time most economical (in the long run) method of dealing with our dependent children. Under the present system in this colony, by which the cost of providing for and maintaining dependent children is thrown upon local Charitable Aid Boards, to be paid for out of rates, the nature and extent of the provision must necessarily be affected by considerations of economy; and herein at once arises the danger of the true interests of the children being subordinated to the necessities of the balance-sheet. This danger apparently struck Dr. MacGregor in 1892, for the following passage occurs in his report for that year: "The State might take over the whole cost of the children who are now paid for partly out of rates, and who are being boarded-out by the Boards, or otherwise provided for in a very parsimonious fashion." And again, in 1896, he writes as follows: "The children must first of all be dealt with, and saved from contamination" (i.e., the contamination of pauperism). "Under proper safeguards to prevent the break-up of families, all neglected and orphaned children ought to be made wards of the State, instead of leaving them, as at present, to be victims of our absurd system of local government."

In 1899 Mrs. Grace Neill wrote: "In dealing with deserted and neglected children there is room for reform. . . . There is no definite or comprehensive State guardianship of children, responsible for their development into healthy, self-respecting members of the commonwealth."