

27. *Mr. Salter.*] Have you known girls to be left in the cells without being visited for any length of time?—Not whilst I was here.

28. Have you ever heard of it?—No.

29. Are you aware that the Matron is in the habit of boxing girls' ears?—I never saw it.

30. Have you ever heard of it?—I have heard of it amongst the girls.

31. Have you any reason to doubt the truth of what they say?—They are not very truthful sometimes.

32. Was the Matron in the habit of speaking to one staff about another staff unfavourably?—I have not heard her.

33. Is it not a fact that the Matron discussed Miss Mills with you on one occasion?—No.

34. You are sure?—Yes.

35. Is it a fact that Miss Mills came to you crying, and asking advice as to what she should do?—I have no recollection of her doing it.

36. Do you know that the Matron is in the habit of taking the word of the girls against the members of the staff?—When I had any complaints to make about the girls she listened to both sides.

37. You have been living at the Home for the last few days?—Yes.

38. Since this inquiry started?—Yes.

39. As Mrs. Branting's guest?—Yes; I was sent for.

40. At the Government expense?—Yes.

41. Of course, you conversed with Mrs. Branting about the inquiry generally?—Yes, generally speaking, it was talked about.

42. Did the Matron tell you there was no fuss about Te Oranga; it was only caused by one person who wanted her position?—She never told me that.

43. Or anything of the kind?—No.

44. You are quite clear about that?—Quite clear.

45. From your experience, do you think the food given to the children is satisfactory?—Yes, so far as I know.

46. Have you ever heard them talking about the bread and dripping and bread and jam as bread and scrape?—Yes.

47. Do you think they had any cause to speak like that?—No.

48. When an attendant said the other day that the dripping and jam were scantily spread, you would not agree with her?—I had the spreading of it for three years, and it was quite consistent with my way of thinking.

49. There was a specimen here the other day where the dripping and jam had evidently quarrelled with the crust, judging by the distance they were apart?—That had been spread since the morning.

50. Yes, but there was no sign of anything near the edge of the bread. Are the pieces always spread like that?—I cannot say, but it is spread something like that.

51. You think the girls have no cause of complaint at all?—I really do not.

52. I understand you relieved for the Matron?—Yes.

53. Miss Harrison told us the other day that she was the relieving officer?—I was here during Matron's last holidays.

54. Was Miss Harrison supposed to be in charge then?—Yes.

55. Then, she was practically relieving for the Matron and you were helping Miss Harrison?—Yes.

56. Then, it is hardly correct to say you were relieving for the Matron. You were here to assist Miss Harrison, who was relieving?—Yes.

57. *Mr. Russell.*] Miss Harrison would be in school all the morning and afternoon?—Yes.

58. You had charge of the institution when Miss Harrison was in school?—Yes.

59. You say that for three years you put on the dripping and jam?—Yes.

60. Had you any instructions from the Matron, or any one, to be scrimpy with the children?—No.

61. You used your own discretion?—No; I took orders from the Matron.

62. Were there any instructions to go easy with the dripping and jam?—I spread it as she showed me.

63. If a girl was in the cell, would not her absence from the tea or dinner table be at once noticed?—Yes.

64. Would it be possible for a girl to be in the cell and be overlooked altogether? Would not her absence from the meals be at once noticed?—Yes.

65. *Mr. Salter.*] It is just possible she might be overlooked?—It might be, but it would be hardly possible, because her place would be left vacant.

66. But if a girl said, as one did yesterday, that she was in the cell from first thing in the morning until tea-time, and that she had no breakfast or dinner and no tea until 8 p.m., would you consider that possible?—I could not believe it.

67. But if she swore that had happened, would you swear that it had not?—I could not absolutely swear, but I could hardly think it was possible to miss three meals in one day.

68. *The Commissioner.*] It seems to me you have had exceptional opportunities for considering the effect of the institution upon the inmates generally during the time you were here and coming back after a lapse of time in temporary charge. Are you able to say to what extent, in your opinion, the Home has been successful in improving the moral condition of the inmates?—I think it has been for the good of the inmates.

69. Have you noticed any improvement in the inmates?—Yes.

70. In what respect particularly?—Since I have been away I have got letters from several of the girls who have been at service, and I have seen them when they came back, and I have seen