

them when I have been down here, and I have seen an improvement in their manners and everything else.

71. They like to keep in touch with the institution and everything belonging to it?—Yes.

72. Generally, after they leave, do they express gratitude for the treatment they have received here?—Yes.

73. Speaking generally, you think the Home has been of great benefit to the girls?—Yes.

74. Have you noticed that particularly on your return to the Home?—Yes; some of the old ones have very much improved during my absence.

WILLIAM REECE examined on oath.

1. *Mr. Russell.*] You are an ironmonger, residing in Christchurch?—Yes.

2. I think you were asked by the Government to accept the position of Official Visitor to this Home?—Yes, in 1905. I succeeded Mr. Heywood.

3. And for the last two years you have been in touch with the institution?—Yes.

4. I think you not only come here occasionally, but Matron and the others connected with the Home go to you for advice in town?—Matters are very frequently referred to me, both by the Matron and the Lady Visitors, as it is difficult for me to come up here.

5. From your personal observation, are you satisfied that everything is being done that could be done to assist these girls?—Yes, in my opinion.

6. That is, to assist them both into physical health and into a higher and better moral attitude?—Yes.

7. And in your opinion, is this Home fulfilling that purpose?—To a very large extent. There are improvements in regard to classification which I would like to see. They are in hand now.

8. But you think the experiment has been successful to this extent: in helping the girls to a better position, and making them less immoral, and so on?—Decidedly so.

9. You said something about classification. Do you suggest there is a great necessity for more classification here?—Yes; it has been strongly recommended to the Government by the Matron and the Visitors that there should be another class, and that the system should be changed in regard to classification.

10. *The Commissioner.*] Do you know now what is proposed to be done?—Yes.

11. *Mr. Russell.*] And in your opinion, will that meet the requirements of the situation?—It will depend upon the method of classification, in my opinion.

12. Assuming that the methods of classification suit you, you think the facilities will exist in the new building?—I do.

13. When you have been here, did the children seem to be happy?—Most certainly. I am in the habit of judging facial expressions to some extent, and I certainly think, from the appearance of their faces, the girls are very happy.

14. There has been nothing to suggest, as has been stated, that the girls are slaved to death and generally treated more as little convicts than as girls?—I think that is absurd.

15. Do you think, so far as you can see, that the relations between the staff and the Matron are all that could be desired?—Yes, so far as I can judge.

16. Are you satisfied as to Mrs. Branting's fitness to fill the position of Matron?—I think it would be very hard to get somebody else to fill the position as she does.

17. And you have exceptional opportunities for judging?—I think so.

18. And do you approve of her methods as a mixture of kindness and firmness?—Yes, generally.

19. Are you of opinion that the food given to the girls is sufficient in quantity and quality?—On one or two occasions when I have paid surprise visits the girls have been at meals, and the food seemed to me plain and wholesome.

20. Are you in favour of the present system of corporal punishment as applied indiscriminately to young and old girls?—Generally speaking, I should like to see corporal punishment dispensed with. It is a very difficult matter to decide. We are only experimenting with these institutions. I have studied the matter somewhat as it occurs in America and Germany and other places, and I find they are endeavouring to dispense with corporal punishment. There are some few instances where it is absolutely necessary, in my opinion, to use it, but if other means could be adopted I should prefer to see it abolished.

21. *The Commissioner.*] And, of course, especially so in respect to young women of twenty?—The only object in having the right to punish them at all, until you have other methods, is as a deterrent to others in the Home.

22. *Mr. Russell.*] You mean it would be no use to try and thrash a girl of nineteen or twenty into morality, but you think it is necessary to do so to deter others?—Yes.

23. *The Commissioner.*] Then you have to sacrifice principle for the sake of example?—Yes. But I think it is possible to devise other means.

24. *Mr. Russell.*] Have you considered this point: that many of these girls are very impudent, and think nothing of calling the staff "old hags" to their faces? What could you suggest should be done in such cases instead of punishment to prevent all the other girls of the school following that example?—The matter has been discussed by the Visitors with the Matron frequently to see what could be substituted, and we have found it a very difficult question indeed. We are now in hopes that classification will so instil self-respect and hope into the minds of the inmates that we will be able to dispense with it.

25. *The Commissioner.*] There will be no necessity, in fact, for that kind of punishment?—I hope not.

26. The inducements to behave will be greater?—Yes, I think so.

27. At any rate, any shortcomings in that direction are the fault of the system, and not of the individual?—Exactly.