

50. Will you be good enough now to deal as widely and fully as possible with the question of classification as an improvement upon the existing system, and with a view specially to reducing the necessity for corporal punishment?—The first thing in classification in a reformatory is a reception ward, where every girl, good, bad, or indifferent, diseased or clean, goes in for a certain time. The very best attendant that can be got—a woman judged for tactfulness, kindly ways, and real solid interest in the work of reforming girls—should be appointed to that ward under the Matron. This is to me the whole foundation of success. It should not be a little place, because a little place would not do. These diseased girls should be put into the ward here until they are cured of their disease, and before that, seeing they would have to show a course of good behaviour, this reception ward would have to be a place of some magnitude. A meeting of rescue-workers held in the Guildhall, London, brought forward the great good done in remand homes. We would not need separate homes, but one well-equipped home where the girls would be classified. The Matron and her attendant would say to a girl, “We know all your bad qualities; we want to see some of your good qualities; we want to help you to be a good girl.” When girls come into a strange home they are very amenable to that treatment if given in the proper way. You have all sorts of girls, and their departure from the reception ward should not be hurried. I would keep them three months, to find out something about them before I shifted them to another place. I would have a sleeping-room for the diseased girls, and keep their trouble a perfect secret. It would be a constant work, but it would be a splendid work for some woman really devoted to helping a girl to do what is right. Until that is done classification is quite haphazard. I would commence the reformation by extending the good points of a girl, because every one I extended would be another kick down for the bad points. Then I should have three classes after that. I think you will see that will simplify matters very much, because a girl going in need not be shifted in a month or six weeks to the third, or second, or first; in fact, before I put any girl into the third or lowest class, I should feel myself justified in giving her the benefit of the doubt by putting her in the second class, and if she would still misbehave herself, I would allow her to work into the lowest. The great thing of all is encouragement. I think this, to a great extent, would do away with the need of corporal punishment. When a girl comes in expecting to come to everything that is black and repellent, and finds kindly ladies taking an interest in her, and being to her what she never had before—a real true sympathetic friend—she is very amenable to good influences. The rest is a simple matter; but a large issue is involved in the question of the adult-juvenile criminal. The *Press* of the 11th February had an article on the subject, and the suggestions there put forward, in my opinion, are those that should be adopted in this Dominion. We want to keep our young people out of the gaols altogether, and to do that we must have a proper sized reformatory. The Government want to face the matter in a whole-hearted way, because the Government can have no better asset than a good reformatory system that keeps an influx from the gaols. I have seen plans of the proposed new buildings, but I have seen nothing of this reception ward, and, in my opinion, if the Government is only going to spend a certain amount of money, it would be far better to spend it on a receiving ward than on a punishment ward. In regard to the second class in connection with the present Te Oranga Home, I have seen girls that I thought would not be very long in getting shifted up, and I have seen these girls moved up. I think the Matron has shown discernment and good judgment in gauging the fitness of the girls for classification. But there are some girls there who need the very strictest of treatment. The present system of classification at the Home seems a very admirable one, and I think it has been worked admirably; but I would like to emphasize that the whole essence of classification in a reformatory is a commencement at the new end. I should like, in conclusion, to say a word for the staff. I see them at the Home, and I take tea with them every Sunday night, and I think the Home is very fortunate in having such a staff. I think they are good, honourable, straightforward women, and I do not believe salary is the whole thing they are working for. I believe they take a great interest in their work, and have a higher motive in doing so than merely the salary they get for it.

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MONDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1908.

ADA HARRISON further examined.

1. *Mr. Salter.*] Do you remember a conversation that took place some time ago with Mr. Walker in reference to Miss Howden's salary, and the deduction of the time of her illness from her holidays?—I do not remember anything being said about her salary.

2. Miss Howden said Mrs. Branting had said that the fortnight she was ill was to be deducted from her holidays at the end of the year, and that she asked Mr. Walker about it in your presence. Do you remember this?—Yes.

3. Do you remember how the conversation arose?—Mr. Walker and I went round to the porch to ask the Matron for a holiday for the girls after the examination. The Matron was not there, and Miss Howden came to the door. There was some talking and laughing about giving the girls the holiday, and then Miss Howden said, “I do not think it is very kind of you, Mr. Walker, to want my illness taken off my holidays at the end of the year.” Mr. Walker said he had never heard of it before, and that it did not come within his work, or words to that effect. There was nothing said about salary.

ELIZABETH HOWDEN further examined.

1. *Mr. Salter.*] With regard to the punishment register, I want you to tell the Commissioner what instructions you received in regard to entering punishments, and what was the practice all the time you were here?—Miss Hunt helped to initiate me into the work. The Matron said I must be particular about the punishments, and that I had to always take them out of the small