

17. You continued to make efforts to get her into service?—Yes; I mentioned the matter to Mrs. Bean several times, and I brought it before my Committee several times, and all agreed she should have a chance with the exception of Mrs. Branting.

18. What happened eventually?—I asked the Committee to see Mrs. Branting, to try and get justice done, and in due time the Chairman did see Mrs. Branting, and he gave a very unfavourable report to the Ladies' Committee. He said Mrs. Branting accused the girl of such terrible things that he certainly could not sanction her going into a house—at any rate, where there were young children. I think Mrs. Branting had no reason to speak like that, because I was sure she could not prove it. I let the matter drop for a little while, and brought it up over and over again, and Mr. Sorensen always brought up what Mrs. Branting had said. So at last I thought, even supposing she was as black as Mrs. Branting painted her, she merited a chance since she had been with us. She had then been with us a year. I asked the Committee to see Mrs. Branting; again and again she refused her permission to let A—— go to service. I then asked Mr. Sorensen if he would approach a higher power to get justice done, and he said No. He was not going to quarrel with outside people. I asked him if he would authorise me to do so, and he said "No, certainly not." I let the matter drop again, and then Mrs. Bean came along. They had taken an interest in A——, and wondered why such a nice girl should be kept with such a lot of old people like we have. I said it was a case I felt rather sore about. Mrs. Bean said she would give 12s. a week for her, on my recommendation. I informed Mrs. Bean of the position. I brought Mrs. Bean's offer before the Committee at their next meeting, and the Chairman said the Committee saw no reason to object to the girl going out in that case. So Mrs. Bean approached Mrs. Branting, who again repeated she was going to keep A—— within bolts and bars, and protect the country from the likes of her. Eventually Mrs. Bean got the consent of the Department for her to go to service, and word to that effect came down to Mrs. Bean and Mrs. Branting.

19. What happened then?—Mrs. Branting rang me up to say A—— was to have a chance, but on conditions, and when I inquired what were the conditions, she said that I should recommend A——, and be willing to accept the responsibility of her going to Mrs. Bean's. I said I would be only too pleased, and Mrs. Branting said I must put it in writing, and I did so right away, so as not to miss even one post. I posted it to Mrs. Branting. Mrs. Bean came in just then, and I told her what I had done, and Mrs. Bean said she wished I had sent it direct to Wellington, as that would perhaps have been more satisfactory. I said I did not like to do so, as I had said I would send it to Mrs. Branting. Mrs. Bean said she would write to Mrs. Branting, and ask her to send my recommendation at once to Wellington without any comment. I believe Mrs. Branting promised to do so. The girl in the meantime had commenced to pack, and was waiting for word to come every day to go to the situation. Word did not come, so in a week's time Mrs. Bean said she would wait no longer, and she sent a telegram to Wellington, and received a reply the same afternoon to say they were awaiting my report.

20. Your report had been sent to Mrs. Branting how long before?—Six days. Next, word came that instead of A—— going to a situation she was to be returned to Te Oranga Home. I rang up the Chairman to ask if I could do anything to prevent such a thing as sending her to the one place under the sun that her whole soul loathed. He said to send her back, and I said I could not do it.

21. The upshot of it was?—A—— was sent back to Te Oranga. She only remained there a fortnight, and has been in service ever since at Mrs. Bean's, earning 12s. a week, and doing well.

22. You have frequently seen her and Mrs. Bean, too?—Yes.

23. And the report is very favourable?—Yes.

24. *Mr. Russell.*] The girl was sent to the Samaritan Home at the request of Mrs. Branting?—Yes.

25. And you understood she was still under the jurisdiction of the Education Department?—Yes.

26. Then, when the lawful authorities from Te Oranga came to take her back, why did you take it upon yourself to refuse to give her to them?—Because she had been sent away twice to prevent her committing suicide and murder, and I was not going to compel her to go back again.

27. Why did you want to defy the law?—It was a choice between two evils, and I thought I would choose the least.

28. You knew you were committing a breach of the law?—Yes.

29. At that time Mrs. Bean had arranged with you to get this girl?—Yes.

30. So your action was to get this girl to service at Mrs. Bean's?—Not only to Mrs. Bean's. I was just as anxious A—— should go anywhere.

31. When Miss Hunt came, did you refuse to let the girl go?—I said to her, "You can come in and take A——, but I will not hold a finger up to make her go. If you can persuade her all well and good."

32. Did you not tell Miss Hunt you would not allow her to go to her destruction?—I flatly deny that.

33. How was it a policeman had to come and get the girl?—Because I said I would not use any force to make her go. I told Miss Hunt so.

34. Did you tell the girl "You are under the authority of the State, and this is your statutory guardian"?—I did not. A—— knew that quite well. She is a sensible girl. I did not converse with the girl more than I could help, because she was broken-hearted when she knew she had to go back again.

35. If Miss Hunt says you would not allow her to go, and used these words "I will not allow her to go to her destruction," there is no truth in that?—No. I said, "I will not be a party to it. I will not use any force." I certainly did not say I would not allow it, because I knew I had no authority to prevent it.