

trine or forms of faith, you know, unless you ask him or show him your mind is uneasy on that score. No! He just does all a mortal man can do for you, and evidently wishes he could do more. Then he jollies you and goes to church, and you feel you'd give one of your two useless legs if you could follow him. Whist! Here he comes.'

THE WALTHAM ORPHANAGE

THE COMMISSIONER'S INQUIRY

The adjourned inquiry into the charges concerning the management of the Waltham Orphanage was resumed on Friday before the Commissioner, Mr. Bishop, S.M.

Canon Coates spoke strongly in favor of the matron. His experience had been that the children all respected and liked her. However, he thought that the supplies for the orphanage were cut rather fine.

Emily Black, a member of the Charitable Aid Board, said that she had visited the orphanage many times. Everything seemed squalid and miserable, and the arrangements for bathing were very bad. The Board did not look kindly on suggestions for reforms from the women members who sat on it. Mrs. Carpenter was not fit to be matron, as she did not appreciate her responsibilities. She was a fairly efficient inspector, but no matron. Her conversation was coarse, and her reports often ill-advised. The homes in which the children were boarded out were not satisfactory. She believed the secretary dominated the Board more than should be the case.

Mrs. Marguerite Williamson, who had been a member of the Wanganui Charitable Aid and Hospital Board, gave evidence in support of the cottage home system for children.

Thomas C. Morris, secretary to the Charitable Aid Board for the past twenty years, stated that there had always been a great deal of trouble in connection with the orphanage. The master and matron had to be dismissed about 1890. Then the Board decided to adopt the boarding-out system, and advertisements were inserted in the papers calling for applications, and demanding full particulars concerning applicants and references to responsible people. About 170 applications were received, and about 40 children were sent out, so that a very good selection was made. As many as possible were sent into the country. Witness was personally strongly in favor of boarding-out as against institutionalism. Children were best in homes, but there was a great deal of misunderstanding on the part of the public in regard to boarding-out. It seemed to be taken for granted that all children boarded-out were under the care of the Charitable Aid Board. The people overlooked the fact that hundreds were boarded out by the Education Boards and by private people. After the Board adopted the system some local ladies very kindly undertook the work of inspection. They did splendid work for about four years, but then the practice dropped into disuse. Then the Board obtained reports from reputable people in the various localities. Two Government officers had inspected a number of the homes, and both spoke very favorably of them. Dealing with the visits of inspection made by the special committee previously referred to, witness read the report adopted, which found everything satisfactory on the whole, and recommended that payment be stopped in only one instance. Payment was stopped, but the woman refused to give up the children, as they had been placed with her by their various mothers. She still had the children, and apparently the police could do nothing. A little improvement was effected in one or two cases, and three children were taken away from homes. As to the amount paid for the boarded-out children, witness said he was rather at a disadvantage, as he was an officer of the Board, and insinuations and charges had been made, which he would have to meet as best he could. After the increase from 6s to 7s a week was decided on he did not receive any instructions from the Board, and, therefore, did not pay the increase. He did so as soon as he was instructed to do so. It was not to be wondered at that some of the householders keeping children should object to having their houses inspected by seven people driving about in two four-wheeled cabs. They did not object to any one person inspecting the house, but they did object to visiting in 'wholesale quantities.' The Government adopted the boarding-out system, and paid 6d a week less per child than did the Board. In dealing with the children it was found to be a sad fact that the majority were illegitimate. If the State would take over that branch it might be better for the children. A question to be considered was: Were such children to be treated better than those of the ratepayers?

In reply to the commissioner witness said that he considered the majority of such children came under the charge of the Board.

The commissioner expressed doubts as to that. From his own experience, he knew that an enormous number of children was adopted in Christchurch—nearly all illegitimate. They did not come under the charge of the Board.

The inquiry was adjourned at this stage until 10.30 on Monday.

The inquiry was resumed on Monday.

Mr. Norris, the secretary, said the cost of maintenance of the inmates was £2 4s 8d per month so far as pensioners were concerned.

The Commissioner commented on the inclusion of funeral expenses in this estimate. Such expenses could not be said to form part of the inmates' maintenance.

Mr. Norris said he did not know how else to charge them. With regard to children, he strongly favored the boarding-out system as against the cottage homes.

Mr. Norris, secretary to the Charitable Aid Board, continuing his evidence, said he asked the commissioner to consider whether it was at all likely that he 'dominated' the Board, as alleged by Mrs. Wells. During his connection with the Board he had had to deal with about a hundred people, and with very few exceptions indeed he had never had the least trouble with them. It was hardly credible that such men would allow him to influence their action and feelings. He believed the Board would know how to deal with him should he attempt to 'boss' them. Many of the members had taken a great interest in the work, and had frequently conferred with him. If other members had cared to, they could have obtained the same information, and probably there would not have been the necessity for so much of the commissioner's time to be taken up. He had told Mrs. Wells often that he should be delighted to give her any information he could. Mrs. Henderson used frequently to talk with him about matters concerning the work of the Board, and it was always a pleasure to exchange views. He denied that his system had been one of blockade, or negation, or that Mrs. Wells had been deliberately kept off the institution's committee. Fourteen months ago all three ladies wanted to be on the Charitable Committee, but the number was limited to seven. A ballot was taken to increase the number to eight, and if the members of Mr. Harper's 'little caucus' had not all done what they promised to do, Mrs. Wells would have been left off that committee. He could not say all he felt in regard to Mrs. Wells, as he had no wish to be disrespectful. They had never quarrelled, but it was unfortunate that at times Mrs. Wells had showed strong feelings. He was afraid it was against himself. It was a very delicate subject.

The Commissioner: Say what is in your mind, Mr. Norris. Get rid of it, and you will feel better.

Witness: Well, then, I am sorry to say so, but I am fairly and honestly convinced that Mrs. Wells has been actuated by a desire to get me out of my position. Continuing, he contended that when going through the accounts it was his duty to ask for particulars when discovering a big item, without intending to stint the orphanage. Mrs. Carpenter had a free hand to order what she considered necessary, and he had never had the slightest desire to stint the orphanage of supplies. Everything was done by the order of the committee, but it seemed to be assumed that he was continually doing things of his own accord. He did not think that the public generally had any idea of the amount of work that the Charitable Aid Board had to do. Some thought he had a bed of roses, but he had been a slave to the Board, and devoted the best years of his life to it. He could not help regarding the movement as a direct attempt to get him out of his position. Witness asserted most emphatically that there had been no deliberate attempt to keep Mrs. Wells off the institution's committee. He did not think any member cared a snap of the finger whether Mrs. Wells was on the committee or not. Personally, he should be very glad to see her on the committee. It was not a fact that meetings of the institution's committee frequently lapsed owing to the absence of the chairman (Mr. Dobson). The meetings were irregular, being called as occasion required. Witness would ask the chairman if it was advisable to call a meeting, and if Mr. Dobson instructed him he would convene a meeting. There was no systematic inspection of the orphanage. The matron had practically a free hand. In regard to the town houses, where children were boarded out, it was left to the discretion of the inspector as to when any report should be made. He thought 7s 6d a week was a fair charge for boarded-out children, seeing that the Government's regular payment was 7s.

The inquiry was then adjourned.

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