

COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO CHILD ABUSE
PUBLIC HEARING

HELD AT HERBERT PARK HOTEL
BALLSBRIDGE, DUBLIN 4

ON TUESDAY, 16TH MAY 2006 - DAY 218A

EVIDENCE OF SR. ANN-MARIE McQUAID

BEFORE:

MR. JUSTICE SEÁN RYAN
CHAIRPERSON OF THE INQUIRY

and

MS. MARIAN SHANLEY
MR. FRED LOWE

218A

I hereby certify the following to be a true and accurate transcript of my shorthand notes of the evidence in the above-named action.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION PRESENT:

REGISTRAR TO INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE: MR. B. REEDY

COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION: MR. N. MacMAHON SC
MS. L. RATTIGAN BL

Instructed by: MS. E. McHUGH

FOR THE SISTERS OF MERCY: MR. P. GAGEBY SC
MS. NI RAI FEARTAI GH BL

Instructed by:

MR. M. CONNAUGHTON SC

Instructed by: LAVELLE COLEMAN

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1 THE HEARING COMMENCED AS FOLLOWS ON TUESDAY, 16TH MAY
2 2006:

3
4 THE CHAIRPERSON: Good morning, Mr. MacMahon.

5 MS. RATTIGAN: Good morning, Chairman. 10: 30

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: Oh sorry, Ms. Rattigan.

7 MS. RATTIGAN: We are here today to hear
8 evidence in relation to
9 St. Joseph's industrial school in Dundalk. And I would
10 like to call Sr. Ann-Marie McQuaid. 10: 30

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, where is Sr. Ann-Marie
12 McQuaid. Good morning,
13 Sister. Come along and get your picture taken. I
14 gather you are happy with that.

15 A. I got it. 10: 30

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good. You will get it
17 together again, thank you
18 very much. Very good. Now, Ms. Rattigan.

19 MS. RATTIGAN: Chairman, perhaps the
20 witness could be sworn in 10: 31
21 first.

22 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good idea. Now,
23 Mr. Reedy.

24
25 SR. ANN-MARIE McQUAID, HAVING BEEN SWORN, WAS 10: 31
26 QUESTIONED, BY THE COMMISSION, AS FOLLOWS:

27
28 1 Q. MS. RATTIGAN: Good morning, Sister. I
29 would like to reintroduce

1 you to the investigation Committee, if I may. I
2 understand you are the Provincial Leader of the Sisters
3 of Mercy of the northern province; is that correct?

4 A. That's right.

5 2 Q. You are here today representing Sisters of Mercy in 10:32
6 respect of St. Joseph's Industrial School, Dundalk
7 which now comes within the ambit of the northern
8 province; is that correct?

9 A. That's correct, yes.

10 3 Q. I understand also you previously gave evidence to the 10:32
11 investigation Committee at a public session on 10th
12 January this year and you outlined at that public
13 hearing the source of information that you relied upon
14 and you also attended all the private hearings in
15 relation to Dundalk; is that correct? 10:32

16 A. Yes, that's correct.

17 4 Q. I think also that you yourself have no direct personal
18 knowledge of St. Joseph's industrial school Dundalk; is
19 that correct?

20 A. That's correct, yes. I was in a different diocese. 10:32

21 MS. RATTIGAN: I think you understand the
22 basis upon which you are
23 here today and that you are here to answer questions
24 that may arise out of issues concerning Phase I and
25 Phase II, and then I will pass you over to 10:32
26 Mr. Connaughton for some questions.

27

28 END OF QUESTIONING OF SR. McQUAID BY THE COMMISSION

29

1 SR. ANN-MARIE McQUAID WAS THEN EXAMINED, AS FOLLOWS, BY
2 MR. CONNAUGHTON:

3
4 5 Q. MR. CONNAUGHTON: Good morning to you
5 Sr. McQuaid. Mark 10: 33
6 Connaughton is my name and I'm instructed by Lavelle
7 Coleman solicitors and I don't appear here on behalf of
8 any individual complainants. But I would like to ask
9 you a small number of general questions and I
10 appreciate that your knowledge of this particular 10: 33
11 institution is derived from material rather than your
12 personal experience?

13 A. That's correct, yes.

14 6 Q. Nevertheless on behalf of the Congregation you are
15 presumably in a position to speak with some authority 10: 33
16 about what went on and what occurred?

17 A. Yes, to the best of my ability.

18 7 Q. Sure. The first question I wanted to ask you about or
19 the first matter I wanted to ask you about is this, one
20 forms an impression from reading the material about 10: 33
21 Dundalk that, apart from the very negative inspections
22 in 1944 and 1946, the people that were involved in
23 running Dundalk were attempting to be innovative,
24 attempting to do things well, but not in any real
25 structured way, I wondered whether you might like to 10: 34
26 comment about that? That's an observation I am making
27 for this moment, but it is one I would like you to
28 comment on?

29 A. I haven't actually looked at the structured way but I

1 certainly saw it was very innovative in lots of ways.
2 In the fact that from 1942 the children did go out to
3 the primary school in the parish and mix with the
4 children of the locality, they had a godparenting
5 system in place whereby every child had a godparent 10: 34
6 from a reputable family, who committed themselves to
7 remembering the child's birthday, Christmas and Easter
8 and they often took them on holidays. They had long
9 holidays in the summertime, about four weeks when they
10 went on mass to the holiday home, which had been built 10: 34
11 and was paid for actually by the people of Dundalk
12 themselves.

13
14 For example, I notice in the Inspection Reports, you
15 mentioned there were two negative ones but the rest, 10: 35
16 the other 33 we have were very positive and they talked
17 about in the 1960's and 1970's about the intimate
18 atmosphere and the warm atmosphere within the school
19 itself.

20 10: 35
21 I remember one of the quotes was that it was actually a
22 textbook example of a school in which the children came
23 before the buildings, because the building was not
24 great.

25 8 Q. Yes, I think that's... (INTERJECTION)? 10: 35

26 A. But the children were definitely cared for and had a
27 very innovative programme before the children left at
28 16, the girls left at 16.

29 9 Q. Very good. What I meant when I was putting to you that

1 it was unstructured was this: It appears to have come
2 from within that institution, rather than from a policy
3 driven approach on behalf or on the part of the Sisters
4 of Mercy. Now, I know I wasn't here yesterday, but I
5 know that obviously you will make the point that in 10: 35
6 terms of the organisation and structure of the Sisters
7 of Mercy there was a dramatic or a significant change
8 in that organisation in the relatively recent past?

9 A. Yes.

10 10 Q. Through the nationalisation, as it were, of the Order? 10: 36

11 A. Yes.

12 11 Q. Nevertheless the point I was going to put to you was
13 that what was done was done on an ad hoc basis within
14 that particular institution. I mean, you have
15 mentioned two things in particular that I wanted to 10: 36
16 refer to: One was the integration with local -- the
17 local convent primary school, the integration of the
18 children with the local convent primary school?

19 A. Yes.

20 12 Q. You would be aware no doubt from your general knowledge 10: 36
21 that that wasn't a situation that prevailed in other
22 Sisters of Mercy institutions, residential
23 institutions?

24 A. Well I wouldn't be au fait with all of them, because 10: 36
25 the Mercy Sisters ran quite a number of institutions
26 and I would only be familiar with a couple of them. I
27 think Dundalk too had an advantage of being on the side
28 of a street and it was certainly very limited in the
29 space it had, the old primary school. They had an

1 initial primary school, which was closed in 1942 and
2 demolished. That itself I would say was -- I wouldn't
3 be in a position to judge of it because I am really not
4 au fait with the others.

5 13 Q. Another aspect in this regard that I just draw to your 10: 37
6 attention and asked you to comment upon is that really
7 until the 1970's there was nothing structured in terms
8 of the staffing, it was really from the ranks, people
9 taken from the ranks in order to staff the institution?

10 A. What do you mean? 10: 37

11 14 Q. What I mean by that is that the Sisters who were
12 involved in running the institution, this particular
13 institution, that they wouldn't have received any
14 special or particular training in this regard, that
15 wasn't something that really was on the agenda or in 10: 37
16 the mindset until the 1970's; isn't that right?

17 A. In Ireland there were no training courses actually
18 until the 1970's in professional childcare. Is that
19 what you are saying?

20 15 Q. No, I appreciate that. No, I'm saying that there was 10: 38
21 no specific training provided to the people who worked,
22 the Sisters who worked, didn't receive any particular
23 or special training to work in these particular
24 institutions and obviously you can only speak by
25 reference to Dundalk? 10: 38

26 A. Right. And I would be familiar with the fact that vast
27 majority of the Sisters were either trained teachers
28 with experience, some of them with experience of
29 principalships and nurses. Those would be the

1 majority.

2 16 Q. Let me be more specific. You would agree with me, no
3 doubt, that with respect to education that while the
4 children were integrated, because of their particular
5 backgrounds, they didn't perform particularly well in 10: 38
6 the formal education setting?

7 A. Quite a number of them didn't, and I must say it is a
8 great regret to us and we would have said how sad we
9 are and sorry that a number of children, their
10 potential wasn't developed. We also are aware that 10: 39
11 some children were able to do better than others. Some
12 went to secondary school, eventually went on to
13 nursing. Some went into secretarial work and into
14 childcare and that. But there would have been and we
15 would acknowledge that there would have been children 10: 39
16 who didn't perform well.

17
18 I would say too that certainly in the 1940's and 1950's
19 and 1960's there wasn't an awareness of the educational
20 needs of children who had been traumatised by loss or 10: 39
21 by bereavement or by displacement, even in schools, and
22 schools had very big classes and there were no special
23 needs teachers like we have today. So sadly there was
24 children lost out.

25 17 Q. Yes. I suppose the specific point, and I think you 10: 39
26 have dealt with it, but the specific point that I was
27 putting to you in this regard was that in reality the
28 majority of the children would have ended up not going
29 any further than the very basic level of education, and

1 as a result would have ended up, the girls in
2 particular, substantially in domestic service and that
3 kind of employment?

4 A. Yes, the majority would have done primary school, basic
5 primary school, the primary school certificate and some 10: 40
6 would have gone on to do business studies, typing and
7 that. But what you are saying is quite a large
8 proportion did go into domestic service, either in
9 private home, residences or hotels or that.

10 18 Q. The other thing that struck me in relation to education 10: 40
11 in particular was the absence of any dialogue between
12 the Sisters of Mercy and the Department of Education in
13 relation to additional resources in this area. And I
14 wonder whether you would have any comment to make about
15 that? 10: 41

16 A. Do you mean they weren't asking for extra resources, is
17 that it?

18 19 Q. Well, I suppose those of us who have any knowledge of
19 the Department of Education would know that they
20 usually say no. But there doesn't even seem to have 10: 41
21 been an exchange between the parties as to additional
22 needs in this area and how they might be met or that
23 they couldn't be met? In other words, if you take the
24 point of the need for special needs teachers, I know
25 that's what they are called now, but the need for 10: 41
26 special education for these children, there doesn't
27 seem to have been any exchange as to how that might be
28 approached, even if the circumstances weren't there at
29 a particular point in time to make it available, so

1 maybe even it would be budgeted going forward, there is
2 a complete absence or dirth of information in this
3 regard?

4 A. I am wondering, I am not sure, I am wondering is that
5 because the educational needs of the children were 10: 42
6 dealt with in the primary school and the primary school
7 was the parish primary school, so their records and
8 their correspondence wouldn't be in the correspondence
9 of St. Joseph's.

10 20 Q. I would have to suggest to you that that wouldn't be 10: 42
11 so, because at the end of the day these were children
12 who were institutionalised and insofar as anybody was
13 standing in locus parentis in relation to these people
14 it would have been the administrators of the school. I
15 am obviously putting it to you so that you have an 10: 42
16 opportunity of commenting on it, that it is noteworthy
17 that there doesn't seem to have been any demand or
18 request for additional resources in this regard?

19 A. As I said, probably that would have come through the
20 primary schools. If this is any help, the Sisters from 10: 42
21 the primary school, who taught during the day in the
22 primary school, used to come in the evening and help
23 the children with their homework. Because, as you
24 said, it became very obvious, certainly in the 1960's,
25 that there were children who weren't able to keep up 10: 43
26 with the class. And the principal of the school, who
27 was a Sister, was able to form a kind of a rota among
28 the Sisters so that they would go in in the evening and
29 help those children who had difficulty with their

1 homework. So I suppose that's what they did, and I am
2 hoping that the primary school did look for resources.
3 21 Q. The other general point I want to put to you relates to
4 the numbers in the school, I appreciate -- I know it is
5 going back some time, I appreciate it, but when you 10: 43
6 gave your evidence on 10th January 2006 you gave the
7 Committee some assistance in that regard because you
8 referred -- it is only a very short passage, it is at
9 page 3, you just told the Commission that: "In the
10 1960's there were on average...", even before that you 10: 43
11 said:

12 "From the 1950's the numbers of
13 children enrolled in St. Joseph's
14 decreased significantly and was down to
15 45 by 1958. In the 1960's there were
16 an average 30 children in the school
and this was increased with the 10: 44
admission of boys in 65 but that a very
temporary increase."

17
18 You draw the attention to the Commission by 1976 the
19 number of residents was down to 26 and that was in
20 total that it dropped down. 10: 44

21
22 I just want you to reflect on this for a moment: In
23 the 1940's. I can't give you a precise year, but there
24 would have been approximately 100 in the institution.
25 I think there is a reference here that: 10: 44

26 "As the years went by extensions were
27 added to the school and by 1943 a
28 certificate for St. Joseph's was
increased to 100 places."
29

1 That doesn't necessarily mean there were 100 people
2 there?

3 A. No, actually there was 70 in the 1970's.

4 22 Q. So from 70 you have it dropping down to about 30. One
5 of the things I noted from the documentation is that 10: 45
6 there doesn't seem to have ever been a specific
7 consideration given to the optimum number of children
8 with respect to the care of the children and the number
9 of staff who would have been available to care for the
10 children and I wonder would you like to comment about 10: 45
11 that?

12 A. Yes, I would, because I was amazed when I did my
13 research and went through all the staffing that through
14 most of my period on review, which is about 1940 to
15 1983, there actually was a child/staff ratio of 1:9 10: 45
16 which amazed me because that was not the norm for the
17 time. Those were usually three Sisters and employed
18 staff and that wasn't counting the staff who came in,
19 Sisters who came in in the morning and the evening, so
20 it was amazing that it was that. 10: 45

21 23 Q. Very good. I didn't do that exercise but it leads me
22 back to the point I virtually started with, that this
23 doesn't seem to have been on the basis of any
24 structured approach to managing or organising
25 St. Joseph's, it was just the way things were done? 10: 46

26 A. I think it probably was an attitude, if you are talking
27 about the structure of the Sisters of Mercy there
28 wasn't a body of the Sisters of Mercy as such, it was
29 units within a town or a diocese, that was the total

1 unit. Dundalk was the total unit for Dundalk and it
2 didn't have any connections with any other communities.

3 I am not sure if -- is that what you are asking about?

4 24 Q. Well, it is, partially answers the question, it is a
5 matter for the Commission at the end of the day, but 10:46
6 what I am really putting to you is that there seemed to
7 be a lot of little things going on in St. Joseph's that
8 aren't replicated in other institutions which were also
9 run by the Sisters of Mercy and I appreciate you have
10 made the point that it was run on a pretty much an 10:47
11 independent fiefdom basis. But there doesn't seem to
12 have been any cross fertilisation or exchange of views
13 in this regard between the various different diocese or
14 whatever way it was structured at that time as to how
15 things were being run and how they might learn from 10:47
16 each other for example?

17 A. And I wouldn't be able to answer about that, but I
18 would think that when the Resident Managers'
19 Association was set up that there would be some cross
20 fertilisation of ideas because I noticed the two month 10:47
21 programme for girls before they left school, actually I
22 think originated from the Resident Managers. I have
23 memories of the Sisters saying that the Resident
24 Manager went to the meetings and she would come back
25 and make various changes. So how it worked the other 10:48
26 way I'm not sure.

27 25 Q. One of the final questions I just wanted to put to you
28 is that while you have dealt with the issue of corporal
29 punishment and in particular you referred to the issue

1 of the Punishment Book and indeed in the course of
2 presentations, there has been some discussion on this
3 specific subject. I think then at page 28 and 29 of
4 your -- I should say page 25 of the transcript, of my
5 printed copy, there is two paginations, but at the top 10: 48
6 of page -- it is question No. 66, and I will just read
7 you the passage, it is very, very short, it just says:

8
9 "Q. You state in the statement that the
10 Punishment Report Book covering the 10: 48
11 period from 1932 to 1950 is still in
12 existence. What happen to the Book
13 after 1950?

A. It doesn't seem to have been filled
in."

14 Then the question was asked -- well, does that mean
15 that it is there, but it is blank but I think that you 10: 49
16 couldn't find any record of it at all, isn't that
17 right?

18 A. Yes, we did have the Book, which we gave to the
19 Commission, but it was blank. And I must say I would
20 have had the question that is probably in your mind, 10: 49
21 why it was blank. I don't have an answer, except that
22 I am conscious that in the couple of other institutions
23 that I am aware of that had Punishment Books theirs
24 seem to have ended in the 1950's as well. And I must
25 say I found that puzzling because each time the 10: 49
26 Inspector came in for an inspection he or she signed
27 the Punishment Book, so I was just wondering what
28 happened that the Inspector didn't ask for the Book
29 between 1950 and 1983. I suppose part of me was

1 thinking did they say there was no need. I just don't
2 know. That was a puzzle to me as well. Because they
3 had been very conscientious, about it.

4 26 Q. Nevertheless, it was something that ought to have been
5 completed? 10: 50

6 A. It was part of the rules and regulations of the school.

7 MR. CONNAUGHTON: Very good. Thank you very
8 much indeed. Thank you,
9 Chairman.

10 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. Now, 10: 50
11 Ms. Rattigan.

12

13 END OF EXAMINATION OF SR. McQUAID BY MR. CONNAUGHTON

14

15 SR. ANN-MARIE McQUAID WAS QUESTIONED, AS FOLLOWS, BY 10: 50
16 THE COMMISSION:

17

18 27 Q. MS. RATTIGAN: Chairman, I just have one
19 brief area that I wish to
20 explore with Sr. McQuaid. It arises in relation to the 10: 50
21 care staff in Dundalk, you mentioned there earlier that
22 there was a child ratio of 1:9 in terms of staff, so
23 there was lot of lay staff employed in the school and
24 in particular we heard that there was girls from the
25 Munster Institute that were engaged each year. What 10: 50
26 vetting procedure were there for such girls or how were
27 they recruited, do you know?

28 A. I inquired where the staff came from and I was told
29 that it was from a number of institutes, like the

1 Munster Institute, Cathal Brugha Street, there was some
2 other courses run in Dublin which had one year training
3 courses for mainly home economics, that type of care.
4 And the Resident Manager would have talked to the
5 principal of the particular school or if there were 10: 51
6 other Congregations running training programmes at the
7 Resident Managers' meetings they would be asking "do
8 you know of any girl who would be suitable, good
9 character, could work with children?" And that's
10 really the way they got their staff. 10: 51

11
12 Most of the care staff and tutors came -- didn't come
13 from Dundalk actually, although they did have helpers
14 in as well. So that's all I was able to find.

15 28 Q. These care staff that were employed in Dundalk, do you 10: 51
16 know what level of supervision the nuns then exercised
17 over those staff?

18 A. Well, in the institution itself there would have been
19 three Sisters, two full time and one who would have
20 been in half day every day, a nurse. And it would have 10: 52
21 been the Resident Manager and the assistant manager who
22 would have supervision of the staff. I do know that
23 both the Resident Managers in the period that we are
24 dealing with laid down very strict rules about caring
25 for the children and about corporal punishment and they 10: 52
26 were forbidden to punish the children.

27
28 Now, that was the rule, sadly it wasn't always kept,
29 because I do know there was a member of staff in the

1 1950's who beat the children with a hairbrush and one
2 of the senior girls reported it to the Resident Manager
3 and the young woman was dismissed. And that was one of
4 the ones.

5
6 So I think in my statement I apologised to anybody who
7 suffered either because of unmerited or excessive
8 punishment, either from a Sister or from ones that we
9 didn't even notice. So that was the care, that was the
10 supervision. Is that okay? 10: 52

11 29 Q. Were there any written guidelines to that effect or is
12 this just information that you obtained through
13 speaking to other Sisters? 10: 53

14 A. I did get in the files a copy was kept of the rules and
15 regulations for the industrial school, so whether they 10: 53
16 were read to the staff or not I don't know, or just
17 verbally interpret. But I do know that was the rule,
18 that it so you have been the Resident Manager who did
19 the punishment. I do know that a Sister told me that
20 way back in the 1940's that she had seen a girl spit at 10: 53
21 one of the Sisters, one of the younger Sisters and she
22 slapped her and the Resident Manager had seen her and
23 had reprimanded her.

24
25 Now, saying that, that that was the norm, we would say 10: 54
26 that there wasn't an atmosphere of abuse, but the
27 length of period of time is so long and there were so
28 many children and a variety of staff it is realistic to
29 say that there would have been times when a child could

1 have been beaten more severely. And for that we would
2 be sad, very sad and apologise.

3 MS. RATTIGAN: I have no further
4 questions, Sister, thank
5 you. 10: 54

6 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good.

7

8 END OF FURTHER QUESTIONING OF SR. McQUAID BY THE
9 COMMISSION

10

10: 54

11 THE CHAIRPERSON: Now, Mr. Gageby.

12

13 SR. ANN-MARIE McQUAID WAS THEN EXAMINED, AS FOLLOWS, BY
14 MR. GAGEBY:

15

10: 54

16 30 Q. MR. GAGEBY: Sister, just one or two
17 matters, please. I wanted
18 to come back to the question of education. I think
19 firstly, as we all know, free secondary education
20 didn't come in until the mid-1960's; isn't that
21 correct? 10: 54

22 A. In 1963.

23 31 Q. I think obviously Dundalk closed more than 20 years
24 ago?

25 A. 1983, yes. 10: 55

26 32 Q. So looking at the 1940's, 1950's and early 1960's the
27 school was being run under the rules established by the
28 Department; isn't that correct?

29 A. Yes.

1 33 Q. And we know all about the material, that a child could
2 only go to secondary school while in the institution
3 with the consent of the Minister and without charge to
4 the people of Ireland?

5 A. Yes.

10:55

6 34 Q. In fact, it appears that a number of children prior to
7 free primary education -- free secondary, were in fact
8 offered places from Dundalk. I want to put up on the
9 monitor a document which came to us from the Department
10 of Education. I am sorry it is not in the pack for
11 everybody else, it came to me about ten minutes ago,
12 its citation is DGB0126/003/1. This is a document
13 which we believe was in circulation in the Department
14 of Education prior to the conference in Carysfort in
15 1953 and which the Committee has seen some bits and
16 pieces.

10:55

10:56

17
18 This is a document of a number of pages, it
19 is "Provision of Secretary Or Vocational Training for
20 Children in Industrial Schools". It goes by schools
21 and it is referring to -- we think the document is
22 dated 1953 and it is referring to what has happened in
23 the preceding year. There is a number of schools which
24 are cited on the left and it then moves across the
25 right. We are moving on to page 3, and if we could
26 just explore slightly.

10:56

10:57

27
28 We are looking at Dundalk, which appears No. 2. And
29 the query under the second comment is:

1 "Number of children offered post
2 primary education 1951/52."

3 There is a squiggle.

4 "No. Of children to be offered post
5 primary education in 1952/53."

10: 57

6 So it is between the two school year or over the two
7 school years. The remark is:

8 "Secondary school attached to this
9 convent, two girls attended in year
10 1950 to 51 and were offered the choice
11 of entering a course of secondary
12 education but preferred to be
13 discharge".

10: 57

12 Firstly, I am just trying to make sense of that.

13 Firstly, a child would obviously be offered the
14 secondary education a lot earlier than 15 or something
15 like that, it would be about 6th class; isn't that
16 right?

10: 58

17 A. 6th class.

18 35 Q. Obviously children were discharged at age 16, so the
19 offer wasn't obviously being made at the age of 15 or
20 whatever. Would that be your understanding just
21 looking at that document?

10: 58

22 A. Yes.

23 36 Q. It would seem that in Dundalk two girls attended in
24 1950/51 and were offered a chance but declined; isn't
25 that right?

10: 58

26 A. Yes.

27 37 Q. And that would seem to be to do the Leaving, would that
28 be right, isn't that the way of reading it?

29 A. Yeah, I think they had been offered the course in

1 secondary school towards the Leaving, yes.

2 38 Q. Because secondary school attended in this convent:

3 "Two girls attend in year 1950/51 and
4 were offered a chance to continue a
5 course of secondary".

10: 59

6 So that would seem that they were already there and the
7 possibility, the option, being there to go to Leaving.
8 That's one way of reading it. So that must have been
9 funded in some way which wasn't from the Department of
10 Education?

10: 59

11 A. Before free education came in I noticed in the account
12 books a couple of girls who were at St. Joseph's in
13 1960's, now I didn't go back that far, and the fees
14 were being paid by the convent.

15 39 Q. I see. Could we just put this in context therefore,
16 where there is one or two firstly, in... (INTERJECTION)?

10: 59

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: Sorry, Mr. Gageby, just
18 tell us about this document
19 again.

20 MR. GAGEBY: This document is from the
21 Department of Education
22 discovery, it appears to have been a document that was
23 circulating, it relates to Mercy and non-Mercy
24 institutions, we believe prior to or for the
25 conference.

11: 00

11: 00

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: It is related to the
27 conference in 1953.

28 MR. GAGEBY: It seems to be, yes, it
29 seems to be. I am sorry it

1 only came to me ten minutes ago.

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: Don't apologise.

3 40 Q. MR. GAGEBY: But that seems to be the
4 context, it is looking at
5 the previous two years and what has happened about 11:00
6 secondary education.

7

8 (To the witness) I want to get the context. Firstly,
9 how many girls were in Dundalk in 1951/52, 1952/53?

10 A. 1951 there were 73; 1952 there was 68; and in 1953 11:00
11 there was 59.

12 THE CHAIRPERSON: What do you make of this,
13 Mr. Gageby, where it says:
14 "Number of children to be afforded post
15 primary education." 11:01
16

17 "Afforded" not offered, not provided by the nuns or
18 whatever it is?

19 MR. GAGEBY: I don't know,
20 because... (INTERJECTION). 11:01

21 THE CHAIRPERSON: Maybe it is the language of
22 the time.

23 MR. GAGEBY: I think it is because it is
24 speaking of the previous
25 year or the year before. 11:01

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: The number of who were
27 afforded it 1951/52 and the
28 number to be afforded it.

29 MR. GAGEBY: It is obviously post

1 1951/52, if you understand
2 me.
3 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.
4 41 Q. MR. GAGEBY: Can I just come back to
5 this: On the numbers 11:01
6 system that you have just given us there of girls
7 between about 70 and 50 over those years; am I right?
8 A. Yes.
9 42 Q. Is it possible to do a breakdown as to how many of
10 those would have been on the cusp, in other words, 11:01
11 around 6th class and that sort of time? Is it possible
12 to give any idea?
13 A. It is, but I wouldn't be able to do it for you now.
14 43 Q. All right. Could I ask just to try and do a very rough
15 idea. Supposing in 1952 there were -- we were asking 11:02
16 you to look at Dundalk, for instance, how many children
17 at that stage would have been from the institution
18 roughly of the age of 12 or 13, just thinking, I mean
19 it is unlikely to be all of them, it is unlikely to be
20 none of them, it has got to be a certain percentage on 11:02
21 the spread, of the 68?
22 A. Maybe 20, would it? I don't honestly know.
23 MR. GAGEBY: All right, no.
24 Sr. Ann-Marie, is there
25 anything else you would like to add? 11:02
26 A. No, that's grand.
27 MR. GAGEBY: Thank you very much.
28
29 END OF EXAMINATION OF SR. McQUAID BY MR. GAGEBY

1 THE CHAIRPERSON: Mr. Lowe, would you like to
2 ask any questions?

3

4 SR. ANN-MARIE McQUAID WAS FURTHER QUESTIONED, AS
5 FOLLOWS, BY THE COMMISSION:

11:03

6

7

8 44 Q. MR. LOWE: Good morning. Going
9 through the medical
10 inspector's reports, bear with me while I take you
11 through a few years of them:

11:03

12

13 "1948, I'm hoping to get a recreation
14 hall.

14

15 1950, no recreation hall, one is to be
provided.

11:03

16

17 1951, recreation hall is under
discussion. It appears a room in the
old school may be given for this
purpose.

18

19 1951." Later in that year.
"Recreation hall still under
discussion.

20

21 1952 no recreation hall yet, under
discussion.

11:03

21

22 1953 no recreation hall yet."

23

24 1954 ditto.

25

11:03

26 "1956 children play in field attached
27 to the primary school as they have no
accommodation for themselves of their
own.

28

29 1959 things will improve in recreation
hall in time, it requires a little
initiative to get things going."

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Remember that's 11 years after it was first noted.

"1958. They have a field to play in but none in the premises."

11:04

Finally in April 1960:

"New recreation hall, an old school room has been provided."

I nearly cheered when I saw that. Why does it take 12 years to provide a basic facility deemed necessary in 1948?

11:04

A. All I can offer is that, first of all, it was a fairly limited building and a fairly limited site, the building actually was a string of houses which had been built and connected together. They had a small yard at the back with a shelter for the children with a roof and three sides and a hot pipe that ran through it and connected to the laundry, that was as much as they were able to do. On wet days, they were in the school.

11:04

11:05

When the old school -- in 1954, they moved to a new site, part of that building was taken over, and I am surprised it was 1960, I thought it was actually before that, that they had moved in to take over. The other thing that happened in the 1960's and 1970's they revamped the whole building and moved the dining room downstairs up to the next floor and it transformed the long dining room into a recreation hall. But it certainly all along the line the building was of great

11:05

1 difficulty and it was restrictive in adaptability and
2 improvements. And I would acknowledge that. I do
3 know that some -- a quite a number of the former
4 residents would have memories of playing outside and
5 feeling cold and huddling in that shelter. 11:06

6 45 Q. MR. LOWE: And it suggests the
7 priorities were for basic
8 facilities and that playing and recreational facilities
9 were not seen as a high priority for the children?

10 A. I would say you are right in that the priority was 11:06
11 basic, like good accommodation for them for the
12 dormitories or cubicles and improving the building
13 inside. Because I do know there was a Reverend Mother
14 in the 1950's who was very farseeing but she had to
15 borrow over 20,000 from a community in the another 11:06
16 county to be able to do that adaptation because there
17 was no funding.

18
19 I do know that in the 1950's, the Inspection Reports
20 would have said how much the building needed painting. 11:07
21 The Sisters used to run bazaars and they actually
22 collected door to door in Dundalk and in Dublin to fund
23 those kind of adaptations. I was told they could
24 afford the paint but they couldn't afford the painter.
25 So four of the Sisters, including the Reverend Mother 11:07
26 and the Resident Manager, two Sisters from the school
27 and the caretaker of the convent, painted the building
28 basement to top floor at night-time. From the memory
29 of the children, it was a former resident told me that

1 at night-time they used to creep out of the bed to see
2 the nuns without their veils when they were painting.
3 But they did it from top to bottom. So you are right,
4 they concentrated on the inner part of the building
5 first.

11:07

6 46 Q. MR. LOWE: The report certainly
7 states:

8 "Well run school, with caring people in
9 charge of it."

10 A. Yes.

11:07

11 47 Q. MR. LOWE: It is complimentary on
12 those things?

13 A. Yes.

14 48 Q. MR. LOWE: It is only the fact that
15 play in comfortable

11:08

16 circumstances didn't seem to be prioritised, that
17 disturbs me?

18 A. Yes, I suppose it is true in our hindsight and we know
19 the importance of play in the role of the development
20 of the child, when the main building was developed, I
21 was glad to know that they adapted that whole bottom
22 area for child play. I do know that they did a lot of
23 work on the nursery, even to the simple things of
24 motifs on the wall and a lot of play toys that would
25 help children learn motor skills and give them
26 enjoyment as well. The children did go out a lot too,
27 they walked a lot, they went out on walks and they
28 would have been invited out to homes and to
29 performances and that. But it is true, the

11:08

11:08

1 Congregation. . . (INTERJECTION)

2 49 Q. MR. LOWE: Would you agree also it
3 illustrates how difficult
4 it is to change things in an institution?

5 A. Yes, yes. It is slow. Especially if money is an 11:09
6 issue.

7 MR. LOWE: Thank you.

8 50 Q. MS. SHANLEY: Can I just ask one question
9 arising out of that. I may
10 be wrong, but from reading the documents in relation to 11:09
11 Dundalk, I think it is the only reference we have to
12 active fundraising by the Sisters, certainly if there
13 is another I would be reminded of it, but certainly it
14 is the only reference I can recall seeing. Why was
15 that, fundraising was something which was very often 11:09
16 associated with childcare and provision of childcare,
17 certainly in other countries as well? Was there any
18 difficulty with the nuns fundraising and why did they
19 do it in Dundalk and not do it elsewhere? Or did they
20 do it elsewhere and we just don't have a record of it? 11:09

21 A. My understanding, and I could be wrong, but I would
22 have heard that fundraising was core to many of the
23 Mercy institutions.

24 51 Q. MS. SHANLEY: Yes. I don't see any
25 reference to it in any of 11:10
26 the documents, except, as I say, your document refers
27 to it?

28 A. I must say I noted it because I was most surprised at
29 the Sisters going around the houses, because I

1 associated that with other Congregations. I remember
2 saying I wouldn't have had the humility to go around
3 houses asking for money, I would have organised bazaars
4 and that but I thought it took tremendous effort. Also
5 the people of Dundalk were extremely supportive and 11:10
6 generous.

7 52 Q. MS. SHANLEY: Yes, that's another
8 impression I get.

9 A. Yes, very much so. And a lot of organisations provided
10 treats for the children and there would have been very 11:10
11 generous benefactors as well. At the same time, right
12 from the start the Sisters never seemed to have enough
13 money. When they went to buy the extra house in the
14 1880's, they actually mortgaged the convent to the
15 grand jury of Dundalk to raise a loan of 10,000 which 11:11
16 they would pay back £100 a year. I mentioned about the
17 20,000 they borrow from a neighbouring county as well.

18 53 Q. MS. SHANLEY: But it is your
19 understanding that
20 fundraising was a very central and core operation of 11:11
21 all the Sisters?

22 A. Yes.

23 54 Q. MS. SHANLEY: Of the Order generally?

24 A. Yes, that's my understanding.

25 MS. SHANLEY: Okay. Thank you for that. 11:11

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good.

27
28 END OF FURTHER QUESTIONING OF SR. McQUAID BY THE
29 COMMISSION

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MR. GAGEBY: Could I just come back on one matter, please, on the money issue.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, certainly. 11:11

SR. ANN-MARIE McQUAID WAS RE-EXAMINED, AS FOLLOWS, BY MR. GAGEBY:

55 Q. MR. GAGEBY: Mr. Lowe was asking you, Sr. Ann-Marie, about the difficulties and why it took so long to get this particular aspect of the playroom and play area dealt with. Just correct me if I am wrong in this: There was the capitation system, which obviously was pro rata for each child and varied and went up in the years? 11:11

THE CHAIRPERSON: It was the same for each child.

56 Q. MR. GAGEBY: Yes, but it went up. Yes, indeed. 11:12

(To the witness) There were at some stages building grants from the Department and at some stages there were not; isn't that correct?

A. They were building grants at one stage in the middle of the 1940's and they were discontinued about, I think it is, 1948. 11:12

57 Q. January 1948?

A. And by that stage I think Dundalk had just got about

1 700 and something.

2 58 Q. 171 in pounds?

3 A. In grants. I know that when the inspectors came to the
4 school in 1971 and saw all the renovations that had
5 been done to the school and discovered the £20,000 that 11:12
6 had already been paid, I got the sense that he
7 encouraged the Sisters to apply to request extra money.
8 I notice that had following year they got a grant of
9 3,000 towards their 20,000 plus expenditure.

10 MR. GAGEBY: Thank you very much. 11:13

11

12 END OF RE-EXAMINATION OF SR. McQUAID BY MR. GAGEBY

13

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good, thank you very
15 much, Sister. Thank you. 11:13

16 Are we going straight on, or do people want a break?

17 MR. MacMAHON: Perhaps a short break to
18 allow documents be arranged
19 on the table. I wouldn't anticipate a long break would
20 be required. 11:13

21 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good. Then we will do
22 Clifden, isn't that right?

23 MR. MacMAHON: Yes.

24 THE CHAIRPERSON: Very good.

25

11:13

26

27 THE HEARING THEN CONCLUDED AT 11:13 A.M.

28

29