

COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO CHILD ABUSE
PUBLIC HEARING

HELD AT HERBERT PARK HOTEL
BALLSBRIDGE, DUBLIN 4

ON MONDAY, 15TH MAY 2006 - DAY 217A

EVIDENCE OF SR. MARGARET CASEY

BEFORE:

MR. JUSTICE SEÁN RYAN
CHAIRPERSON OF THE INQUIRY

and

MS. MARIAN SHANLEY
MR. FRED LOWE

217A

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. U. NI RAI FEARTAI GH BL

Instructed by:

FOR THE COMPLAINANTS: MR. D. McGRATH SC

Instructed by: MR. D. HANAHOE
MICHAEL E. HANAHOE

FOR THE COMPLAINANTS: MR. D. McGUI NNESS SC

Instructed by: MS. G. KEEHAN
HUSSEY & BATES

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1 THE HEARING COMMENCED AS FOLLOWS ON MONDAY, 15TH MAY
2 2006

3
4
5 THE CHAIRPERSON: Good morning, everybody. 10: 29

6 MR. MacMAHON: Good morning, Chairman.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: Just a second,
8 Mr. MacMahon. Yes,

9 Mr. MacMahon, we are starting with?

10 MR. MacMAHON: This morning the Committee 10: 30

11 is again hearing the
12 evidence of Sr. Margaret Casey on behalf of the Sisters
13 of Mercy in relation to their school, Our Lady of
14 Succour, Newtownforbes. If I may call Sr. Margaret
15 Casey. 10: 30

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: If Sr. Casey just stays
17 where she is and we can get
18 the filming out of the way. Just stay where you are,
19 Sr. Casey. If you want to get your pictures taken.
20 The easy way is to come and have your picture taken and 10: 30
21 then we get it over with, Sr. Margaret. Thank you very
22 much.

23
24 SR. MARGARET CASEY WAS QUESTIONED, AS FOLLOWS, BY THE
25 COMMISSION: 10: 31

26
27 1 Q. MR. MacMAHON: Chairman, I will just very
28 briefly introduce Sr.
29 Margaret Casey.

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(To the witness) I think, Sister, you are the Provincial of the western province for the Sisters of Mercy and you were elected for a six-year term commencing in 2001. I think.

10: 31

A. That's correct.

2 Q. I think you yourself are a native of Newtownforbes, you were educated by the Sisters of Mercy, you attended the primary school there from 1954 to 1962 and the secondary school from 1962 to 1967?

10: 31

A. That's correct.

3 Q. I think you entered religious life with the Sisters of Mercy in 1967 and you were finally professed within the Congregation in 1975 and I think you were based in the convent in Newtownforbes until 1985?

10: 32

A. Yes, that is true.

4 Q. I think at that stage you were transferred to Lanesborough, Co. Longford?

A. Correct.

5 Q. The industrial school, of course, closed in 1969?

10: 32

A. Yes.

6 Q. I think you prepared an opening statement on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy and you gave evidence on their behalf in relation to Newtownforbes to the Investigation Committee of the Commission on 11 Jan 2005?

10: 32

A. Yes.

7 Q. I think at the beginning of that evidence you set out the source of the information which you had and relied

1 on for the purpose of your evidence to the Committee?

2 A. I did, yes.

3 8 Q. I think that in addition to that information you have
4 since that time also attended the private hearings of
5 the Commission relating to Newtownforbes? 10: 32

6 A. The Newtownforbes module, that's true.

7 9 Q. I think you understand that you are here today to deal
8 with questions which may arise. Mr. McGrath, I think,
9 has some questions to ask you and perhaps also your own
10 counsel Mr. Gageby may have some questions and at a 10: 33
11 later stage I may have some questions for you also?

12 A. Yes, thank you.

13 10 Q. Can I just ask you before I pass over to Mr. McGrath in
14 relation to and on the closure of the industrial school
15 in 1969, what happened to the industrial school and to 10: 33
16 the lands around it at that point in time?

17 A. Well, the children that were in the industrial school
18 were transferred to Moate, to the group homes in Moate.

19 11 Q. There were how many children at that stage?

20 A. Five in 1969. The industrial school buildings, quite a 10: 33
21 lot of the rooms had been taken over by the secondary
22 school at that time, so any further rooms were subsumed
23 by the secondary school from 1969 on until the
24 secondary school closed. In fact, those buildings,
25 before the secondary school closed in 1989 some of 10: 34
26 those buildings actually were knocked, the original
27 industrial school buildings, because they were unsafe.
28 The land around it, when they rebuilt the secondary
29 school it wasn't a permanent structure, it was to last

1 us for the ten, twenty years and that's what happened.
2 At the moment it is a disused building, which a
3 developer has -- is trying to acquire at the moment,
4 he's looking for planning permission on it.

5 12 Q. Trying to acquire from, from the Sisters of Mercy? 10: 34

6 A. Yes, he offered to buy the site of the school from us,
7 and there was planning objections so it is at that
8 stage at the moment, it is not complete. Some of the
9 laundry buildings, and the cloisters -- the cloisters
10 are still there, but the laundry buildings and the 10: 35
11 original convent buildings are now apartments.

12 13 Q. Yes. Having already been disposed of and developed by
13 private developers?

14 A. By private developers, yes.

15 MR. MacMAHON: Thank you very much. I 10: 35
16 think Mr. McGrath has some
17 questions that he wishes to have dealt with.

18

19 END OF QUESTIONING OF SR. MARGARET CASEY BY THE
20 COMMISSION 10: 35

21

22

23 SR. MARGARET CASEY WAS THEN EXAMINED, AS FOLLOWS, BY

24 MR. McGRATH

25 10: 35

26 14 Q. MR. McGRATH: David McGrath, senior
27 counsel, I am instructed by
28 Michael E Hanahoe solicitors and they represent two of
29 the five complainants who went to the Commission and I

1 have a number of questions to ask you, covering a broad
2 range of issues that arise out of the running of
3 Newtownforbes. I just want to just indicate two
4 things. First of all, to start with, the two people
5 who gave evidence before the Commission that I 10: 35
6 represent both went in in the 1940's. The first one
7 went in 1944 and it would appear she was about four
8 years of age or around that at the time she went in.
9 The second complainant went in in 1946 and it would
10 appear that she was one at that time and that she 10: 36
11 actually left Newtownforbes when she was about nine,
12 she didn't stay for a period, she went back to her
13 mother at that particular stage. There are a number of
14 matters that will arise out of that.

15 10: 36
16 It would appear that both of the people who gave
17 evidence that I represent here would both have gone in
18 a period when there were problems, or there had been
19 indicated problems in the 1940's in terms of the
20 running of the school, I think that was significantly 10: 36
21 discussed on the last occasion in terms of problems
22 that arose.

23 A. That's right.

24 15 Q. Now, in that regard there was a letter, as I
25 understand, in 1944, which would indicate from medical 10: 36
26 inspections that there were problems that needed to be
27 dealt with, those included that the premises was
28 unsatisfactory, the accommodation whilst it was good
29 there were other problems as well in terms of the

1 health of the children and the manner in which they
2 were being cared for and those were matters which had
3 to be seen and as the reports go along it would seem to
4 indicate that there were improvements made and then
5 there were some things went backwards and that 10: 37
6 certainly there seems to have been a period when
7 schools certainly had difficulties as far as the
8 running is concerned. Would you accept that?

9 A. I accept that, yes.

10 16 Q. One of the matters which arose at the last public 10: 37
11 hearing when you were being asked questions by
12 Mr. Murphy, who was the counsel upon behalf of the
13 Order on that particular occasion, he went through
14 quite a number of the reports from the medical advisor
15 and pointed out as how good and regular those reports 10: 37
16 were. There is one thing that does arise and I want to
17 ask you in relation to the reports and it is not in
18 fact the medical reports I want to -- it is the actual
19 inspection reports from the Department itself. Just
20 give me a moment, Chairman, and I will give you the 10: 38
21 reference in respect of those reports.

22
23 These reports are contained in a booklet that was
24 furnished to me a headed "Documents furnished by the
25 Sisters of Mercy and documents furnished by the Bishop 10: 38
26 of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. The numbers on the
27 documents which seem to be NTF SOM0074-002. The actual
28 documents cover a number of different years but they
29 all seem to have the same number. If I can

1 reading, it is handwritten
2 and I will do my best to get through.

3 THE CHAIRPERSON: What we want was that
4 people would indicate in
5 advance what documents they were relying on, we didn't 10:40
6 hold them to that absolutely. The difficulty is if you
7 haven't done that it makes it more difficult for the
8 witness to deal with possibly a large bulk. It is not
9 a criticism of anybody.

10 MR. McGRATH: With respect, I did have a 10:40
11 conversation with your
12 solicitor on last Thursday or Friday and I indicated
13 the documents that I was relying on in relation to
14 Newtownforbes.

15 MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: I'm not suggesting that 10:40
16 they weren't supplied,
17 Mr. Chairman, I think it is just that they have been
18 given to us in a different form, they are not in folder
19 that my friend is referring to.

20 THE CHAIRPERSON: It is not a criticism, it 10:40
21 is just a fact. Thank you
22 very much. Now, Sister, have you got that document in
23 front of you?

24 A. I have.

25 THE CHAIRPERSON: Which bit of it do you want 10:40
26 to refer to, Mr. McGrath?

27 18 Q. MR. McGRATH: First of all, if you go
28 into the booklet you will
29 see from An Roinn Oideachais Agus Eolaíochta. They are

1 in relation to the inspection in each year, I want to
2 go to -- say, if you start at page 30, I think it is
3 marked 34 in the booklet. Now, there is a number of
4 34s in my booklet, so to some extent it is not terribly
5 helpful. But the year I'm looking for is 1948, if you 10: 41
6 want to start at 1948.

7 A. Yes.

8 19 Q. If you go to the page on which there is what appears to
9 be headed paragraph 6, "conduct of pupils". Okay?

10 A. Yes, I have that. 10: 42

11 20 Q. Conduct of pupils is divided into:

12 "A - behaviour generally and B - method
13 used to training character, e.g. marks,
14 rewards, privileges, deprivations, etc.
C - nature of punishments for
misconduct."

15 10: 42
16 Conduct of pupils is headed in 1948 says as follows, it
17 is in handwritten writing, I will read it as best I
18 can:

19 "Very good, a very happy homely spirit
20 prevails between nuns and pupils." 10: 42

21 Under B it says:

22 "An upright honourable character
23 inculcated truth encouraged. No matter
24 what wrong may be done when it is
25 acknowledged no punishment or
26 reprimands is ever given but" something
27 advice "given in a motherly way always.
28 For correction and advice given
motherly way and always. Major
punishment for misconduct 1 - brought
before the Superior and their good name
gone. 2 - at a separate table in
dining hall junior children receive a
light slap or a caution."

29 Okay, that's 1948?

1 A. Yes.

2 21 Q. We will move on to 1949, a couple of pages later:

3 "Conduct of pupils, behaviour
4 generally, very good a happy homely
5 spirit prevails in the institution,
6 teachers and pupils.

7 B - an upright honourable character
8 inculcated truth encouraged no matter
9 what the fault is if acknowledged no
punishment is given but correction and
advice", something, "always in a kindly
manner.

10 Nature of punishment: "

11 It is impossible to read. Juniors something and then
12 it gets something something for meals, which is
13 suggested that they are put at a --

14 A. A separate table.

15 22 Q. -- separate table for meals. Can you move on then to
16 the next report just says?

17 "Conduct of pupils very good. "

18 And all the various headings are then empty. 1951,
19 absolutely nothing on the pages whatsoever. 1952:

20 "Six pupils, A behaviour general. Very
21 good. A happy homely spirit prevails
22 between teachers and pupils always. An
23 open upright honourable character
24 inculcated, truth encouraged no matter
what the form. If acknowledged no
punishment is given but always
correction and advice given in a kindly
manner.

25 Juniors receive a slight slap or a
26 caution, separate table in dining hall
for meals."

27

28 If you move on to 1954, again we have:

29 "Very good, happy homely spirit

1 prevails between teachers and pupils
2 always. An open upright honourable
3 character inculcated truth encouraged
4 no matter what the fault is, if
5 acknowledged no punishment is given but
6 always correction and advice in a
7 kindly manner.

8 Junior receives a slight slap or a
9 caution, separated at meals in dining
10 hall for meals".

10: 45

11
12 Now, if we go as far as 1958 we again have:

13 "Behaviour; generally very good. An
14 upright honourable character
15 inculcated. Truth encourage. "

10: 45

16 Then I can't read it.

17 "Juniors, a light slap or caution,
18 separated for meals in dining room. "

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10: 45

In fact, you would almost think that the person who is writing the report didn't turn up at the school he just took out the previous years report and filled it in, wouldn't you?

THE CHAIRPERSON: Mr. McGrath, sorry, can I

10: 45

21 just clarify one thing. My
22 understanding is that these aren't the Department
23 Inspector's report, these are what were submitted to
24 the court by the Resident Manager. Which in a way even
25 emphasises the point you are making. But just
26 technically my understanding is that it is not the
27 Department coming down and writing this, this is what
28 is submitted annually to the Department by the Resident
29 Manager.

10: 45

- 1 23 Q. MR. McGRATH: Well, in terms of that, to
2 all intents and purposes
3 the same thing is written year after year after year.
4 The description there of the method used to train
5 (inaudible) and the nature of punishments for 10: 46
6 misconduct, whilst there seems to be some agreement on
7 the separate meals on the table, I have to suggest to
8 you that certainly the evidence that was given would
9 suggest that in fact punishments were somewhat more
10 severe than a minor slap? 10: 46
- 11 A. Well, I can only just accept what is on the record
12 there as having been sent back by the Resident Manager
13 to the Department.
- 14 24 Q. Okay. Now, in relation to that, I just want to start
15 with one thing. On the last occasion one of the 10: 46
16 matters that did arise was the question of bedwetting
17 and I think that you did deal with that to some extent
18 on the previous occasion. Can I just ask you a number
19 of matters arising out of that. Now, it would appear
20 that in keeping with many of the institutions that this 10: 47
21 particular Commission is dealing with, bedwetting was
22 an issue whereby there were various methods used to try
23 and stamp it out, one of them seems to have been that
24 children were punished for it and this particular
25 institution seems to be no different in that regard? 10: 47
- 26 A. Yes, there were different things use. One Sister said
27 she would tried reward and punishment by giving them
28 little ribbons or medals just as an encouragement,
29 other Sisters would have spoken of not giving drinks

1 after a certain time, of older girls getting up during
2 the night with the smaller children. They also
3 acknowledged that not below age eight, but girls over
4 eight would have been slapped for bedwetting and I
5 acknowledged that in my opening statement. And also 10: 48
6 the fact that the Sisters regretted that they punished
7 and used slapping for bedwetting, because there was
8 just a lack of understanding of the whole problem of
9 bedwetting at that time, and that slapping for it
10 certainly, we could say now, wouldn't have helped the 10: 48
11 children. In fact, it would have made them more
12 fearful and it would have had add to their stress.

13 25 Q. Can I just deal with that for the moment, because the
14 two people I represent both indicate that they had
15 problems with bedwetting and were punished as a result. 10: 48
16 One said in a statement:

17 "I wet the bed frequently, usually out
18 of fear and for this my day started
with a beating".

19 THE CHAIRPERSON: Mr. McGrath, I have
20 difficulty with this, these 10: 48
21 statement were furnished to us confidentially, the
22 evidence was heard in private, you are not actually, if
23 I may respectfully say so, representing your two
24 clients, you are engaged by us.

25 MR. McGRATH: Yes, I understand that. 10: 49

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: May I suggest it is a
27 perfectly legitimate area
28 to enquire into, the treatment of bed -- this is not an
29 attempt to shut you down, it is an attempt to comply

1 with the legislation.

2 MR. McGRATH: Sure.

3 THE CHAIRPERSON: I'm just concerned,

4 sometimes -- maybe I will

5 just take a second, because it is not just this one. 10: 49

6 Sometimes people think that "oh, we are not hearing

7 about this evidence or that evidence or the other", and

8 sometimes even well informed people say this. The fact

9 is, of course, that there is a specific statutory

10 prohibition, as we know. I'm not suggesting that you 10: 49

11 are not aware of this, not for a moment, but I'm using

12 the opportunity to say something a little more general.

13 There is a specific statutory prohibition on hearing in

14 public or dealing with evidence relating to specific

15 individual complaints of abuse. So, we have to comply 10: 50

16 with the legislation.

17

18 But we are equally keen to make it as useful as

19 possible from our point of view, there is what your

20 clients might wish, but from our point of view we want 10: 50

21 to make the thing as useful as possible for us.

22

23 May I suggest, Mr. McGrath, that you can certainly say,

24 "look, the treatment of bedwetting", and debate it, but

25 may I suggest at a more general level rather than 10: 50

26 "look, there is specific evidence or witness A gave

27 evidence of this, witness B", you know. I am sure that

28 Sr. Casey will be able to deal with the thing on a

29 level that will not inhibit you, but will still enable

1 you to explore the area but without us having to get
2 worried about whether we are trespassing back into
3 Phase II, private evidence.

4 MR. McGRATH: I appreciate where you are
5 coming from, Chairman, but 10: 51
6 I think I am being as careful as I can be. I am not
7 identifying people, but equally as well, if I am going
8 to challenge in relation to what I think are important
9 matters it seems to be very difficult to do that just
10 in a general way, without actually specifically 10: 51
11 indicating what the Commission knows they were told did
12 happen in the institution. It is a very delicate
13 balance, I think I succeeded in it last week, I am
14 horrified if I am --

15 THE CHAIRPERSON: No, no, no. 10: 51

16 MR. McGRATH: -- this week.

17 THE CHAIRPERSON: It is not a criticism at
18 all, please don't think
19 that for a second. I have to say, Mr. McGrath, if you
20 quote what is expressly stated, what is stated in a 10: 52
21 document submitted confidently to us, I think that
22 crosses the line, even if you don't identify the
23 particular person.

24 MR. McGRATH: Fair enough, Chairman, I
25 accept your ruling. 10: 52

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: But if you say, "Look,
27 people complained about or
28 there was evidence about", I have no difficulty with
29 that, I think that's a perfectly reasonable thing. As

1 I say, it may be a thin line, but. Thank you very
2 much.

3 26 Q. MR. McGRATH: In terms of it, I have to
4 suggest to you that there
5 was evidence that people were slapped for bedwetting, 10: 52
6 and you accept that that did happen?

7 A. I accept that in my original statement.

8 27 Q. Now, it would appear that that method of dealing with
9 bedwetting was something that went on for a long period
10 of time in institutions, and I know certainly we have 10: 52
11 had evidence here last week where it is accepted that
12 it certainly, in a particular institution, it certainly
13 was from the 1940's, 1950's, right through up to
14 1960's. Do you think that anybody dealing with
15 children over a long periods of time, and I mean the 10: 53
16 Sisters of Mercy were dealing with a number of
17 different institutions where this was a problem, that
18 anybody who even thought for five minutes about
19 punishing children for wetting a bed would have
20 realised that really this does not work? 10: 53

21 A. Well, it obviously happened in different institutions,
22 but in terms of communication between institutions,
23 that's not something that would have been typical in
24 the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's, because the institutions
25 were independent units, so in terms of sharing that 10: 53
26 kind of knowledge or wisdom around the best way to deal
27 with bedwetting, that just wouldn't have happened at
28 that time.

29 28 Q. Now, if I could deal with it this way: Most

1 bedwetters, or people who have come before the
2 Commission to talk about bedwetting, it wasn't just
3 that they did it once and never again, they were
4 regular bedwetters, they done it night after night
5 after night, in fact if they got a dry night they were 10: 54
6 lucky, would you accept that that situation prevailed?

7 A. I don't know the extent of bedwetting in Newtownforbes.

8 29 Q. All right. If it falls within the normal pattern it
9 would have been a significant amount of it and a number
10 of them would have wet their bed every night. Now, if 10: 54
11 the evidence is correct, that they were punished for
12 that, they had to be punished on a very regular basis.
13 If somebody wet their bed every night, they would have
14 been punished the following day if that was the regime.
15 Do you not think that after, even after one week of 10: 55
16 punishing somebody and slapping them and having no
17 improvement, that anybody thinking even for five
18 seconds, never mind five minutes, would have realised
19 this doesn't work?

20 A. I can't say that the children were slapped every 10: 55
21 morning for bedwetting because I don't know that, I
22 wasn't there at the time, I did inquire and the Sister
23 who was there is in her 90's and wasn't able to furnish
24 me with any information to help me in an understanding
25 of how often is the punishment or how severe, so I 10: 55
26 honestly don't know. All I know is that -- and they
27 would have acknowledged that in the school, that there
28 was punishment for bedwetting but the extent of it, the
29 regularity of it, the severity of it, I don't know.

1 30 Q. Now, another complaint arising out of bedwetting that
2 arises is this deprivation of a drink in the evening.
3 Again, it would appear from the evidence, not just from
4 Newtownforbes but from other institution, that this
5 didn't work either. That people were going around 10:56
6 thirsty, there are stories from many institutions of
7 people having to take water out of cisterns and out of
8 toilet bowls and things because they were deprived when
9 they were dying of thirst in the evening time and that
10 not drinking again didn't make any difference and yet 10:56
11 it does not seem to have made any impact on somebody
12 that after a week or two of not letting somebody have a
13 drink and they are still wetting the bed, it just
14 couldn't seem to get through.

15
16 Surely with the experience there was of someone in
17 Newtownforbes of taking care of children that somebody
18 must have been realising that there was something wrong
19 with the system, that things weren't working?

20 A. Well, it was just one of the methods that they tried to 10:56
21 deal with it.

22 31 Q. Now, in relation to something else that arises out of
23 various complaints and that, can I put it to you that
24 it would appear that none of the members of the Order
25 who were there during the time appears ever to have 10:57
26 seen anyone being excessively punished?

27 A. From a conversation with Sisters that would be true,
28 they would have told me that they didn't see other
29 Sisters excessively slap a child.

- 1 32 Q. And they never did it themselves, none of them ever did
2 it themselves?
- 3 A. They acknowledged that they would have slapped
4 children. You asked me did they see others slap
5 children. 10: 57
- 6 33 Q. Yes. But none of them suggest that they ever, even
7 once in their lives, lost their temper to the extent
8 that they slapped a child too hard or too many times?
- 9 A. As I have said to you, in terms of the severity of it I
10 don't know. The Sisters would have acknowledged that 10: 57
11 they slapped and in my first statement I acknowledged
12 the Sister's deep regret that they slapped.
- 13 34 Q. Can I just deal with something there. In terms of
14 punishment, punishment can be for two things, it can be
15 to reprimand somebody for something they have done 10: 58
16 wrong or it can be used just for the simple method of
17 control, would you accept that?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 35 Q. In terms of the numbers of children in the school it
20 would seem to have been a very significant number of 10: 58
21 children?
- 22 A. There were significant numbers, yes.
- 23 36 Q. Very difficult to control a large number of children
24 from difficult background, poor backgrounds,
25 malnourished, had problems? 10: 58
- 26 A. Yes, but what are you suggesting?
- 27 37 Q. In those terms I have to suggest to you that whilst
28 these children were sent to you for care and to be
29 taken care of because they were from poor homes,

1 because there was little or no food in homes that they
2 were taken from, that in fact the number one priority
3 was control of the large numbers, and I suggest to you
4 the only way that could be done and was done was by
5 severe punishment?

10: 59

6 A. I accept that discipline and obedience would have been
7 essential and I accept that corporal punishment was the
8 method used to enforce this, but again, I can only say
9 from my knowledge and from conversations the extent to
10 which it was used, the severity or whatever, I just do
11 not know. I did not -- and I acknowledged that in the
12 beginning, I did not pick up from the Sisters that it
13 was something, as you are suggesting, that was used all
14 the time as a method of control when they were in a
15 large group.

10: 59

10: 59

16 38 Q. Well, could I suggest to you that there is certainly
17 evidence from the people who came before the Commission
18 would suggest, and it is a matter that the various nuns
19 you spoke to had to deal with, was a question as to
20 whether or not there was significant punishment. The
21 girls who were in the school certainly have said to the
22 Commission that there was excessive punishment, in
23 fact, one of the things I have to suggest to
24 you... (INTERJECTION)?

11: 00

25 MR. GAGEBY: Mr. Chairman, I don't want
26 to be rude to cut across,
27 Mr. McGrath, but there is a certain line. Is the
28 Sister really being asked to decide what you have to
29 decide, sir? I mean you heard from -- sorry, and the

11: 00

1 Commission, the Commission heard from five complainants
2 and well, I am not trying to shut anybody out, but
3 really there is an exercise in futility partially here.
4 She wasn't here, there was limited materials. I don't
5 want to argue the toss of it either, because that's 11:00
6 your job.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: But isn't it reasonable for
8 any -- of course, there is
9 a line and Mr. McGrath will know and you will know that
10 we are reluctant to be too fussy about the precise -- 11:00
11 we don't want to be preventing people asking questions.
12 But isn't Mr. McGrath entitled to explore, nonetheless,
13 the question of punishment and excessive punishment and
14 violence in a general way.

15 MR. GAGEBY: I think he's already done 11:01
16 that, Mr. Chairman, but he
17 is now, it seems to me, proposing or has commenced to
18 ask this witness whether she agrees with the five
19 people who gave evidence in private. I would just
20 raise this thing. 11:01

21 THE CHAIRPERSON: No, I think there are two
22 objections to that and I
23 think one of them is that it is asking the witness to
24 decide something that we have to decide. In one way
25 witnesses are always asked that, are often asked that, 11:01
26 in courts and in inquiries, even in courts, in
27 substance, if you like.

28 MR. GAGEBY: Mr. Chairman, it begs an
29 unfairness. Supposing the

1 witness disagrees and disagrees for a reason, but the
2 reason arises out of the fact that she, like the rest
3 of us, have sat for many days in Earlsfort Terrace,
4 listening to the matter and turning it around. And if
5 the witness says, "well, I want to disagree", but 11:02
6 can't.

7 THE CHAIRPERSON: "I didn't believe No. 1,
8 No. 3, No. 5", for
9 instance.

10 MR. GAGEBY: But this couldn't be right 11:02
11 because somebody wasn't
12 there or any of the painstaking methods by which you
13 have proceeded, sir.

14 THE CHAIRPERSON: That is the reality,
15 Mr. McGrath, isn't it? I 11:02
16 mean, of course everybody understands the position that
17 you are in, but on the other hand just suppose a
18 witness, not necessarily Sr. Casey, suppose a witness
19 were to say, "well, now that you ask me, I was
20 impressed by two witnesses but I wasn't impressed by 11:02
21 ten witnesses," suppose there were twelve witnesses and
22 how could we get into the question as to how or why he
23 or she was impressed. Isn't that a real difficulty?

24 MR. McGRATH: Well, except that
25 ultimately it is for you to 11:03
26 decide whether you believe the witnesses or not.

27 THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, quite.

28 MR. McGRATH: It is neither a thing here
29 nor there, but that, to

1 some extent, that's going to arise.

2 THE CHAIRPERSON: May I say, Mr. McGrath, I
3 am less worried about that
4 question than I am about trespassing into the private
5 evidence. That's frankly my own personal thing, I see 11:03
6 a much bigger problem, because I am worried about
7 compliance with the legislation. Whereas the other
8 matter, as I say, in some shape or form often enough
9 witnesses are asked, "did you hear the evidence of the
10 plaintiff?" A defendant might be asked and, "were you 11:03
11 not impressed?" So that in some way they might be
12 asked, rightly or wrongly, to comment on it in a court
13 situation. I am more concerned about the
14 confidentiality.

15 MR. McGRATH: Well, Chairman, let me ask, 11:04
16 I will move away from that
17 for a moment and maybe I will ask it in a different
18 way.

19 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much.

20 39 Q. MR. McGRATH: On the last occasion you 11:04
21 yourself gave evidence
22 about being in school in Newtownforbes in the primary
23 school?

24 A. Yes.

25 40 Q. You mentioned something that happened with a particular 11:04
26 nun who then left and went away and came back at a
27 later stage. And you knew her at time, I think she was
28 teaching you in the school and then you knew her later?

29 A. Yes.

- 1 41 Q. And you described a change in her personality, et
2 cetera. Can I ask you what was it that happened in the
3 school on that occasion that you remember?
- 4 A. At the time I saw the Sister slap a child on the back
5 of the hand. 11:04
- 6 42 Q. What age were you at the time?
- 7 A. I was in about third or fourth class.
- 8 43 Q. It was enough of an incident to strike you at that age
9 and to remember it because it didn't strike you as
10 being right? 11:05
- 11 A. Yes, I found it unacceptable at the time and I find it
12 unacceptable now.
- 13 44 Q. If we take it then that you have a memory of that, do
14 you think it is likely that that sort of thing happened
15 on other occasions, in other classrooms? 11:05
- 16 A. Well, could I say that was the primary school and that
17 Sister had no dealings with the children from the
18 industrial school outside of the actual class, she
19 happened to be a person that didn't have dealings with
20 them either for supervision or meals or recreation or 11:05
21 anything like that, it was purely in the classroom
22 situation. And I would accept that some Sisters may
23 have been harsher than others in terms of, you know,
24 using a stick or whatever, but that was the particular
25 incident. 11:05
- 26 45 Q. Now, could I ask you just in general terms, in terms of
27 finance in relation to institution. Now, the
28 Commission will be well aware that the main source of
29 finance for any of these was the capitation grant?

1 A. Yes.

2 46 Q. Now, there would have been some payments being made in
3 respect of teachers who were in the school. But am I
4 correct in understanding that those who would have been
5 in the industrial school and not teaching but taking 11:06
6 care of children there was no payment for them coming
7 in from anywhere outside?

8 A. To my knowledge no, but again it is something I just
9 wouldn't be exactly sure of.

10 47 Q. Okay. Now, the Sisters of Mercy were running a very 11:06
11 large institution, which had very large numbers of
12 children at times?

13 A. Yes.

14 48 Q. Is there anything in the records that would indicate 11:06
15 that there was any method whereby there was any
16 planning for what was going to happen in the future, as
17 far as the upkeep of the premises or the supplying of
18 whatever needs of these particular premises were?

19 A. Well, from my limited knowledge of the accounts, it is 11:06
20 quite a while, Chairman, since I looked at them,
21 because it was back in January 12 months, but the
22 income and expenditure were within 5% of the capitation
23 grant. I know that there was some -- in terms of for
24 the building, back in the 1940's, there were three
25 years where expenditure exceeded income back in the 11:07
26 1940's and the only explanation that could be offered
27 for that was that there was a -- it was funds that were
28 raised for a building at the time and in the annals of
29 the convent there was reference to some of the Sisters

1 fundraising and obtaining money from wealthier people
2 in Dublin and from the Duke of Norfolk and things like
3 that. But that was where the funding would have come
4 from.

5 49 Q. So to all intents and purposes, once the school was up 11:07
6 and running, so far as the Sisters of Mercy were
7 concerned to all intents and purposes it was on its
8 own?

9 A. Yes, but could I also just say that as part of the
10 practice as religious Sisters that any money or income 11:08
11 earned by the Sisters is pooled in a common fund and it
12 is out of that fund it would be used then for the
13 ministries of that particular house. So whatever
14 income would have been generated, maybe not necessarily
15 for the Sisters in the industrial school, but by the 11:08
16 other Sisters, that money would have been used for the
17 ministries as well.

18 50 Q. But from the overall point of view, the school had to
19 survive on its own, whether it be by using the
20 capitation grant or using the salaries of the nuns who 11:08
21 were employed in the school, or whatever fundraising it
22 could organise for itself?

23 A. Yes, but they didn't fundraise for the industrial
24 school, it was just for money for that building.

25 51 Q. Yeah, but I mean when a build was going to be built 11:08
26 they had to look for somebody to fund it, they had to
27 fundraise in some shape or form. There was certainly
28 no question of going to the Sisters of Mercy overall
29 and saying "we need money, can you help us out"?

- 1 A. I think I explained to you that the Sisters -- the
2 convents were autonomous, independent units, most of
3 them, up until the 1970's. Then what happened, say,
4 for example, in Newtownforbes in 1979 it would have
5 become part of a diocesan union and later in 1994 and 11:09
6 only then did the 26 dioceses come together and form a
7 congregational union. So, the units would have been
8 independent and would have had to be responsible for
9 whatever ministries obtained in that particular house.
- 10 52 Q. So from that point of view, there was certainly nowhere 11:10
11 that people running this institution could turn to get
12 help from within the Order itself?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 53 Q. Now, I know we are looking back from a long time ago,
15 but does it seem inconceivable now that the Order was 11:10
16 organised in such a way that there was no question of
17 the Order looking to see what was happening and whether
18 the ministries that it was involved in could be done in
19 a better way?
- 20 A. That's the way the Congregation developed from the time 11:10
21 of our founders. She wanted us to be in local units
22 and it was only with the evolution of time, events in
23 what was happening in the country and even among
24 ourselves, particular then Vatican II would have been a
25 major influence, when we were invited to look again at 11:10
26 ourselves and how we were leading our lives and were
27 they meaningful and relevant to society at this time.
28 It was only out of all of that and reflection for years
29 on that that the Sisters decided that a better way

1 forward would have been to form the groupings. But to
2 say from the beginning, I think to me that would be an
3 insult to the way the Congregation has developed. I
4 would see it that we were progressive, that we were
5 engaging as the years went by and exploring ways that 11:11
6 we could be better in ministry and that we could use
7 our talents and resources to a better effect.

8 54 Q. One of the points that has arisen in a number of the
9 institutions so far and I am sure will arise, is the
10 situation with regard to leaving the institution, one 11:11
11 of the major complaints coming from witnesses seems to
12 have been that they suddenly were one day told they
13 were leaving, with no preparation. Have you anyway of
14 helping us in regard to that, why were things so
15 cursory in those terms? 11:12

16 A. I regret I cannot, you know, add much to what I already
17 said in my opening statement about leaving. The
18 practices seem to have been that the Resident Manager
19 acquired employment through contacts that she would
20 have had or knowledge if a job became available. Then 11:12
21 if the girl was 16 or time for her to go they would
22 have made decisions then. But the actual process,
23 there is nothing written down. Unfortunately, the
24 Resident Manager is deceased and the two Sisters that
25 were there, they are both in their 90's so they 11:12
26 couldn't help me in providing any further information.

27 55 Q. It would appear in many of the institutions that one of
28 the major complaints from -- or the complaints that
29 would arise so far as leaving is concerned, is that,

1 first of all, they were only really told the day before
2 or on the day that they were going, "you are 16, you
3 are leaving." That when they left they couldn't read
4 and write, there was no preparation in terms of
5 explaining to them how you survive outside the 11: 13
6 institution, no explanation as to how money worked, no
7 explanation how rent a place, how to pay bills or
8 anything of that nature. Do you accept that that was
9 the situation in the institution insofar as the girls
10 in the institution were concerned? 11: 13

11 A. I accept that girls leaving they were prepared in terms
12 of housewifery, domestic work and all of that, I do
13 acknowledge that there was certainly a gap in preparing
14 them for handling money, in preparing them
15 psychologically and emotionally from the break from 11: 13
16 leaving a major institution to a working situation. As
17 I said, it seemed to have been, from what I have heard,
18 that they did only get the short notice.

19 56 Q. As far as the training is concerned in the industrial
20 school, as it was, from what I can understand from 11: 14
21 reading the papers for Newtownforbes, am I correct in
22 understanding that really the training there was
23 limited to domestic service?

24 A. Certainly the training was for domestic service, but if
25 one puts that in the context, that at the time and the 11: 14
26 years that we are talking about domestic service would
27 have been what most of the people in the country would
28 have went into. Because if you even look at the
29 Central Statistics Office, figures from there would

1 have indicated that, for example, of people gainfully
2 occupied by occupation in 1946 that in personal service
3 there were 102,000 83% were women and of that 79,000 of
4 them were employed as domestic servants, so it wasn't
5 unusual in the wider context. In fact, also in 11: 15
6 evidence from the Central Statistics Office, the
7 occupations that women tended to go into, the first was
8 agriculture and then domestic. For example, in 1936
9 7.6% of the women went into domestic and in 1946 7.2.
10 In the context, domestic service was the thing that was 11: 15
11 available to them and that's what they were prepared
12 for.

13
14 May I also say that some of them went on to train for
15 nursing and was in shops and things like that. So that 11: 15
16 it wasn't just limited, you know, to domestic.

17
18 If again to help put it in context, and I use this
19 example, the time I gave evidence the first time back
20 in January 2005, I did my Inter Cert in 1965, and there 11: 15
21 were 30 of us in the class, but when I went to Leaving
22 Cert only 13 of that group actually went as far as
23 Leaving Cert. Again, there was only 13 in the Leaving
24 Cert in 1967, again in the context, there was only 100
25 in the school. But by the time I left that school in 11: 16
26 1975 you would have had 400 in the school. That's just
27 a general context that would help.

28 57 Q. Just coming back to what I was asking you a moment ago
29 and I understand why you are putting it into a context,

1 but am I correct in understanding that the only
2 training provided was for domestic service, that's it?

3 A. That was the main training.

4 58 Q. So it didn't matter how bright a student was,
5 everybody, whether they are bright or not bright, they 11:16
6 were being trained for domestic service?

7 A. While I acknowledge that they were being trained for
8 domestic service, may I also say that free education
9 did not come in, but the idea of people going to
10 secondary school it wasn't until the late 1960's, so 11:16
11 certainly in the 1940's and 1950's. But again, even in
12 Newtownforbes, some of the pupils did in the 1950's go.
13 Just bear with me and I will get the figures.

14 59 Q. I'm not terribly interested in
15 figures... (INTERJECTION)? 11:17

16 MR. GAGEBY: I think the witness should
17 be allowed to answer.

18 A. I'm just saying, for example, in 1949 or 1950, three
19 pupils got extensions from the Department, so again in
20 1950/51, seven attended secondary school. The records 11:17
21 would also show that between 1952 and 1962 at least
22 eight children were discharged either on licence with
23 the express purpose of attending secondary school or
24 their period of detention was extended so they could
25 attend secondary school. Handwritten evidence from 11:17
26 1953 would show that again a different number of pupils
27 presented for scholarships. I would suggest that that
28 would indicate that there was some consciousness of
29 training or allowing some of the pupils to go ahead and

1 have secondary education, that it started as far back
2 back as then. Bearing in mind that the secondary top
3 only started in Newtownforbes in the early 1950's.

4 60 Q. From the point of view of children coming out, in many
5 institutions we have heard evidence, or the Commission 11: 18
6 have heard evidence, that people were illiterate or
7 could barely read and write. Do you accept that that
8 was a problem for many of the girls leaving
9 Newtownforbes?

10 A. My understanding is that most of the girls in 11: 18
11 Newtownforbes had the opportunity of attending primary
12 school to sixth standard, I acknowledge that not all
13 did the Primary Cert. I am surprised by that standard
14 that people would say that they weren't able to read or
15 write. It is possible that some got through the net 11: 19
16 that they could today, who might have a problem with
17 dyslexia, and again there wouldn't have been a great
18 consciousness of it at that stage. But every effort
19 was made to give the children a basic primary
20 education. And they were in class with me while I was 11: 19
21 there and they did get it. And again I would have some
22 figures for those that attended primary school but
23 there was an attendance, all of them would have
24 attended and those between 14 and 16 then, if they
25 weren't going out for employment or weren't going on to 11: 19
26 secondary school, in later years they had the
27 opportunity of having -- they had the opportunity of
28 having the industrial training.

29

1 There was also at that time, if I may say so, that the
2 -- looking just back through some of the documentation
3 from the Department, there was a question of whether
4 they could -- if you just bear with me for one moment.

11:20

5
6 For a child to go ahead, you had to have the sanction
7 of the Inspector and then there was also the Children's
8 Act of 1941 said -- sorry, in 1962/63 it required:

9
10 "The pupil to be sufficiently advanced
11 in knowledge and intelligence to enable
12 him or her to follow with reasonable
13 success a course of secondary
14 education."

11:20

13 And that's material from the Department of the
14 education, they were set out as requirements.

15 61 Q. In terms of all the institutions, and the Commission
16 have heard evidence on numerous occasions of many of
17 the children complaining that when they were in the
18 school they were so frightened and so fearful, and they
19 were so anxious all the time that they weren't able
20 believe to learn. Did you, during your time, notice
21 any children in your class who were having difficulty
22 with learning or were afraid to answer questions or
23 anything of that nature?

11:20

11:21

24 A. It is subjective, all of us can have fears of different
25 people. The teachers in different classes would have
26 had a different relationship with pupils. Again, each
27 of the pupils would be bringing their own emotional and
28 psychological baggage, you know. So some might have
29 been more fearful and afraid than others. But in

11:21

1 general, like, we got -- I mean, I would have received
2 the same education that the children from the
3 industrial school received with me in the primary
4 school.

5 62 Q. There is one difference between you and them, you went 11: 21
6 home, they didn't, they stayed in the institution?

7 A. Yes, and I did acknowledge that in my opening
8 statement. I acknowledged that a girl from the
9 industrial school whom I knew said to me that she
10 envied me going home at 3:00 because she was there. 11: 22
11 And I do acknowledge that for somebody that was there
12 permanently on a 24 hour basis, all year, that it was
13 different set up for them. I did acknowledge that in
14 my original statement.

15 63 Q. And particularly if they were in fear, as many of them 11: 22
16 have pointed out over the time the Commission has been
17 sitting, they were in fear that they were likely to be
18 beaten at any time, for anything, they believed that?

19 A. I acknowledged that they would have felt fear, but the
20 fact that they would be beat, any time, any place is 11: 22
21 something that I'm not in a position to comment on
22 because I just don't know that that was the situation.

23 64 Q. Well, if that was the factual situation, and that's
24 what many of them have told the Commission here, if
25 that was the factual situation would you accept that 11: 22
26 they were going to have a difficulty learning in
27 school.

28 A. It would be a bit more difficult if somebody is afraid
29 but the Commission will make a judgment on that too.

1 65 Q. Just returning to a couple of documents that I just
2 want to refer to. These are in a folder entitled
3 "Documents Discovered by the Department of Education
4 and Science" and then it has a number of numbers on it.
5 The actual documents are NTF001-004.

11: 24

6
7 Now, one of them is a handwritten letter which then is
8 followed by a typewritten copy, I think, of the same
9 letter. It would appear to be dated -- the typewritten
10 one is dated 12th February, there is nothing on the
11 handwritten one, but the handwriting would appear to be
12 the same handwriting as the inspection doctor. It is
13 the letter of 1940, which indicate that she's writing:

11: 24

14 "To tell you how very disappointed I
15 was at finding such a lack of
16 supervision in your school during the
17 recent medical examination. I cannot
18 find any excuse which would exonerate
19 you and your staff from the verminous
20 condition of several of the children's
21 heads. I was not satisfied in finding
22 so many of the girls in the infirmary
23 suffering from bruises on their
24 bodies".

11: 25

25
26 Now, would the fact that they were suffering bruises on
27 their bodies and it is put into that letter suggest to
28 you that those girls were being maltreated in some way?

11: 25

29 A. I can only accept the document as it is presented.

30 66 Q. Would it suggest to you, as it suggests to me, that
31 those girls had bruises on their body because of some
32 form of maltreatment?

11: 25

33 A. Well, if it was unacceptable to the Department the
34 likelihood was that it could have been -- it was some

1 kind of mal treatment.

2 67 Q. I mean, given the words "so many" would suggest that
3 there was an awful lot of them?

4 A. Well, unfortunately the letter doesn't say the number,
5 so it would be only speculation on my part, I don't 11:26
6 know how many were there.

7 68 Q. It goes on to say:

8 "I wish particularly to draw attention
9 to the latter as under no circumstances
10 can the Department tolerate treatment 11:26
11 of this nature in you being responsible
12 for the care of these children will
13 have some difficulty in avoiding
14 censure. The lack of supervision and
individual attention is, in my opinion,
the reason for the dirty condition of
the heads and the untreated abscess I
discovered in the child in the
infirmary".

15 Would you accept that at that stage, certainly in 1940, 11:26
16 that it was being pointed out that this school was not
17 being run in any proper manner?

18 A. In my opening statement I accepted the documentation
19 from the Department from 1940 and the reports up to
20 1945, which were very negative. And on behalf of the 11:26
21 Sisters I apologised for those, and as far back as
22 January 12 months.

23 69 Q. There is another document I would like to refer to,
24 Chairman, NTF001-013. It is a handwritten note which
25 says as follows: 11:27

26 "Mr. ----- calls to complain regarding
27 the condition of his children in
Newtownforbes. He called to visit them
28 on Saturday 24/448 and says that they
are suffering from scabies, for months
29 passed. One of the girl's hands is
practical disabled from the sores
between her fingers. The children's

1 footwear is in a very bad condition and
2 they have no stockings. The caller was
3 asked to (as read) and it would appear
4 that nothing further occurred but he
5 had actual called".

6 That would suggest that even eight years later, after 11: 28
7 the report and complaints from the doctor, that things
8 were not all well in the school, wouldn't it?

9 A. I'm not sure of the dates, I just don't have those
10 actual documents with me. What year do you say this
11 letter was? 11: 28

12 70 Q. It is not a letter, it is a note, it is 1948, and it is
13 a note of a complaint being made by some parent who had
14 called to see his children?

15 A. Yes. I think it referred back to 1944.

16 71 Q. No, the letter says, I will read it to you again: 11: 28
17 "Mr. ----- called to complain regarding
18 the condition of his children in
19 Newtownforbes. He called to visit them
20 on Saturday, 24/4/48 and says that they
21 are suffering from scabies, for months
22 passed. One of the girl's hands is
23 practically disabled from the sores
24 between her fingers. The children's is
25 footwear is in very bad condition and 11: 28
26 they have no stockings".

27 A. I accept that, but can I also draw attention to fact
28 that even between 1944 and 1948 that the actual
29 Department records in 1945, signed off by the
30 Inspector, show that medically the children were well 11: 29
31 and that there was much improvement in the institution,
32 that was in 1945. Again, in 1946 it shows that:

33 "The children were well cared for and
34 there was much improvement and the
35 children had put on weight."

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Now, in August of 1946, it did note that:

"Ringworm and scabies were treated and eyes had been treated."

So it was obviously something they were trying to deal with. 11: 29

72 Q. I just want to suggest to you that that's not the complete record because again document NTF001-0011, 15/6/44 says as follows in the general observations:

"I regret to state that this school has gone back since my last inspection". 11: 29

So that would suggest that things, whilst they had improved between 1940 and 1943, by 1944 were going backwards. As I say to you in 1948 there was a complaint by a parent. So things, whilst they did improve, still left an awful lot to be desired, to put it mildly? 11: 30

A. That was a difficult period in the time of the institution and we deeply regret that, but from then on, I think written into the record again from the opening appearance at the Commission, the reports from -- most of the reports showed a marked improvement. In fact, from, say, 1947 it said that children looked much cleaner and neater, much better supervision. In 1952, it says: 11: 30

"It was satisfactory, clean and well kept, the clothing was good. Food well served and was appetizing. Much better. Classroom and dormitories heated." 11: 31

1 In 1954 it says it was well run. In 1956 it said it
2 was well run and the children were clean and well cared
3 for. In 1957, the premises bright and cheerful, well
4 run school. So on in 1960, right up to 1964, the
5 Department records did show a marked improvement. 11: 31

6 73 Q. Can I just stop you there for a second. These are the
7 Inspection reports from the doctor?

8 A. Yes.

9 74 Q. Are you aware, and I'm sure you are, that the
10 Commission has heard regularly from former pupils of 11: 31
11 the various industrial schools throughout the company,
12 that before the inspector arrived there was always a
13 massive clean up in the school, first of all; secondly,
14 that on that particular day they were all ordered to be
15 on their best behaviour; thirdly, they were all dressed 11: 32
16 in their Sunday finest, that the various dormitories
17 were always looking their best because all the old
18 bedclothes were all stripped off and very nice duvet
19 covers and colourful things were put on the bed and
20 that somehow or other the place was always pristine 11: 32
21 when the inspectors came. Now, it seems to have been a
22 pattern around the country, and I have to suggest to
23 you that quite often these inspectors reports reflect
24 what was seen on the day, which was designed to impress
25 by those in charge? 11: 32

26 A. Well, I wasn't there at the time and I did acknowledge
27 again, previously, that efforts were made, if when the
28 inspections were coming. But there was also in the
29 records, I remember reading, that there were

1 inspections that were not notified and so inspectors
2 would have been able to -- you know.

3 75 Q. With respect, I have to suggest to you that a lot of
4 people would have had doubts as to whether there was no
5 knowledge that those inspections were coming. If you 11: 33
6 look at the various dates, they change from year to
7 year but they are never far away from the previous
8 date. I have to suggest to you that the likelihood is
9 that the word went around to the schools very quickly
10 when the inspectors were on the way? 11: 33

11 A. I couldn't stay that for definite.

12 MR. McGRATH: I suggest that it wouldn't
13 necessarily be wise for
14 either the Commission or for yourselves to rely on the
15 inspection reports as being an accurate reflection of 11: 33
16 what it was like for the rest of the year other than on
17 the day in question. I have no further questions,
18 Chairman.

19

20 END OF EXAMINATION OF SR. MARGARET CASEY BY MR. McGRATH 11: 34

21

22 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much.

23 MR. MacMAHON: I think perhaps I should go
24 next, I have just one for
25 two very brief question to ask. 11: 34

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much. Very
27 good.

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29

1 SR. MARGARET CASEY WAS FURTHER QUESTION, AS FOLLOWS, BY
2 THE COMMISSION:

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- 4 76 Q. MR. MacMAHON: Sister, really the
5 questions that I wanted to 11: 34
6 ask you related to the ethos of the Sisters of Mercy as
7 expressed in their constitutions, as I understand it,
8 there was a sequence of constitutions in being, there
9 was a 1926 constitution and then there is a 1954
10 constitution which, insofar as is material to my 11: 34
11 question, is really a restatement of the 1926
12 constitution.
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 77 Q. I think in 1969 things were changed, a further document
15 was produced? 11: 34
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 78 Q. And then I think that there were more substantial
18 changes later on, which I think probably have no
19 bearing to Newtownforbes?
- 20 A. No, I think the most recent constitution would have 11: 34
21 been 1985.
- 22 79 Q. I think that was amended in 1994?
- 23 A. Yes, when we became a Congregation.
- 24 80 Q. Yes. I wanted to ask you about the vow of obedience.
25 The Rule 28 of the 1926 constitution, and this was 11: 35
26 replicated in Chapter 7 of the 1954 constitution,
27 states that:
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29 "The Sisters are always to bear in mind
that by the vow of obedience they have
forever renounced their own will and

1 resigned it to the direction of their
2 Superiors. They are to obey the Mother
3 Superior as holding her authority from
4 God rather through love than from
5 servile fear. They shall love and
6 respect her as their mother, without
7 her permission they shall not perform
8 public penances."

11:35

6 Then the following rule, Rule 29 says:

7 "They are to execute without hesitation
8 all the directions of the Mother
9 Superior, whether in matters of great
10 or little moment agreeable or
11 disagreeable. They shall never murmur
12 but with humility and spiritual joy
13 carry the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ".

11:36

11 It continues for another short bit, but what I really
12 wanted to ask you was whether the vow of obedience in
13 practice was likely to have an impact in the capacity
14 of a Sister who is perhaps operating some facet of the
15 schools, if that Sister saw that the manner in which
16 the school was operating was wanting in some way, that
17 if she was carrying out her duties in that school
18 because she had been appointed to that position. Did
19 the vow of obedience perhaps affect such a Sister to
20 question her Superior in how the school was being
21 conducted?

11:36

11:37

- 22 A. I suppose back in those years the Sister would have
23 been assigned to a job under obedience and that
24 obviously would have impacted on the institution and
25 her role in it, because sometimes then it meant, and
26 this would have been borne out in the industrial
27 school, that they could have ended up in a particular
28 Ministry as, say, some of the Resident Managers, that
29 they were there for quite a long time, 30 years and

11:37

1 more. But it would have been true, as well, that out
2 of the obedience that it wouldn't have been the
3 accepted or the norm for somebody to complain to the
4 person in authority about how the place was being run,
5 because to do so would have been seen not merely as a 11:37
6 kind of personal failing but it would also have shown
7 that in some way that their inability to cope with the
8 challenges of religious life.

9
10 I suppose that then, you know, that it operated two 11:38
11 facets, because in one sense there was the positive
12 side to them taking on this obedient work, you had the
13 positive side that the Sisters worked there and it
14 highlighted their commitment and dedication for a great
15 number of years. But the negative -- and that was at a 11:38
16 time when, you know, there was poor resources and women
17 weren't the forefront of achievement, even in public
18 life.

19
20 But on the other hand, and the negative impact of it, 11:38
21 and this would have impacted on the industrial school
22 greatly, would have been the fact that, you know,
23 leisure was circumscribed that unstructured, there was
24 all of these kind of things were seen as luxuries
25 rather than as essentials. It meant then that people 11:39
26 weren't conscious of the whole concept of burnout. And
27 because of that, having worked too long in the
28 institution, obviously that would have impacted on the
29 way they operated and on the way they worked with the

1 children. So, you know, it would have affected them.

2
3 But could I just say too that even though that the
4 Sisters were expected to take up the Ministry that they
5 were assigned to, there were individuals that managed, 11: 39
6 you know, to be able -- whether it was their
7 personality, or the personality of the person in
8 authority, that were able to say that they weren't
9 suited or whatever.

10 11: 39
11 Now, after Vatican II, in the 1960's, certainly the
12 obedience would have taken a new dimension because it
13 would have been then in dialogue and in discussion and
14 in consultation that a person would have been assigned
15 and there they would have been better able to talk 11: 40
16 about the role or whatever was going on in the school.

17 81 Q. Of course, the Sister's statement as to the vow of
18 obedience didn't, in fact, change to any extent until
19 1969 --

20 A. I don't have the actual one. 11: 40

21 82 Q. -- in the constitution?

22 A. Yes. Our most recent one is that it would still be --
23 in the dialogue and consultation, but the ultimate
24 decision would be with the Superior.

25 83 Q. But if the Committee were to accept from evidence that 11: 40
26 it may have heard, that a Superior tended towards being
27 unsupportive or tended to express little interest in,
28 say, the industrial school or in the education of the
29 children there, the vow of obedience would in a sense

1 constrain a Sister who wished to do something about
2 that?

3 A. Yes, it would. Then I suppose it was in a good lot of
4 situations, I'm just thinking of the institution that I
5 am dealing with myself, the Resident Manager happened 11: 41
6 to be the Superior for quite some time so it would have
7 been more difficult for the Sisters then in that
8 scenario to actually complain or talk the thing
9 through. But still some managed to do it.

10 84 Q. There was a conference arranged in 1953 by the Sisters 11: 41
11 of Mercy, it took place in Carysfort, the Commission
12 has been furnished with documents arising out of that
13 conference. I'm wondering whether there was any
14 evidence to suggest or to show that Sisters from
15 Newtownforbes attended that conference and if so 11: 41
16 whether it was purely the Superior or did it extend
17 beyond that, if there was such attendance?

18 A. No, the person that attend in 1953/54 was a person in
19 charge of the industrial school, though not the
20 Resident Manager. That's my understanding. 11: 42

21 85 Q. One of the things said by Sr. Mary Bernardine in the
22 course of that conference, and I think this conference
23 came up at the last hearing, but one of the things she
24 said was that:

25 "Experience shows that when the person 11: 42
26 in charge is kind but firm, sympathetic
27 but impartial, efficient without being
28 overbearing, determined but open to
29 suggestion, approachable without being
too free, the other members of the
staff will take their cue from her and
the result will be content and harmony
in the entire home".

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First of all, is there any evidence that arising out of that conference there was any change or discussion for change amongst the Sisters in Newtownforbes.

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A. I won't know that, Mr. MacMahon.

11: 43

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86 Q. Is there any written evidence that would suggest that any notice at all was taken of the context of the conference in 1953 in Newtownforbes?

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A. Certainly I would have come across a copy of that, but I wouldn't have any evidence in the archives to support what happened in this industrial school as in Newtownforbes as a direct result of attending that conference.

11: 43

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87 Q. There is no evidence of any restructuring or changes in terms of administration or in the manner in which the children were organised or their affairs were ordered?

11: 43

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A. I'm not aware of any evidence.

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88 Q. I suppose that while the document acknowledges that a good leader, the habits of a good leader will pass down through to those working under her, I suppose the opposite is also the case, if you have a leader who is lacking in leadership qualities or is -- shows little interest in the children or is not open to change, that equally change is less likely to happen?

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A. Yes, but I am just recalling that the person who

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attended that would have been still in charge in the industrial school in Newtownforbes in 1954 and 1956. Though she's quite elderly now, some years ago in conversation with her, she would have said that her --

29

1 in latter years that she was in the school that her
2 whole manner of operating and relating to the children
3 would have been totally different. Because, for
4 example, she wouldn't have used the corporal punishment
5 and that she tried through fostering, music and all of 11: 44
6 that, to give them a better chance.

7 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: She wouldn't teach me then.
8 She wouldn't teach me. I
9 wasn't one of the grandeur.

10 89 Q. MR. MacMAHON: Can I ask you again in 11: 45
11 relation to the ethos of
12 the Sisters as an Order, a Congregation, that was
13 heavily involved in running industrial schools in
14 Ireland, the constitutions, certainly those of 1926 and
15 1954, appeared to give no assistance to the 11: 45
16 congregation or to the nuns who formed part of it, as
17 to the manner in which the children whom they are
18 caring for should be cared for or how they should be
19 educated?

20 A. No, that's not specifically set out in the 11: 45
21 constitution.

22 90 Q. The constitution expresses the relationship between the
23 nuns and the children in purely religious terms, I
24 think, or in spiritual terms?

25 A. Yes. 11: 46

26 91 Q. There is no guidance given as to how the children are
27 to be educated, again apart from in religious terms,
28 Rule 5 says:

29 "The Sisters shall teach the children
to offer their hearts to God when they

1 wake in the morning, to adore his
2 Sovereign majesty, to return thanks for
3 all his favours, to arm themselves with
4 the sign of the cross. They shall
5 instruct them how to direct their
6 thoughts, words and actions to God's
7 glory, to implore his grace, to know
8 him, love him and fulfil his
9 commandments, how to examine their
10 consciences and how to respect their
11 parents and their Superiors"

11: 46

12 The only direct mandate for instruction is that:

13 "The children should be instructed as
14 to the method of assisting for the holy
15 sacrifice of the mass and to prepare
16 for the sacraments, confession,
17 confirmation and Holy Communion".

11: 46

18 A. That's true.

19 92 Q. I think that it wasn't until the 1972 rules, again long
20 after Newtownforbes was closed, that the requirement
21 for bringing in trained lay staff was brought in as
22 part of a constitutional requirement governing the
23 Sisters, there was no reference whatsoever prior to
24 that?

11: 47

25 A. Well, that would coincide with the whole Kennedy --
26 say, in the terms of now the industrial schools, the
27 Kennedy Report in 1970, which would have been
28 recommending that. Also at that time it was the move
29 from the institutional type industrial school to the
30 group home. So of necessity when they moved from the
31 larger institution to the smaller group homes that is
32 was really when they started bring in lay staff.

11: 47

11: 47

33 93 Q. Well the 1969 rules directed that:

34 The Superiors shall see to it that
35 Sisters who engage in the postulate of
36 education be thoroughly informed and
37 prepared for this work. They shall

1 SR. MARGARET CASEY WAS THEN EXAMINED, AS FOLLOWS, BY
2 MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH:

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4 97 Q. MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: Sr. Margaret, just some
5 brief matters, if I may. 11: 49

6 Just what Mr. MacMahon was speaking about there, that
7 the guidance and constitution was of a general
8 spiritual, perhaps even theological nature, that would
9 have been true presumably also for Sisters involved in
10 other Ministries, such as teaching in a primary school? 11: 49

11 A. Yes, it was covered all ways.

12 98 Q. Or teaching in a secondary school?

13 A. Yes.

14 99 Q. So the constitution presumably, am I right is saying,
15 would have been to provide the spiritual guidance and 11: 49
16 then the Sister went into a specific area, where she
17 would get training, for example, in Carysfort, in
18 teaching. But perhaps the difficulty in the childcare
19 area was that there was a gap in that there was no
20 training in childcare? 11: 49

21 A. There was no training until after 1970.

22 100 Q. If I could just talk about the Sisters of Mercy in
23 general terms, Mr. MacMahon again posed a question to
24 you where he mentioned that the Sisters of Mercy were
25 very centrally involved in the position of childcare, 11: 49
26 that was not only in the old days but also later in the
27 later half of the 20th century in group homes?

28 A. Yes.

29 101 Q. Just in relation to that, the other main ministries of

1 the Sisters of Mercy, what were they?

2 A. The main ones would have been education, nursing and
3 visitation of the sick and poor.

4 102 Q. Would that be true for Newtownforbes?

5 A. It would. Well, not nursing in Newtownforbes. The 11: 50
6 ministries in Newtownforbes was a primary school,
7 secondary school, boarding school and visitation of the
8 people in the local area would have been one of their
9 prime ministries.

10 103 Q. Taking into account of course what you said earlier 11: 50
11 about Newtownforbes being structured at that time at a
12 local level, nonetheless, as you have mentioned, there
13 were particular ministries that were associated with
14 the Sisters of Mercy, what common to those, what is the
15 Sisters of Mercy or what was it originally particularly 11: 50
16 intended to deal with?

17 A. The charism of the Sisters of Mercy would be the
18 education of the poor, sick and the uneducated. Or the
19 care of the poor, sick and uneducated.

20 104 Q. Does that account for the particular ministries? 11: 50

21 A. Yes, that would be the basic charism irrespective of
22 which house you belong to. That would be the test of
23 our call as Mercy women.

24 105 Q. Would that explain the predominance or the centrality 11: 51
25 of the Sisters of Mercy in the industrial school
26 system?

27 A. Yes, because obviously the charism of Mercy, it would
28 have found an expression in the care of children in
29 industrial school.

- 1 106 Q. Yes. Given, I suppose, that so many of the children
2 came from poverty stricken backgrounds?
- 3 A. Poverty stricken, yes.
- 4 107 Q. I think that Mr. McGrath was putting questions to you
5 about the finance aspect of things and he was asking 11:51
6 the question, for example, as to if there was a
7 shortage of money or if there was planning could one go
8 to Sisters of Mercy and ask for money? Isn't it the
9 fact that there simply wasn't such an entity as the
10 Sisters of Mercy which is what he was assuming in his 11:51
11 question at that time?
- 12 A. At that time there wasn't. We didn't become a unit, as
13 a Congregation, until 1994 when the 26 diocese came
14 together.
- 15 108 Q. If, for example, a Resident Manager wanted to get money 11:52
16 from somewhere it was to the convent?
- 17 A. To the convent, yes.
- 18 109 Q. You couldn't talk about going to the Sisters of Mercy?
- 19 A. No.
- 20 110 Q. I think inherent perhaps in his question was an 11:52
21 implication or assumption that the convent had funds,
22 that would depend of course on whether the convent had
23 money to make available?
- 24 A. That's true.
- 25 111 Q. May I just ask you about the secondary education. You 11:52
26 mention that there were some people who were head of
27 the (inaudible), I suppose the general run of people of
28 going to post primary in the later years, a few did
29 manage to make some kind of post primary education.

1 How was that funded in the years before free secondary
2 education?

3 A. Again, I don't know specifically in Newtownforbes how
4 it was funded, but some of it would have been aided by
5 the convent would have cared for the expense or some of 11: 52
6 it would have been possibly paid for out of the funds
7 of the industrial school, you know.

8 112 Q. Am I right in assuming that prior to the advent of free
9 secondary education there was no special provision from
10 the Department for particular bright students, for 11: 53
11 example, to go to secondary school if they were in
12 industrial schools?

13 A. No, there wasn't. In fact, you had to get permission
14 from them to go. As I said earlier, in 1941 they had
15 to be of above average, or average intelligence, they 11: 53
16 laid out conditions. In fact, in the earlier one in
17 the 1930's, they said that they could go, the sanction,
18 but it had to be at no cost to the Department was in
19 1931.

20 113 Q. So the bar was quite high to get there and no money was 11: 53
21 provided?

22 A. No. It was and no money was provided.

23 114 Q. Jus in terms of the Inspection Reports, Mr. McGrath was
24 asking you a few questions about those. I think you
25 made very clear in your opening statement, January, 12 11: 53
26 months ago that there was a very, very bad patch in the
27 1940's and thereafter, and particularly from 1950's
28 onwards, the Inspection Reports were positive on the
29 whole?

1 A. Yes.

2 115 Q. Mr. McGrath in a sense has asked you to comment on the
3 suggestion that we should accept the negative reports
4 in their entirety and we shouldn't lay any emphasis or
5 accept that there is any truth in the positive reports 11: 54
6 because the positive reports, he says, would be based
7 on almost a sham of an inspection?

8 A. Yes.

9 116 Q. Could I ask you to comment on that? In particular,
10 could I ask you, first of all... (INTERJECTION)? 11: 54

11 MR. McGRATH: Chairman, I didn't use
12 those words.

13 THE CHAIRPERSON: But that's the implication.

14 117 Q. MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: May I just ask you about
15 that? 11: 54

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: It is a legitimate area. I
17 suppose everyone wants to
18 say, "here's a document saying the place was great, you
19 should pay attention to that, or here are ten documents
20 saying the place was great." But somebody was 11: 54
21 saying... (INTERJECTION)

22 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: But it wasn't.

23 THE CHAIRPERSON: Sorry, we can't have a
24 general discussion.

25 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: We were there. 11: 54

26 THE CHAIRPERSON: Maybe I can say something,
27 I see Ms. Buckley there and
28 I hear the interruptions of people, we could possibly
29 have a seminar here, but the system we are having is of

1 having evidence and having questions asked and nobody
2 is going to get fussed over somebody saying something,
3 but it is much better if they don't say something,
4 because it gets in the way of the evidence and it
5 really only makes -- especially if it comes from 11: 55
6 survivors or victims or their representatives, if it
7 comes from that it looks terrible, it looks as if we
8 couldn't have a meeting without interruptions. And
9 that's looking bad from the point of view of the
10 survivors, that they won't permit a meeting to take 11: 55
11 place without barracking or interrupting or letting the
12 witnesses give evidence.

13
14 I mean, from your own point of view that doesn't make
15 sense. It is not our experience. Our experience has 11: 55
16 been that for the past two years we have had nothing
17 but cooperation from people. We have had people come
18 in three a day and we couldn't have had more
19 cooperation, so it gives a completely false impression
20 if we have commentary as we are going along, 11: 56
21 interruption, chat as if you can ignore the fact that
22 it is a formal session. I mean, it is only reflecting
23 adversely and in a way very inaccurately on the
24 position of victims and their representatives. So, I
25 mean, it is really a matter of practical common sense. 11: 56
26 We will get through this much more efficiently, much
27 more effectively.

28
29 Mr. McGrath's point, and I am trying to deal with it

1 and acknowledge the force of what he's saying and yet
2 not interrupt Ms. Ni Rai feartaigh and let her get by.
3 That's the reality, that people are really giving a
4 false impression of themselves. Thank you,
5 Ms. Ni Rai feartaigh. 11:57

6 MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
7 I'll be very short.

8 THE CHAIRPERSON: Take as long as you like.

9 118 Q. MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: Just coming back to the
10 reports. I think you would 11:57
11 accept that they are limited insofar, for example, the
12 meal that was put on the table, that might not be the
13 one that they were getting when the inspector wasn't
14 there, or, for example, the clothes or so forth?

15 A. Yes. 11:57

16 119 Q. Isn't it the case that the Inspector would have been in
17 the position to observe the general physical condition
18 of the children?

19 A. Yes, because he or she would have spent time there with
20 them. 11:57

21 120 Q. So if they were very thin, for example?

22 A. They would have observed that. Then they would have
23 had the experience, they were professional in their
24 role and they would have had the experience of doing
25 that task in other institutions and they would be able 11:57
26 to make observations.

27 121 Q. Yes, I think you are aware that there was a small pool
28 of inspectors and they would have been visiting schools
29 throughout the country so they were in good position to

1 observe and make comparisons?

2 A. Yes.

3 122 Q. We know that when they did, in fact, see things,
4 particularly in Newtownforbes, they weren't slow about
5 saying what they did? 11: 57

6 A. Yes, they wrote -- when they saw the thing in 1940 they
7 wrote the letters and they subsequently commented when
8 there was an improvement in the supervision which they
9 had asked for, that was the pattern that it followed,
10 with letters to check that things had happened and even 11: 58
11 if -- from just looking at the discovery documents, if
12 there was recommendations around people's health or
13 whatever, the Resident Manager had to send in a letter
14 to say that those things were complied with.

15 123 Q. So things like scabies and abscesses, scabs, all of 11: 58
16 that they could see that?

17 A. They could see that that.

18 124 Q. And if they saw them they mentioned them?

19 A. They did, yes.

20 125 Q. And similarly with weight? 11: 58

21 A. Yes.

22 MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: Thank you.

23

24 END OF EXAMINATION OF SR. MARGARET CASEY BY

25 MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH 11: 58

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27 THE CHAIRPERSON: Mr. Lowe, have you any
28 questions.

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1 SR. MARGARET CASEY WAS FURTHER QUESTIONED, AS FOLLOWS,
2 BY THE COMMISSION:

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4 126 Q. MR. LOWE: I'm still not happy with
5 the condition of the 11: 58
6 children in the 1940's and your statement that it was a
7 bad time, it seems to be much worse in Newtownforbes
8 than it was anywhere else. If I quote from the
9 Inspector's Report, 1939, 1943:

10 11: 59
11 "Lack of shoes. 12 small babies had no
12 shoes at all and no pretense of having
13 any. They looked forlorn and cold.
14 They were assembled together in the
15 play hall. 20 other bigger children
16 had no shoes on and when I pushed them
17 they told me they had none. From the
18 number of pairs of new shoes put on
19 today I am of the opinion that a number
20 of these children are barefooted on
21 other days". 11: 59

22 This is the Inspector saying they are not used to
23 wearing shoes here and if they had shoes on it is
24 because they were given new shoe to be put on? 11: 59

25 A. Yes, I accept the Inspector's Report.

26 127 Q. MR. LOWE: But why was it so bad in
27 the 1940's compared to
28 other institutions?

29 A. I'm not in a position because I don't know. To be able 11: 59
30 to make a comparison I do not know enough about other
31 institutions. The only fact that I know about that
32 time was that there was a change in terms of the
33 Resident Manager in 1940 -- the person who was Resident

1 Manager there who let standards slip for a period?

2 A. That could be an interpretation.

3 129 Q. MR. LOWE: What was the mechanism to
4 redress that within the
5 Order, if someone was letting things slip like that? 12: 01

6 A. My understanding is that there was one person working
7 there and for whatever reason a second person helped
8 out at the time. Now, I can't -- it is a judgment on
9 my part to say that, you know, obviously something
10 wasn't right. All I know is that when the other person 12: 02
11 came back to Newtownforbes in 1947 she was back in as
12 Resident Manager.

13 130 Q. MR. LOWE: One of your colleagues gave
14 evidence to us and she
15 said she: 12: 02

16 "Wanted the children to be dressed the
17 same as the day pupils and she
18 organised buying them in clothes. It
19 took five years to introduce these
changes".

20 Now, that must be frustrating for someone. Would there 12: 02
21 be any reason why it took so long to buy children
22 clothes?

23 A. I don't know the reason, in truth, Mr. Lowe. I know
24 that Sister was involved in the (inaudible), they made
25 them and the only reference in records is of bales of 12: 02
26 material being bought from Cleary's. I suppose against
27 that one would have to say as well that two people
28 working in a linen room and, you know, you are talking
29 about possibly 80 to 100 children, so by the time it

1 would take some time to make clothes and that for them.
2 But the records would show though that the clothes were
3 bought -- the names of the retailers are in the records
4 and the clothes were bought as well in the institution.

5 131 Q. MR. LOWE: But it was that particular 12: 03
6 colleague who seemed to be
7 the first one to say she didn't want the children to be
8 looking different from the children outside?

9 A. Yes, she was working -- she and another Sister were the 12: 03
10 two that were -- had full-time responsibility at the
11 time in the industrial school. Because she was -- she
12 had the -- it was she that ensured or brought in the
13 fact that they then had a set of clothes for school, a
14 set of clothes for after school, and a set for Sunday,
15 and that was why she was responsible for clothes. 12: 03

16 132 Q. MR. LOWE: Another of your colleagues
17 commented on the fact that
18 the school seemed to take so little interest with the
19 industrial school children, instead of them getting
20 more attention if they were slower or more backward, 12: 04
21 they got no attention and she saw that as a major
22 problem. In fact, she said that she found it
23 impossible to change things, the other nuns in the
24 convent didn't have a say in the running of the
25 community, so she was frustrated by seeing this and not 12: 04
26 being able to say anything about it.

27 A. And the other Sisters wouldn't have been able to do
28 because they would have been involved in their own
29 Ministry but they wouldn't even have possibly been

1 aware perhaps of what they saw but they wouldn't have
2 been aware of the actual things happening on the
3 ground.

4 133 Q. MR. LOWE: But the "them and us", the
5 normal children and the 12: 04
6 industrial school children, really came out in that
7 evidence, would you agree that there was this
8 segregation?

9 A. My experience was there was no different in primary
10 school, there was no segregation between the industrial 12: 05
11 school children and the town's children. That was in
12 my own experience. You know, it was the same in the
13 classroom. As I said, the clothes would have improved
14 and that and, you know, there was no -- I wouldn't have
15 seen them as being segregated, that was in the 1950's. 12: 05
16 I wouldn't have perceived it that way.

17 134 Q. MR. LOWE: She was talking about the
18 slightly earlier period
19 where she did perceive it?

20 A. Yes, and that would be true. 12: 05

21 MR. LOWE: Thank you.

22 135 Q. MS. SHANLEY: Can I just ask you one
23 question, Sister, looking
24 at the discovery over the last number of months, there
25 was a strong impression that Newtownforbes, and indeed 12: 05
26 a lot of the Sisters of Mercy schools in general were
27 run much better before the war, that there was a
28 standard. There is a sense of almost pride in the
29 children coming across in the 1920's and 1930's in some

1 of the very early material which is completely absent
2 after the war. You get no sense of that at all. One
3 of the examples is that before the children were being
4 sent out at 16 and they were being -- and they were
5 being sent to as domestic servants, the level of 12:06
6 preparation, the equipment they were given, the care
7 that was taken in the placement pre World War II was
8 much, much greater. I am just wondering whether the
9 Sisters, and it isn't just Newtownforbes, this is
10 general, was there a change in attitude to the type of 12:06
11 work or was there a change of attitude to the type of
12 children, it is quite -- it is something I have
13 noticed.

14 A. I really couldn't comment on that because I really am
15 not aware of -- you know, you are talking about the 12:06
16 difference and I wouldn't have researched enough before
17 that.

18 136 Q. MS. SHANLEY: You haven't discussed this
19 in the Order yourself, you
20 haven't yourselves tried to trace... (INTERJECTION). 12:07

21 A. Not to go back to what was there before, you are
22 talking about before the 1930's and 1940's. We have
23 not discussed that. We have been trying to see -- our
24 discussion would be mainly on what can we learn from
25 what's happening now and how can we transfer the 12:07
26 learning into other Ministries that we are engaged in.

27 MS. SHANLEY: Okay.
28
29

1 END OF FURTHER QUESTIONING OF MS. MARGARET CASEY BY THE
2 COMMISSION

3
4 MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: Sorry to interrupt but the
5 Commission is referring to 12: 07
6 documents we have not seen. We only got documents from
7 1940 onwards, so we are not a position to compare.

8 MS. SHANLEY: There was some research
9 done, into the pre World
10 War II period. 12: 07

11 MS. NI RAI FEARTAIGH: I don't think Sr. Margaret
12 would have seen that so she
13 wouldn't be in a position to draw comparisons.

14 MS. SHANLEY: I can certainly get it over
15 to you. 12: 07

16 THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you very much,
17 Sister. That's that phase.
18 Thank you very much. That's the end of that. Now we
19 will move on to Goldenbridge, please.

20 MR. McGRATH: Chairman, would it be 12: 08
21 possible to have five
22 minutes.

23 THE CHAIRPERSON: I will tell you what I will
24 do, we will have a cup of
25 coffee and we will come back in 15 minutes. We will go 12: 08
26 on a little bit past one o'clock, we will try to make
27 it convenient. Thank you very much.

28
29 THE HEARING THEN CONCLUDED AT 12: 08 P. M.

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