

COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO CHILD ABUSE

HELD AT THE ALEXANDER HOTEL, DUBLIN
ON MONDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2005 - DAY 60

BEFORE

MR. JUSTICE SEÁN RYAN

CHAIRPERSON OF THE INQUIRY

AND

MR. FRED LOWE, PRINCIPAL CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST

60

I hereby certify the following to be a true and accurate transcript of my shorthand notes in the above hearing.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION PRESENT

REGISTRAR TO INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE: MR. BRENDAN REIDY

COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION: MR. BRIAN McGOVERN SC
MR. NOEL McMAHON SC
MS. KAREN FERGUS BL
MS. CIARA McGOLDRICK BL
MR. DARREN LEHANE BL

Instructed by: MS. FEENA ROBINSON

FOR ST. PATRICK'S: MR. NICHOLAS MOORE,
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1 THE HEARING COMMENCED ON MONDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY 2004,
2 AS FOLLOWS, AT 2005:

3
4 MR. RYAN: Now, good morning. This is
5 the first part of our
6 investigation into St Patrick's industrial school in
7 Kilkenny and this is our first public phase. And when
8 this is finished we will go into private session as
9 we are required to do under all the legislation and
10 those hearings will be held between tomorrow Tuesday
11 and Friday next and then there is a subsequent stage
12 as in previous cases we will have a phase three
13 hearing in public.

14
15 Now, Mr. McGovern, would you like to introduce the
16 counsel team. May I welcome you as counsel to the
17 Inquiry. Well, maybe you would like to introduce your
18 team first of all.

19 MR. MCGOVERN: Thank, you Chairman. My
20 name is Brian McGovern I am
21 a senior counsel for the Commission and I have with
22 me here today Mr. Noel McMahon SC who is also part of
23 the legal team for the Commission and Ms. Karen
24 Fergus, barrister, Ms. Ciara McGoldrick who is a
25 barrister, Mr. Darren Lehane who is a also barrister
26 all part of the legal team and the solicitor to the
27 team of the Commission is Feena Robinson.

28 MR. RYAN: Very good. Now, good
29 morning, Mr. Moore.

1 MR. MOORE: Good morning, Chairman. For
2 the benefit of the hearing
3 my name is Nicholas Moore, I am a solicitor and a
4 partner in the firm of Arthur Cox and with me is my
5 colleague, Ms. Joanelle O' Cleirigh, solicitor.

6 MR. RYAN: Very good, good morning,
7 Ms. O' Cleirigh. All right,
8 Mr. McGovern, if you would
9 like to start the proceedings.

10 MR. McGOVERN: Very good. Thank you,
11 Chairman. I'm just going
12 the initially outline the format this is taking. I
13 know in your introductory remarks you briefly alluded
14 to that, but just to have this on the record for the
15 purpose of members of the public who might not be
16 familiar with what we are doing.

17
18 This, as you say, is a public hearing in relation to
19 St. Patrick's industrial school in Kilkenny. This was
20 an industrial school for young boys up to the age of
21 ten years and it operated in that capacity from
22 December 1879 until December 1966 after which time it
23 continued to be run as a school but it was a
24 different type of school. It is now run for people
25 with mental handicap.

26
27 This hearing, Chairman, will follow the same format
28 that has been used for the past year or so when
29 investigating other institutions. It will be in line

1 with statements made by the Commission and indeed by
2 you, Chairman, this morning on the question of
3 procedures to be followed. What this means is that
4 evidence regarding St. Patrick's industrial school
5 will be heard in three phases; phase one commencing
6 this morning will consist of the hearing of
7 Sr. Una O'Neill who is the Superior General of the
8 Congregation of the Religious Sisters of Charity who
9 will give general information about St. Patrick's.
10 This will include the Congregation's view as to how
11 the institution operated and what life was like
12 there. It is intended to serve as a general
13 background to the institution.

14
15 It is appreciated, Chairman, that some or perhaps all
16 of the evidence which she gives will not be accepted
17 by some people who were present in the institution at
18 the relevant time and we understand that. If there
19 are issues raised which require resolution or
20 clarification they will be returned to in phase three
21 at a later stage.

22
23 When this brief public hearing, comprising phase
24 one has been completed, phase two will then begin. As
25 you say this will take place throughout the remainder
26 of this week and will involve the hearing of evidence
27 from persons who have filed statements with the
28 Commission outlining abuse suffered by them at
29 St. Patrick's.

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The Committee has prepared a schedule of hearings involving relevant witnesses who may have evidence to give with regard to the institution and these hearings will commence tomorrow on the 8th of February and are expected to conclude by the end of the week and these will take place as you indicated in private.

After the Committee has had an opportunity to consider the evidence given in both phase one and two it is proposed to return to a public hearing which will deal with any conscientious matters outstanding or any other relevant issues concerning the management and operation of the institution.

At that stage the Investigation Committee will permit such cross-examination as fair procedures require in the light of the issues which have been identified in phases one and two from those parties who appear to have a legitimate interest in them.

A decision has been made to leave over these contentious issues until phase three since by that time the committee will have had an opportunity of hearing evidence from persons who were in the institution at the relevant time rather than now when the Committee can only have a limited picture as to what contentious issues are likely to arise.

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So that, Chairman, is, as it were, an opening statement for the benefit of such members of the public as are here who might not be familiar with the procedures to be adopted. As I say we have here this morning, we have Sr. Una O'Neill who is going to give evidence on behalf of the Order and I would propose calling her now to do that.

MR. RYAN: Very good.

MR. McGOVERN: Sr. Una O'Neill, could you come forward to the table here, please, thank you.

SR. UNA O'NEILL, HAVING BEEN SWORN, WAS EXAMINED-IN-CHIEF, AS FOLLOWS, BY MR. MCGOVERN:

MR. RYAN: Thank you, Sr. O'Neill.

1 Q. MR. McGOVERN: Now, Sister, I have already introduced myself and I have to ask you some questions about St. Patrick's institution and you have furnished a statement concerning the institution and I propose asking you questions based on that. If I could just ask you to keep your voice up so that everybody could hear you, please, thank you.

I think for the purpose of preparing your statement and for the purpose of giving evidence today you consulted a number of sources, is that right?

1 A. That's right, the sources that we used to come to
2 some understanding of St. Patrick's were, first of
3 all, the community annals which covered the period
4 1879 to 1966. The admission and discharge registers
5 for St. Patrick's of which we have 12 covering the
6 period 1879 to 1966. A diary of events book which
7 covered the period 1879 to 1918 and then a section of
8 this book was used later on as a register for county
9 council records for children not committed through
10 the courts. We had first holy communion and
11 confirmation registers covering the period 1914 to
12 1966 and a document entitled "Account of Life in St.
13 Patrick's during the 1930s" by a named resident who
14 wrote this account as an adult and sent it to a
15 sister Assumpta who had lived in the institution and
16 worked there for 35 years. We have the Department of
17 Education's discovery, which we received in
18 December 2004 which contains their inspection file
19 relating to St. Patrick's, a medical inspections file
20 for St. Patrick's, medical returns file for
21 St. Patrick's and the certification file for the
22 institution plus a building grants file and a
23 miscellaneous file.

24
25 Now, in addition to that we met with a number of
26 sisters who worked in St. Patrick's and who are still
27 alive. We also, I should say, reviewed the
28 individual files of the 11 men who have requested to
29 appear before the Investigation Committee.

1 2 Q. Yes. And can I ask you what is your position within
2 the Order?

3 A. I'm the Superior General of the Sisters of Charity. I
4 was initially elected on the 29th July 1995 for a
5 term of six years and re-elected on 28th July 2001.

6 3 Q. And during the operation of St. Patrick's as an
7 industrial school was it always the Religious Sisters
8 of Charity who ran this school?

9 A. It was.

10 4 Q. And can I ask you did you at any time work in the
11 school or have any function in the school while it
12 was operating as an industrial school prior to its
13 closure in 1966?

14 A. No, I didn't. It closed before -- the year that I
15 made my first vows as a Sister of Charity.

16 5 Q. I see. So the information you are giving the
17 Commission is based on records?

18 A. That's right.

19 6 Q. And conversations you have had --

20 A. That's right.

21 7 Q. -- with other members of the Order and other relevant
22 people?

23 A. And the members of the Order with whom we spoke they
24 actually cover a fair range of the years that the men
25 who are appearing lived in St. Patrick's from 1933 to
26 1966, so we got a fair amount of information from
27 them.

28 8 Q. Can I ask you with regard to the pupils in the school
29 were they all male pupils?

1 A. Yes, they were all boys, small boys up to the age of
2 ten. There was one exception to this in 1966 where
3 two infants were admitted into the school for a very
4 short period before it closed, a brother and sister.

5 9 Q. Yes.

6 A. And the little sister Rosemary she was held until the
7 school closed.

8 10 Q. But other than that exception they were all boys up
9 to age ten?

10 A. Yes.

11 11 Q. Can you tell the Commission when you first became
12 aware of the allegations of abuse in St. Patrick's?

13 A. We first became aware of allegations of abuse in St.
14 Patrick's I suppose formerly on 27th January 2000
15 when we received correspondence from a firm of
16 solicitors regarding a past resident who had been in
17 St. Patrick's and who was alleging abuse. However
18 prior to that in the summer of 1999 a past resident
19 called to St. Patrick's for a visit. He was trying
20 to trace the grave of his stepbrother. One of the
21 sisters who had worked in the industrial school met
22 with him and in the course of that visit he told her
23 he was trying to trace a man whom he said had worked
24 in the laundry in St. Patrick's while he himself was
25 a resident. He alleged that the man had abused him
26 sexually and the sister undertook to try and make
27 inquiries which she did, but no-one in St. Patrick's
28 remembers the man. That's not to say he wasn't
29 there. Nobody remembered him. Subsequently there was

1 correspondence from Fr. Joseph O' Reilly a director
2 of Ferryhouse who wrote to a Sr. Eugène Butler who
3 was the Provincial at the time to let her know that
4 this man had called to Ferryhouse, because he was of
5 the opinion that this man may have been a past
6 resident of Ferryhouse, but there was no further
7 correspondence.

8 12 Q. I take it you carried out a general review of
9 documents and files relating to St. Patrick's
10 governing the period when the complaints were made in
11 respect of the 12 men you referred to?

12 A. Yes, we did. We found nothing in their files nor
13 indeed in any of the documentation to substantiate
14 the specific allegations that were made by the 11 men
15 who are appearing before the Commission.

16 13 Q. Just to clarify what you mean by that are you saying
17 that there is no documentary evidence to support
18 ... (INTERJECTION)

19 A. There is neither documentary evidence nor is there
20 supplementary evidence from the Sisters who would
21 have lived there at the time.

22 14 Q. I see. I think you've also saw discovery
23 documentation which has been furnished by the
24 Department of Education, is that right?

25 A. Yes, that's right.

26 15 Q. And I think, without going through everything, this
27 documentation includes inspection reports for a
28 period from 1942 up to 1964 with I think three years
29 missing, is that right?

1 A. Yes, and indeed sometimes it appears there were two
2 inspections in one year but just one report.

3 16 Q. Yes, and was there any general tenor of these
4 reports?

5 A. The general tenor is that they were all favourable in
6 all categories and in terms of the categories
7 inspected they are referred to as good, very good and
8 in certain years they are referred to as excellent.

9 17 Q. Yes, and were there any comments that appeared in
10 these reports that come to mind?

11 A. Yes, some of the comments would -- at the end of each
12 report usually there was a comment written and some
13 of those would be, "Well conducted school. Children
14 very well carried for. Very clean. Extremely well
15 run school. Nursing unit: excellent", and other
16 similar remarks.

17 18 Q. I would like now, Sister, just to ask you to deal
18 with the origin of the school and just in a general
19 way take the Commission and the members of the public
20 here through the history of the school. I think
21 originally there was a farm and house there which
22 became St. Patrick's industrial school, is that
23 right?

24 A. That's right. There was a farm which appears to have
25 been owned by the State. It was known as the Model
26 Farm. It was situated about mile and a half outside
27 the boundary of Kilkenny city. There are photographs
28 of the building which members of the Commission have.

29 19 Q. Yes, I think it was on a site of approximately

1 80 acres.

2 A. That's right, it was indeed. It consisted of a very
3 large house with many outbuildings and about 80 acres
4 of land. It was the Bishop of Ossory, Dr. Moran, who
5 wanted to provide an industrial school for the boys
6 at the time and he invited us to run it and we opened
7 it on 23rd December 1879.

8 20 Q. Yes, and I think at that time it was certified for
9 the admission of 186 children whom we know now would
10 have been boys up to the age of ten years?

11 A. That's correct, yes.

12 21 Q. And you deal then with the construction, adaptation
13 and change of the buildings over the years. I think
14 in your statement you provide an appendix, which sets
15 out in some considerable detail the way the school
16 expanded and how additions were made to the building
17 from time to time?

18 A. That is true, practically every year there were
19 buildings or repairs or extensions. There are
20 examples of that in every year, for instance, in 1949
21 if I just pick one, we are told that work was
22 completed on the construction of new toilets for the
23 boys carried out by a local contractor at a cost of
24 4,000 pounds. Then they had on-going trouble with
25 water and the supply of water in Kilkenny. In that
26 year the rainwater from the roofs was diverted into
27 an old reservoir underground and an electric pump was
28 installed to pump the water from the reservoir to the
29 institution tank. A septic tank under the

1 children's dining room was cleaned. Two new passages
2 leading from the play hall to the new toilets were
3 started. A boot room and classroom were provided and
4 the institution convent kitchens and backstairs were
5 painted and the roof of the convent repaired. That's
6 just an example of the on-going ... (INTERJECTION)

7 22 Q. Yes, well I don't think it is necessary to take you
8 through the entire appendix.

9 A. I think not, we might be here for ages.

10 23 Q. If I may just ask you this I think the appendix shows
11 that from 1879 right through until 1965 various works
12 were carried out which --

13 A. That's right.

14 24 Q. -- included additions, renovations, the sourcing of a
15 water supply which --

16 A. That's right.

17 25 Q. -- leads to a well, central heating boilers being
18 replaced, classrooms being built and things of that
19 nature.

20 A. That's right.

21 MR. McGOVERN: And they are all set out,
22 Chairman, in the appendix
23 to the report. I don't think it is necessary to take
24 the witness through them.

25 MR. RYAN: Very well.

26 26 Q. MR. McGOVERN: The next part of your
27 statement that you
28 furnished, Sister, deals with the decertification and
29 the closure of the industrial school. I think this

1 happened in 1966. Could you tell the Commission about
2 that?

3 A. That's right. It was on 31st May 1966 the Department
4 of Education acknowledged formal notification from us
5 of our intention to resign the certificate of
6 St. Patrick's school with effect from 25th
7 November 1966. At that time, well really it was
8 August/September, all of the boys were transferred to
9 other institutions. At that time then in July of that
10 same year the Department of Health approved the
11 proposal to turn St. Patrick's into a school and
12 training center for boys and girls with severe and
13 moderate mental handicap. That service began in the
14 Autumn of 1966. It developed and expanded over the
15 years and it continues there today. But currently it
16 caters for some children and many adults and there
17 are a total of 100 in residential care. Many of whom
18 now are both physically and mentally handicapped.

19 27 Q. Are the Sisters of Charity running the school --

20 A. We are.

21 28 Q. -- in this capacity now?

22 A. Yes, we are, yes.

23 29 Q. You mention there the Department of Education. What
24 was the role of the Department of Education in the
25 running of the school?

26 A. Of the industrial school?

27 30 Q. Yes.

28 A. Well, obviously throughout the evidence that I have
29 submitted the attendance of the Department, the

1 instructions of the Department, the inspections of
2 the Department are detailed and it is evident to me
3 that they had a very strong supervisory role which
4 was taken very seriously by the Sisters at the time
5 and especially in the early -- even say the building
6 and there are recommendations made about an annex, a
7 sanitary annex for the little boys, and there are
8 many recommendations in terms of the changes,
9 discussions more than recommendations in terms of the
10 development of the building.

11 31 Q. Yes.

12 A. But they had, I mean right throughout the evidence
13 that I provided, one can see the relationship between
14 the Department and the Sisters.

15 32 Q. Yes.

16 A. The manager particularly.

17 33 Q. You deal then in your statement with the admissions
18 and transfers in the years 1933 to 1966. Would you
19 tell the Commission why you would have picked that
20 period?

21 A. I picked the period 1933 to 1966 because that's the
22 period of time during which the 11 men who are
23 appearing before the Commission were resident in St.
24 Patrick's.

25 34 Q. Yes.

26 A. Sorry.

27 35 Q. I think you then set out a table which shows the
28 numbers and ages of children in the school, is that
29 right from time to time, in these years?

1 A. Yes, from the first of January 1933 to the first of
2 September 1966 a total of 1,282 children passed
3 through St. Patrick's.
4
5 Now, there were short-term stays children which are
6 not included in these figures, for example, children
7 came to St. Patrick's sometimes for a number of weeks
8 when a parents was ill or unable to cope. So, the
9 years are done in ten year blocks so from '33 to '42
10 we would have had 411 who were committed through the
11 courts. '43 to '52 we had 409 committed through the
12 courts. '53 to '62: 261 committed through the courts
13 and 68 otherwise admitted. '63 to '66: 95 and 38
14 otherwise committed.

15 36 Q. Yes, and these were children up to the age of ten?
16 A. They were children up to the age of ten.

17 37 Q. And some of them would have been at certain periods
18 very young, as young as one month I think.
19 A. Indeed, they were, yes, in the nursery.

20 38 Q. Then I think you set out in a table in that period
21 '33 to '66 the reasons for committal of children as
22 identified in the detention order and the
23 Registrar's?
24 A. That's right. There were 435 children who were
25 admitted because they had parents, well what was
26 stated in the detention order as: "A parents who does
27 not exercise proper guardianship". 341 were
28 destitute. 163 wandering and having a parent who does
29 not exercise proper guardianship. 119 no fixed abode.

1 110 no reason for committal given. 92 receiving
2 alms. Ten orphans. Seven: A parent in prison or
3 having criminal habits and five under the care of
4 parents which had been convicted of an offence under
5 Part (ii) of the Children's Act 1908 in relation to
6 their children.

7 39 Q. Just for the sake of clarification, these reasons you
8 state here are the reasons that were stated on the
9 court documents?

10 A. Yes, on the court documents, yeah, exactly.

11 40 Q. Then you furnish a table for the same period; 1933 to
12 1966 giving statistics relating to the county of
13 origin of the children and without going through that
14 table --

15 A. Sure.

16 41 Q. -- I think the largest numbers by some margin were
17 Dublin, which had the highest number of 416 children,
18 Kilkenny: 220, Tipperary: 211 and then we moved
19 down to Laois which is 86 and they go down then
20 eventually to very low figures such as Cork: four,
21 Meath: three and Longford: one.

22 A. Yes.

23 42 Q. So it seems from that, Sister, that by far the
24 largest number came from Dublin and then adjoining or
25 proximate counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary.

26 A. That's right, and it is interesting we did statistics
27 as well for the period prior to 1933 and the Dublin
28 number far outweighs even the next one, which would
29 be Kilkenny from 1879 to 1933 for instance.

1 43 Q. Yes.

2 A. 1,273 of the boys came from Dublin. I don't have that
3 included in the table, it was just because we were
4 only dealing with '33/'66, but the majority did come
5 from Dublin, but then they did come from most
6 counties in Ireland as well.

7 44 Q. Can I ask you this, Sister, bearing in mind that when
8 one looks at the reasons for the committal that, I
9 know I'm generalising here, but they do seem to be in
10 the main from very impoverished backgrounds, was any
11 consideration ever given by the Order of nuns or by
12 the Department so far as you are aware as to the
13 effect this might have on families in terms of
14 visitation from Dublin, for example, which was some
15 distance away?

16 A. No, we have no record of that at all. And I mean I
17 suppose I'm guessing here, but reading through the
18 annals while there is a great concern for the
19 children and mention of parents and indeed -- well I
20 mention that later on -- there is nothing in place to
21 give the impression that the visits of the parents to
22 the children was a high priority, there is no
23 evidence of that either from the Department's point
24 of view or from the point of view of the school. It
25 would have been a considerable distance from Dublin
26 and in those days a very considerable distance, so.
27 I found no evidence of any expression of priority in
28 terms of making sure that parents could visit their
29 children.

1 45 Q. I see. You go on then to deal in your statement with
2 the fact that when children reach the age of ten they
3 would have been transferred to other industrial
4 schools in general, is that right?

5 A. That's right.

6 46 Q. And you refer at the bottom of page four in your
7 statement that most of them would have gone to places
8 such as Clonmel, Artane, Upton, Carricklee or
9 Salthill and some would have been transferred to
10 Glyn, Tralee, Baltimore, or Letterfrack?

11 A. That's correct, yes.

12 47 Q. And can I ask you from your inquiries would you know
13 what would the Sisters in the convent at the time or
14 in the industrial school at the time have known about
15 these places that the boys were being sent on to?

16 A. My understanding is that they would have known very
17 little about the industrial schools to which the
18 children were being sent. But there also was some
19 discussion between the Department and the Sisters
20 before, well I don't know if it was with all
21 children, but certainly before some children were
22 sent, the manager would make a suggestion to the
23 Department as to where a child might go and give the
24 reasons why and then the Department would confirm it.

25

26 If I could give you one or a few examples of that?
27 In 1946 there is a letter dated, 11th October, which
28 reads:

29

"The Minister for Education in

1 pursuance of the power invested in him
2 by the Children's Act has been pleased
3 to direct that the three children named
4 in the schedule of the back[?] hereof
5 inmates of St. Patrick's industrial
6 school be removed to St. Joseph's
7 industrial school, Clonmel".

8
9 Now, that was the formal statement that came back,
10 but some discussion did take place between the
11 manager and the Department prior to the final
12 decision it would appear. An account was taken then,
13 if not later on of the proximity of family and the
14 wishes of a parent, for example, on the 15th January
15 1949, and I think we have copies of this because we
16 didn't send it into discovery (same handed).

17 MR. RYAN: Thank you very much.

18 A. There is a letter regarding a child and what the
19 letter says is:

20 "The inspector has authorised your
21 application for this boy's transfer to
22 Carricklee in deference to his mother's
23 wishes as expressed in her letter of
24 the 11th inst."
25 Again we have an example in 1948 the Department
26 writes:

27 "With reference to your communication
28 of the 5th inst. I am directed to state
29 that it is thought advisable to have
30 the boy transferred to the Tralee
31 industrial school rather than to Artane
32 as originally suggested. The Tralee
33 school is at present below strength and
34 as the boy has not received visits or
35 correspondence from relatives it is
36 considered no hardship will be
37 inflicted on him if he were sent to
38 Tralee".

1 That's from the Department's point of view. It seems
2 there were efforts to send the boys on to schools
3 where their brothers had preceded them, because we
4 have a letter from the Department in 1956 where a
5 child, it was directed that a child would be
6 transferred to Clonmel rather than Salthill:

7 "His removal to Clonmel will give his
8 relatives better facilities for
9 visiting him and will tend to bring the
10 members of this family together. His
11 brother has expressed the wish to have
12 him sent to Clonmel".

13 So in the later years perhaps there was
14 ... (INTERJECTION).

15 48 Q. Some consideration given to siblings or the
16 convenience of parents?

17 A. That's right, where there would have been contact
18 with the parents.

19 49 Q. I see, yes. You go on then to deal with the children
20 who would have been there in the school when
21 St. Patrick's closed in the summer of 1966 and you
22 state the schools to which they would be, would have
23 been transferred to and the majority went to Artane
24 and St. Joseph's, Kilkenny, and some went to Clonmel
25 some to Cappoquin, Rathdrum and Salthill and then I
26 think five of the children who were in St. Patrick's
27 stayed on there, they went to the new school for
28 mentally handicapped and one child went back to their
29 parents?

30 A. That's right. As I understand it the children were

1 sent to St. Joseph's, Kilkenny, were sent there
2 because they were younger. Now, I'm not certain that
3 would be true in each case, but in the majority of
4 cases those would have been the children who would
5 have stayed on normally in St. Patrick's.

6 50 Q. Did an issue arise at some stage about the problem of
7 transferring children who might have reached the age
8 of ten but would be in the middle of school year?

9 A. That's right. It's normally the boys who were due for
10 transfer to senior schools. They left at the end of
11 each quarter depending on if they reached the age.
12 But we have in March 1965, which was prior to the
13 year before the institution was closed, the resident
14 manager at St. Patrick's requested that instead of
15 transferring such boys at the end of each quarter in
16 the coming year all should remain until the end of
17 the school year, that is the 13th of June at which
18 time each boy would have completed his full term in
19 class and the request was agreed by the Inspector
20 from the Department of Education on the 23rd
21 March 1965.

22 51 Q. That was only, well it was less than a year before or
23 about a year before the school closed, in fact, maybe
24 a little more than a year?

25 A. Hmm-hmm.

26 52 Q. But up until that time had it been the practice to
27 transfer boys when they reached the age of ten
28 whether they were in the middle of a school year or
29 not?

1 A. As I understand it, I would have to check that now,
2 I'm almost sure that that was the case.

3 53 Q. Yes. Can we look at the issue of funding, Sister. I
4 think the school obtained grants from the Department
5 of Education and the county council, is that right?

6 A. That's right and up to 1939 there was no funding for
7 children under six years of age.

8 54 Q. Do you know what the reason for that was?

9 A. I don't, but I can certainly explore it. I'm sure
10 there is a reason I just can't think at the moment.

11 55 Q. Yes, and I think then when you cite a letter written
12 in 1940 by the manager of the school to the Bishop of
13 Ossory, which you say gives an insight into the
14 funding at the time, is that right?

15 A. Yes, I think so. It was contained in our annals but
16 it was also, it was published in the Kilkenny journal
17 of the 14th September of the year. In it the manager
18 explains that there were 186 children in the school
19 and they were divided into three classes, I don't
20 think this means groups, I just think it means, you
21 know, in terms of the funding.

22 MR. RYAN: Categories.

23 A. Yes, categories.

24
25 "Class A consists of a boy from seven
26 to ten years of age for each of whom we
27 receive a weekly grant of seven and six
28 pence from the government and four and
29 six to five shillings from the county
council, making the total weekly grant
for each child 12 shillings. We have
an average of 135 in this class".

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Then the second category was:

"Children under the age from four to six years of age. Prior to April '39 we received nothing from the government for this class. Since April '39 the government pays five shillings each weekly for this class and the local body pays four and six to five shillings making the weekly payment ten shillings. We usually have 25 boys of this age".

The third category were:

"Owing to the number of destitute children in Ireland we get constant applications to admit children from one to four years of age. We have always about 24 in this class for which the government pays nothing".

Then she goes on to state that the average income, therefore, is one and four pence a day per head and she goes on to list the expenditure which is I think quite interesting in terms if I could just maybe offer some?

56 Q. MR. McGOVERN: Yes.

A. She says, and this is contained in the annals which we have discovered to the Commission on page 97:

"The wage bill would be 1,084 pounds as well as that we have to pay the teaching staff, food, clothing, medical requirements, light, heating water the general upkeep of the institution, and she says bread alone costs 800 pounds per year. The expense of rectifying the public water supply to the school this year through a forcing pump has cost over 500 pounds and this added to an existing debts of 2,000 pounds incurred during the past few years in our attempt to accommodate and support

1 the infant children has crippled and
2 disheartened us. To make the burden
3 almost impossible there is further
4 expense pending in repairs to the
5 children's play hall".

6 So, she is just kind of saying what her income was
7 and what her expenditure was there.

8 57 Q. Yes. I think the school did have its own farm.

9 A. It did indeed. It would seem to be quite substantial.

10 58 Q. Did that help to alleviate the hardship?

11 A. Yes, it did, indeed, because it was self-sufficient
12 in terms of butter and milk and fruit and vegetables.
13 We couldn't find any documentation to say that they
14 sold any of the farm produce. Obviously they sold the
15 animals I'm sure, but there didn't to be a sale on
16 the farm produce, so it was all used for the
17 institution it seems.

18 59 Q. Yes. What was the position about the salaries and
19 pensions for teachers in the school?

20 A. Are you talking about the school under the National
21 School Board?

22 60 Q. Yes, in the annals which were discovered at page 100
23 there is a section dealing with salaries and pensions
24 for teachers. I'm just wondering whether this was
25 something that was a problem for the school or not
26 (document handed)? There are references in that
27 section of the annals of the school --

28 A. That's right.

29 61 Q. -- to the fact that, for example:

"Since the war has broken out the

1 Department have decided not to pay the
2 teachers until it is over owing to
financial state government".

3 A. That's right. This was, as far as I can recollect,
4 yes, this was as a result of a meeting of industrial
5 school managers which was held in 1937. One of the
6 petitions there was that they were to pay the
7 salaries and pensions to teachers. Now, I'm only
8 deducing, but I haven't done any research much on
9 this that prior to that it was paid out of the annual
10 income from the children. Then none of the
11 recommendations had been acceded to up to '39 other
12 than the grant of five shillings for children under
13 six years. So there was an on-going discussion
14 seemingly that the state should pay for the salaries
15 of the teachers. I understand that that is the
16 teachers in the primary school which was part of the
17 institution as far as I know. Now, I'm not sure when
18 that, when it would have actually happened then.
19 Probably when it came under the Board. Yes, we see
20 there at the end of page 100:

21 "Not until 1941 we got notice that
22 literally part of the school has been
23 put under the National Board".

24 Sr. Germane has been appointed principal and there
25 are two teachers appointed all receiving a salary
26 direct from the National Board, that was 1st April
27 1941. One would deduce from that, but I'm not sure
28 that they were paid after 1941.

29 62 Q. I see. Can I ask you now about the resident managers

1 in the school. Is it the position that that Sisters
2 who were appointed in as local superiors in
3 St. Patrick's were generally also the managers of the
4 school?

5 A. That's correct, there may have been one or two small
6 gaps in that but generally speaking if a superior was
7 appointed to St. Patrick's she also became the
8 resident manager. All of these are now deceased
9 unfortunately. One sister who acted as resident
10 manager for a short time is still alive but she is
11 frail and her memory is not very good.

12 63 Q. Yes. Can I ask you about the Sisters and the lay
13 staff who were running the school. I think from your
14 statement it appears that the Sisters generally
15 worked in various different capacities?

16 A. They did and that would have been true right up to
17 the end of 1966. They worked -- some of them worked
18 directly with the children. Once the group system
19 came in it would appear with some exception that a
20 Sister was in charge of the group. Some worked in
21 the primary school, they were teachers and they
22 taught in the primary school. Others were in
23 housekeeping. One Sister, for instance, was in
24 charge of the dining hall which I presume would have
25 meant that whole area of the house including the
26 meals, looking after the meals. Some worked in the
27 kitchen, the laundry, the tailoring room and the
28 dairy. Generally the number in committee would have
29 varied from 12 to 14, it would have been more or less

1 that number.

2 64 Q. Yes, I think then there were some lay people working
3 in the farm, would that be right?

4 A. That's correct. From the very beginning of the
5 institution there were a number of female lay staff
6 and they worked alongside the children in the
7 supervision and in the care of the children. That
8 would have been one aspect. Then you would have had
9 the farm. A number of men were employed as farm
10 hands. As far as we can gather from the annals and
11 from the Sisters who are still alive with whom we met
12 they worked directly under the direction of what was
13 called a farm steward.

14 65 Q. I think you are probably aware, Sister, that a number
15 of complainants have made specific complaints about
16 one or two farm hands --

17 A. That's correct, yes.

18 66 Q. -- in the context of sexual abuse. Can I ask you from
19 your inquiries do you know how the farm hands were
20 recruited, who would have interviewed them, who would
21 have had responsibility for them?

22 A. No, we did try to get some information on that, but
23 we really, we couldn't find out who actually
24 interviewed or employed the men who worked on the
25 farm. There was the steward who worked in charge of
26 the staff would appeared to have been employed and
27 interviewed by the Superior, because there's an entry
28 in the annals in 1949 that states on page 107:

29 "Mother (inaudible) which would have

1 been the name of the superior] engaged
2 a new steward [and it gives his name]
3 excellent at his work and gets the best
4 possible yield from tillage, cattle,
5 etc".

6 That's the only entry we have as to who interviewed
7 or who engaged staff. So while she obviously was
8 involved, and I would presume she would have been
9 involved in the employment of the stewards, there is
10 no indication as to how the farm workers themselves
11 were actually employed. We know the men worked under
12 the stewards, we know they had their meals in
13 St. Patrick's, but they had their meal in a separate
14 dining room to the other staff who worked in the
15 institution.

16 67 Q. It appears from the complaints which have been made
17 that the complaints related to I think it was two
18 people, and do you know how many farm hands would
19 have been working there over that period we are
20 talking about here 1933 to 1966?

21 A. No, I wouldn't know how many but we did have, now I
22 don't have it with me but we do have a list of names
23 of people either mentioned in the annals or whom the
24 Sisters remembered. So I could make that available
25 to you if that's helpful.

26 68 Q. Very good. The issue of child care and child care
27 training is something that you might be able to
28 assist the Commission on. What training would have
29 been available for staff during the relevant period?

30 A. There was no, as I think we probably all know, there

1 was no specific training in childcare available in
2 Ireland until the course began in Kilkenny in 1970.
3 We do have some indication that Sisters got training
4 prior to that time. A number of them, for instance,
5 seemed to have attended a childcare course in Camden
6 Town in London, which was run by a congregation of
7 sisters and was a one year course.

8
9 Now, I have tried to find out what that course was
10 about and I have failed. Somebody remembered, and
11 perhaps if it is of relevance I could do some more
12 research on that, it seems to have been a course on
13 child welfare not necessarily directly on child care,
14 but child welfare. We also know that two sisters went
15 to London for a refresher course in child welfare in
16 1956. While they were there they spend a week
17 visiting different schools and they saw the group
18 system in action and it was as a result of that then
19 I think after that then that we moved into the group
20 system in the organisation of the institution.

21 69 Q. But so far as formal training in childcare was
22 concerned there was nothing in Ireland you say,
23 nothing available until after the school would have
24 changed its role in 1966, this would have happened
25 about 1970 you think?

26 A. That's right, the childcare course in Kilkenny.
27 There were other of our Sisters in other institutions
28 in England, for instance, did do -- they did some
29 courses as well, but maybe that was post 1970 as

1 well. I'm not certain about that.

2 70 Q. Can I ask you about the organisation of the school,
3 how it would have been divided up into the different
4 age groups? I know we are talking about age one or
5 less up to age nine, but within that group were there
6 subgroups?

7 A. Now, in the earlier years of the institution, up to
8 1956 there was no grouping other than the nursery and
9 toddlers, they were in a separate group to the rest
10 of the children in the institution, but it was run as
11 one institution in terms of the rest of the children.
12 So there would have been no dividing up of the
13 children and no grouping system at all, it would have
14 been just, it would have been a system in itself
15 really, of which all the children were engaged in the
16 same activities at the same time every day in the
17 same places presumably.

18 71 Q. Yes. And -- sorry ... (INTERJECTION)

19 A. Now I was just going to say then that the group
20 system was introduced in 1956 and three groups were
21 established and then in 1957 when they built a new
22 nursery the small children were divided into two
23 groups so you have the nursery group and what is
24 known as the "Angel" group, which I presume were the
25 toddlers. So, you have the nursery group, the
26 toddlers group and three other groups.

27
28 I think in some photographs that we have offered to
29 the Commission I think you see the photographs of

1 those groups on -- it is photo file two, groups 1956
2 onwards. So we actually see the three groups there
3 in 1956. There is a substantial, I didn't count the
4 number of children in them, but there is a big group
5 of children. It also gives an indication I think
6 there -- that is in appendix two, I'm sorry, it's
7 numbers four, five and onwards -- it also gives an
8 indication there that there was a Sister in charge of
9 each group whom you see on the right-hand side and on
10 the left-hand side there appears to be one staff.
11 That generally seems to have been the ratio of
12 staff to children; a Sister and a staff in each
13 group. Then in number seven you see a mixed group
14 there, the toddlers are at the end of the group and
15 the little boys and then you see the nursery and
16 toddlers groups in number eight, nine, ten and 11. So
17 they give some sense I suppose of the groupings.

18 72 Q. When a child left the nursery was he placed then in a
19 group?

20 A. That appears to have been the practice. The child
21 left the nursery at whatever age and was placed in a
22 group. Now, the groups were, and you can see that in
23 those photographs, there was mixed age groups. So
24 you would have had little ones from four or five up
25 to ten in each group. They weren't grouped according
26 to age, they were of mixed ages within the group.
27 There were approximately 30 to 40 children in each
28 group with a Sister in charge and one or two lay
29 staff.

1
2 Now, efforts were made physically to adapt the
3 building so that the children in the three groups
4 would have their own areas and they are listed
5 somewhere there in 1956 presumably, yes, they are
6 listed on page of the first appendix. While it was an
7 effort -- the effort I'm not sure how successful it
8 would have been in comparison with other of our
9 institutions where they actually would have gone into
10 separate houses, though indeed that had its own
11 downfall as well -- in 1956, for instance, we are
12 told it was to re-arrange for the division of the
13 children. So for instance, they divided the big
14 dining room by glass partitions, painted them each a
15 different colour. The dormitory was painted pink.
16 Newly tiled floor presses made a combined work and
17 play room for one group, etc. So they did try to
18 accommodate in some fashion.

19 73 Q. I presume, well as one would expect, there must have
20 been many siblings there over the years.

21 A. Indeed they were, I'm sure.

22 74 Q. Was there any protocol in place for trying to ensure
23 that there was some contact between brothers who
24 would have been there at the same time?

25 A. We found nothing to indicate that there was a formal
26 system that would have insured that the siblings
27 would have come into daily or frequent contact. There
28 was obviously informal contact particularly in the
29 playground, the playing fields, and presumably they

1 would have seen each other during the day, but I
2 found nothing to indicate that they would have had a
3 formal system whereby brothers met each other or were
4 even to say they were in the same group. I have
5 nothing to say they weren't but I wouldn't say they
6 were.

7 75 Q. Yes, do any of the records of the school indicate
8 that there was any consideration given to this or is
9 there any mention of that issue in any of the
10 documents you have come across?

11 A. No, there is no mention of it.

12 76 Q. And what about boys who would have been in St.
13 Patrick's if they had sisters of approximately the
14 same age, was there a similar school for girls in the
15 same vicinity?

16 A. There was a similar school in St. Joseph's which was
17 in Kilkenny city itself. Now, again there is nothing
18 to indicate that there was any formal system whereby
19 the boys were brought to visit their sisters in St.
20 Joseph's or St. Joseph's were brought to -- or the
21 girls were brought down to St. Patrick's.

22
23 we do, however, have some record of parents, the
24 Sisters would have remembered this, that when parents
25 came to visit sometimes they brought, with the father
26 who would have brought the girls from St. Joseph's
27 down on his visits to St. Patrick's. They also went
28 up and down for concerts and for dramas and that so
29 they would have met, but the contact would have been

1 fairly minimum.

2 77 Q. How frequently?

3 A. It wouldn't have been frequent. I would have thought

4 the concerts would have taken place maybe twice a

5 year or so. So, there was really no, to my

6 knowledge, either from the Department or from

7 ourselves, the issue just didn't seem to arise.

8 78 Q. Do you know from looking at the records are there any

9 statistics available to show how many boys going

10 through St. Patrick's would have had sisters in

11 St. Joseph's which would have been presumably the

12 nearest institution to St. Patrick's?

13 A. Those statistics certainly would be available. We

14 didn't look at them from that perspective, but we can

15 certainly do so.

16 79 Q. Well, without giving statistics, do you know from

17 what you have seen would there have been a

18 significant number or a small number in this

19 category?

20 A. I really couldn't say, I know there were some, but I

21 would be going now on -- it is not something I

22 concentrated on, but I could certainly answer that in

23 more detail perhaps later.

24 80 Q. Maybe the Commissioners can let you know in due

25 course if they want you to pursue that?

26 A. There would no problem.

27 81 Q. But you have no further information about that?

28 A. No, I just didn't avert to it I must say myself in

29 terms of this hearing.

1 82 Q. What about the daily time-table and the routine in
2 the school, what form did that take?
3 A. We have a fairly comprehensive view of it I think,
4 some of it depending on the memories of the Sisters,
5 so there is a little bit of variation from year to
6 year. But it would appear that from the period we
7 are talking about '33 to the mid '50s that the older
8 boys would have gone to mass each day at 7 o'clock.
9 That appears to have been stopped some time before
10 1958, we can't be clear on the year and from then on
11 just the two alter boys went to mass.
12
13 From 1950s onward the children got up in time to have
14 their breakfast at 8.30, now some would say it was
15 eight, so it was eight or 8.30. Following which they
16 would have cleared and tied the dining room, made
17 their beds and assembled in the play hall ready for
18 school at 9.30 which continued until 12 of 12.30,
19 again there is a bit of disparity about that.
20
21 Dinner was then following the morning school. The
22 school then recommenced and continued until 2.30 for
23 the junior boys and 3 o'clock for the older boys.
24
25 They seemed to have been given cocoa and bread when
26 they went up after they came from school and before
27 they went to what is known to the "parade" to play.
28
29 Then after the playing they had to do presumably

1 homework and there were chores to be done and then
2 they went to the chapel for rosary before tea which
3 was about 6 pm. It appears then that they went to
4 bed from 7.30 onwards. Now, there is some variation
5 in that, but generally that would have been the
6 regime.

7 83 Q. Yes, could you tell the Commission about the form of
8 education the boys got and the schooling they got
9 when they were there?

10 A. They went to school each day from 9.30 until dinner
11 and after dinner from, until 2.30 or three and they
12 followed the normal school, primary school
13 curriculum.

14
15 Now, we had some of the reports. We have two
16 references in the annals to the primary school and
17 they appear to have been very positive the
18 Inspector's reports in relation to the school. They
19 were in the annals and they were also in I think in
20 the discovery document from the Department of
21 Education to the Commission. I suppose the school was
22 within the grounds, therefore, it was only the
23 children from St. Patrick's industrial school who
24 went to the school. There are photographs which show
25 the school which would have been separate to the
26 institution but within it on numbers 12 and 13, it
27 gives a sense of what the school might have been
28 like.

29 84 Q. In later years did some of the boys go out to the De

1 La Salle school in Kilkenny?

2 A. They did.

3 85 Q. When you say "later years" now in your statement --

4 A. I'm not sure.

5 86 Q. -- what period are we talking about?

6 A. I would think it was in the 60s but I would have to

7 confirm that.

8 87 Q. When your statement says "a few of the boys" would

9 that mean that there was some selection process as to

10 who went out?

11 A. It would appear that there was, yes. Again I'm not

12 sure of the numbers. I know they were small,

13 relative to the number of children who continued to

14 go to the school on the grounds of St. Patrick's.

15 88 Q. Yes. What about duties the boys would have had during

16 the day?

17 A. During the day in the earlier years, by that I really

18 mean, you know, the 30's and the 40's, they had

19 duties in various parts of the house. We know, for

20 example, they worked in the dining room, in the

21 tailoring room, in the dairy, they washed the

22 corridors and stairs and they helped on the farm

23 during the summer months picking fruit, etc. There is

24 a photograph of the tailoring room there Oat number

25 14 in the photo file.

26

27 Now, we know for a fact too that from -- there was no

28 formal involvement of the boys in the farm, kitchen,

29 laundry or tailor room. I think what was meant by

1 that was that there wouldn't have been a particular
2 boy assigned to a particular area for a particular
3 length of time. They were very small boys so their
4 involvement would have been more informal rather than
5 formal.

6
7 In the later years, from 1940's onwards then, the
8 older boys would have helped out with light duties.
9 The ones that are mentioned in the annals and the
10 Sisters talk about collecting eggs from the farm,
11 bringing tea to the farm hands during harvest time,
12 dusting the chapel, sweeping the dormitory stairs and
13 floors, helping in the dining room, washing dishes,
14 setting tables, buttering bread. They picked fruit
15 from the garden and during the harvest they would
16 have helped in a very limited way. Now, the Sisters
17 would have described that more as if they were out,
18 kind of, following the combine harvester rather than
19 they were actually forking hay or whatever. Again
20 there are a number of photographs of the children on
21 the farm number 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 show the children
22 on the farm.

23 89 Q. From what you have seen from the records --

24 A. Yes.

25 90 Q. -- and from your conversations with other Sisters who
26 would have been there at the time did they have any
27 particular quotas in terms of the tasks they were to
28 perform or were they just of a general nature?

29 A. They were of a general nature, especially those in

1 the later years meaning from the 40's onwards, there
2 wouldn't have been a particular amount of work that
3 they would have had to do. I presume they knew what
4 they had to do on any given week. Also, and I think
5 again we are quite sure of this in so far as we can
6 be, that any work in which they were engaged a Sister
7 or a member of staff was also with them engaged in
8 the same work.

9 91 Q. Yes. Can I ask you about recreation and sports?

10 A. Yes.

11 92 Q. What facilities were available for the boys at St.
12 Patrick's?

13 A. Well, there was a large area, as you know, the farm
14 itself, so they had large fields and a play area
15 which was commonly known as the Boys' Parade. That
16 was provided in 1902. In the annals it is noted that
17 in 1902 some farmland was taken for extra play area
18 and in 1946 swings and slides made of wood were
19 installed. Again there is some photographs showing
20 those. A wireless was installed in 1926 for the use
21 of the community and the boys and the staff. In 1946
22 a swinging boat was added to the boys' sports field
23 together with two trapeze bars, a vaulting horse and
24 jumps as well as six small swings and they put two
25 punching balls into the boys' play hall.

26

27 We do know they trained in music and they had a
28 percussion band. There is a reference actually in
29 the very early years prior to the period we are

1 discussing to having a teacher got over from France
2 in terms of some form of musical training that they
3 were to have.

4 93 Q. Yes.

5 A. The held an annual sports day from June 1951 onwards.

6 94 Q. Was that open to the public, or would it just have
7 been an internal ... (INTERJECTION)

8 A. I would not think so, I would have thought it was
9 internal, yes. In 1952 there is a record of drill and
10 Irish dancing teaching taken place and displays were
11 held on the 29th of June. Now, it would appear
12 people came into those displays because, maybe not
13 these photographs 24, no 25 and 26 don't show that,
14 but I think there are one or two other photographs
15 that do show an audience at these drill displays.

16 95 Q. Yes.

17 A. Then the tennis court was constructed in 1955 and in
18 1964 a ball alley was constructed. We do know they
19 played hurling and football and went out to play
20 matches.

21 96 Q. Yes, and did they go on outings at all?

22 A. They did -- well, they went on walks outside St.
23 Patrick's, I presume these were very formal walks,
24 two by two with a staff member in front and a staff
25 member behind. I wouldn't think they were walks in
26 the sense of how other children might have known
27 them.

28

29 They did go into town for entertainments like the

1 circus. Now, their access to the town would have been
2 limited. I suppose partly because of the distance
3 into it, but from the 50's onwards we do know they
4 went in occasionally shopping and into the 60's.
5 Overall compared to other children perhaps their
6 access would have been quite limited.

7 97 Q. Yes, your statement refers to the fact that they
8 would have entered competitions in the town, what
9 sort of competitions?

10 A. Indeed they went into, they entered competitions, for
11 instance, they went into this whole Irish drama
12 competition and they got two first prizes in the
13 under eight and under ten categories. In 1940 they
14 won the cup for under eight years and two medals for
15 best acting. There are other mentions of winning and
16 participating in the earlier years. If you look at
17 the number 29 photograph you will see the little
18 fellow holding the cup there.

19 98 Q. Yes.

20 A. And then in subsequent photographs you can see the
21 dramas they put on. That seems to have been very
22 popular the plays and the dramas. They were part of
23 the An Tostal festival, for instance, whenever that
24 was I think that was sometime in the 50's.

25 MR. RYAN: 50's.

26 A. And they put on a lot of plays and seemed to have
27 been very good at them, for instance, if the Superior
28 had a celebration or something they would have put on
29 a play for her. Christmas they put on plays and

1 concerts for the staff and that seems to have been a
2 regular feature of life for them.

3 99 Q. MR. McGOVERN: I think there were
4 occasional trips to Dublin.
5 You have mentioned one in 1964 to Guinnesses and a
6 visit to the zoo and Santa Clause?

7 A. That's right. Now, that would have been I'd say
8 non-existent up to -- prior to the 60's possibly. I
9 mean have no reason to say yes or no. They would have
10 been rear, no question about it.

11 100 Q. And I think at Christmas time you mentioned the fact
12 that certain families, prominent families and
13 businesses in the area would have contributed to
14 parties and presents and so on.

15 A. Indeed. They were extremely generous, yes, different
16 groupings in Kilkenny and different families would
17 have contributed.

18 101 Q. Yes, and I think the Artane Boys' band came down to
19 perform at Goram park races and they would have made
20 a visit to the school and stayed there.

21 A. They came for a meal to the school when they were
22 finished playing for the Goram races. But many of
23 the Artane boys, not many, some would have been past
24 pupils of St. Patrick's so in the annals it describes
25 the delight of the Sisters in seeing the past pupils
26 coming back and they would have played to the
27 children in St. Patrick's. There were descriptions of
28 that in detail in the annals.

29 102 Q. Could we move on now, Sister, to the issue of

1 discipline in the school and punishment.

2 A. Sure.

3 103 Q. What was the regime in place in the relevant period?

4 A. Well, slapping was obviously a form of punishment
5 that was used to discipline the children. As far as
6 we can gather it was normally done with the palm of
7 the hand and a cane or ruler was sometimes used.

8

9 We have tried to establish whether children were
10 isolated, sent to dormitories, but that does not seem
11 to, at least from the sources we have, it does not
12 seem to have happened.

13

14 In the later years they were deprived of pocket
15 money. There was a little shop that was set up in St.
16 Patrick's in the later years and it was opened at
17 certain times and the boys would use their pocket
18 money to buy, they would have been deprived of those
19 kinds of treats.

20 104 Q. Was there any issue involving bedwetting, was that a
21 problem and how was it dealt with if there was a
22 problem?

23 A. Indeed, yes, it was a problem. We are quite clear I
24 think as to what happened. We were told that in the
25 earlier days that any older child who wet his bed had
26 to bring down the wet sheets to the laundry in the
27 morning. He might be left standing beside his bed
28 for five to ten minutes when it was discovered that
29 the bed was wet.

1 105 Q. Sorry, can I interrupt you there, sorry, Sister, when
2 you are talking about older children obviously it's
3 ten or younger but do you know what is meant by older
4 children?

5 A. The smaller children, the staff would have brought
6 down, again we are clear about that, in the 50's and
7 60's the staff would have brought down the sheets for
8 the smaller boys, I'm presume we are meaning "boys",
9 I am only guessing now, you know, seven, maybe eight,
10 nine, ten. The smaller ones would not have been
11 required to do that.

12 106 Q. So you say they might have been left standing for
13 five or ten minutes beside the bed?

14 A. Yes.

15 107 Q. And then what would happen then?

16 A. Then in the play hall when they lined up to go to
17 school they would have been called out and they would
18 have been slapped for wetting the bed.

19
20 Those children who constantly wet their beds, they
21 were woken up twice at night. A Sister would get
22 them up and they would go to the toilet. We tried to
23 establish this with the Sisters who we were talking
24 about it with, it would appeared to have happened at
25 11 at night and at three in the morning perhaps. They
26 would get a limited amount to drink after teatime.

27

28 The slapping would have stopped in the late 50's and
29 60's and the staff would have brought the wet bed

1 sheets down. There was a slight change.

2 108 Q. Yes. What about the issue of family contact? I know
3 I dealt with this slightly at an earlier stage in
4 terms of the children who might have been, for
5 example, from Dublin and other places far removed
6 from Kilkenny. What was the position about parental
7 visits, were they frequent or not?

8 A. I think there were very few in fact. The cost of
9 travelling from Dublin to Kilkenny would have been
10 prohibitive for most of them. So, that those, which
11 were the majority of the boys, who were from Dublin
12 would have seen very little of their parents really.
13 We do know they would have come maybe on bank
14 holidays or on Sundays when the fares were cheaper in
15 those days seemingly.

16
17 We know that the visitors to the children, there was
18 a place set aside for them, which was known as St.
19 Antony's and the visitors were given a meal when they
20 came and they were free to take their children out
21 for walks or into town and they were free to come,
22 there seems to have been no prohibition on visitors
23 as far as we can establish. In fact I think they
24 were encouraged, because while on the one hand I say
25 that attention to brothers and sisters and making
26 sure that they were in contact and met that does not
27 appear to have been there, at the same time there was
28 great concern about the families of the children. I
29 noticed, for instance, that in 1954 there is a record

1 of a death of one of the Sisters, this is in the
2 annals on page 111:

3 "She devoted much of her time to
4 tracing relations of the boys and
5 girls. The letters she received from
6 past pupils bares witness to the high
7 regard in which they held her".

8 So she obviously spent a lot of her time trying to
9 trace the relations. So I would gather from that that
10 for some of them they had no contact with parents
11 and, therefore, there was an effort to try and trace
12 the parents and put them in contact with them. So
13 there are conflicting, not conflicting but maybe just
14 different approaches to the issues.

15 109 Q. Yes. You mention the fact that travelling would have
16 been difficult and prohibitive for most of these
17 people and that's from Dublin. I note in the table
18 of statistics dealing with the county of origin of
19 the boys there is not an insignificant number from
20 Clare, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon. I suppose it would
21 have been even more difficult for people of those
22 areas to visit their children, would that be so?

23 A. Indeed, I would think so, I mean I didn't go into
24 that in any great detail but I would think so.

25 110 Q. In terms of the physical care of children what regime
26 was in place? If we could deal with this in the
27 subcategories that you refer to in your statement. If
28 we deal with clothing first of all.

29 A. Yes, now they do appear to be well clothed. I think
that can be seen in the photographs at the back. Now,

1 what we are told is that the children were dressed
2 uniformly and yet right through the photographs that
3 we have there seems to have been quite a variety in
4 some instances in what they actually wore. So they
5 did appear to be well clothed, but they were uniform
6 and the clothes were communal. And they were made in
7 the tailoring room or they were purchased from
8 Munster House Drapery store in Kilkenny. They seemed
9 to have a separate set of clothes for Sundays and for
10 going out insofar as we can gather. For instance, it
11 is just interesting here, there is photographs of the
12 boys at the St. Patrick's day parade in which they
13 were very much part. There is a note in the annals to
14 say that they were on that St. Patrick's day, they
15 were all dressed in their new Foxford tweed coats,
16 that is on page 113 of the annals. The clothing,
17 there are examples of it right through those
18 photographs which seem to indicate that the clothing
19 was adequate.

20 111 Q. Yes. I think an issue arose in the 1940's concerning
21 the children going barefoot in the summer.

22 A. That's right.

23 112 Q. I don't want to delay on this, but there was
24 correspondence between the Department of Education
25 and the school and the Bishop got involved as well I
26 think?

27 A. He did and the medical officer got involved as well.

28 113 Q. Yes. I think what it all boiled down to was that
29 there was a difficulty in getting footwear and while

1 the Department wanted children to have footwear even
2 in the summer it was decided that this could be
3 deferred, because the boys enjoyed going barefoot.

4 A. Yes, and there even seemed to be some internal
5 argument within the Department, because some of the
6 letters in the Department to Inspector McCabe are
7 saying, you know, could she not compromise on this
8 and the medical officer, in fact, in the discovery
9 from the Department files, he says, "Going barefoot
10 is natural to all classes of children in the
11 country". So that the understanding was that the
12 children enjoyed it. It was in terms of the benefit
13 to the children rather than having to wear shoes and
14 socks and boots during the summer.

15 114 Q. And I think the concern of the Department turned
16 around issues such as tetanus if they got cut on
17 their foot or something of that nature.

18 A. It did indeed, yes.

19 115 Q. In any event I don't think there are any complaints
20 about this so maybe we can move on from it, but it is
21 something you referred to and I think you have dealt
22 with that.

23 A. I do because the correspondence was quite substantial
24 about it.

25 116 Q. Yes. On the issue of food. I think you have already
26 told the Commission that the school was quite
27 self-sufficient in terms of farm produce.

28 A. That's right.

29 117 Q. And you set out in your statement examples of the

1 food which was available and that is after referring
2 to comments from the Department inspectors indicating
3 that the food was satisfactory. Could you just take
4 us through a typical day and what would have been on
5 the menu in case an issue should arise about the
6 quality of the food. What would have been the
7 breakfast menu generally in the 50's say?

8 A. In the 50's as far as we could get the information
9 for breakfast they would have had porridge and cocoa
10 and fried bread. The bread would have been fried in
11 dipping for their breakfast. Later on they had
12 cornflakes on Sunday, they would have been considered
13 a treat I suppose in the later years. For dinner they
14 had soup and mince or stew, potatoes and vegetables.
15 Sometimes they got rice, semolina or bread pudding
16 for desert and on very special days they'd have got
17 jelly and custard.

18 118 Q. Dinner would have been in the middle of the day I
19 suppose.

20 A. Dinner would have been in the middle of the day.

21 119 Q. As we all remember it in those days.

22 A. Indeed, yes.

23 120 Q. Then after school?

24 A. After school they were given cocoa and bread and then
25 at teatime they were given sausages or eggs boiled or
26 scrambled, bread and homemade jam or dripping. We
27 know that Crotty's of Kilkenny gave confectionary and
28 bracks occasionally and a Madeira cake was made in
29 the institution kitchen and homemade ice cream was

1 made during the summer and given occasionally to the
2 children.

3 121 Q. How were the children in the school supervised,
4 Sister?

5 A. They were supervised at all times. I'm sure the
6 children would have experienced this as kind of rigid
7 in a sense that they were never kind of free of
8 supervision. Yet I suppose it is true to say too
9 that in spite of every effort by parents or teachers
10 to supervise children whether in school or in home or
11 in an institution like St. Patrick's you can't
12 protect the children 100% of the time from accidents
13 or bullying or whatever.

14
15 The supervision would have been considered to be very
16 adequate because there was somebody in charge of the
17 children at all times.

18
19 At night-time a Sister or a member of staff slept in
20 each of the sleeping areas. Later on it appears to
21 have been a nun, a Sister who slept most of the time
22 in each of the dormitories presumably with her own
23 group. We have notice in 1948, for instance, we are
24 told that a cubicle was cut out of each of the
25 dormitories for a staff or Sister to sleep in.

26 122 Q. Yes. Did the question of holidays arise?

27 A. Yes, holidays, the question did arise. There was a
28 circular which was sent to all industrial schools by
29 the Department of Education on 18th November 1944. It

1 requested that all children to be sent home for the
2 full holiday period of 21 days except in cases where
3 this would not be appropriate because of the family
4 situation and I'm quoting it says for example:

5 "Parents of criminal habits, parents so
6 wretchedly poor, parents who have no
7 homes should not be allowed to have
8 their children".

9 Now, the manager of St. Patrick's then wrote back to
10 the Department in answer to this and said that home
11 leave had been granted to any relatives who asked for
12 it but in effect that was only eight children. It was
13 granted to eight and one was not granted it. It was
14 very small relative to the number of children in the
15 institution at that time. But we do know that friends
16 of children who lived in Kilkenny, I mean the friends
17 who lived in Kilkenny of children, took them out
18 occasionally. Then the remaining children who have
19 stayed in St. Patrick's for the holidays they went on
20 some outings and the Inspector notes in her reports
21 of the 5th August 1948 that picnics, games and walks
22 had been arranged that's in one of the reports.

23 123 Q. When you say "the Inspector" is this the Department
24 of Education?

25 A. The Department Inspector, yes. There is a note in her
26 report that says:

27 "Called to see how the children [I
28 think] were treated during the
29 holidays".

1 And she notes this in her report.

2 124 Q. I think in later years the children used to go to
3 Tramore occasionally, is that right?

4 A. Yes, they went every year from 1933 they went to
5 Woodstown in the annals we're told that began in
6 1933:

7 "Most of the children had grown up
8 since they were three or four in the
9 house and had never been so far abroad
10 before".

11 sixty children went off that distance.

12 125 Q. What was Woodstown?

13 A. Woodstown was a seaside place. I don't know how far
14 it was from Kilkenny, it was a distance.

15 126 Q. It was by the sea?

16 A. It was by the sea. They say then that:

17 "The boys went again the following year
18 for their annual outing and seeing how
19 much they enjoyed it last year and how
20 safe was the strand and sea we took two
21 buses and over 100 boys had a happy
22 outing".

23 Again there are photographs of that in the photo file
24 at the back of appendix 1. They did go to Tramore
25 later on. From 1962 now I would have to be accurate
26 about that, I think that is the first reference.

27 127 Q. Did a practice develop of arranging for the families
28 to take children out? I'm talking about families who
29 wouldn't have been of the same family as the child?

 A. That's right.

- 1 128 Q. Would they have taken them out?
- 2 A. Yes, we are told that from the 1950's onward a number
3 of children whose families were not in a position to
4 take them went out on holidays with befriending
5 families. Now, these seemed to have been organised
6 both in Dublin and in Kilkenny. What I gather what
7 happened was that a letter was written by the manager
8 of St. Patrick's in the early 1950's to various
9 people requesting them to take the children. Now, she
10 wrote this letter to the Mother Societies in
11 Harold's Cross in Basilea[?], in Stanoff Street and
12 Severin Place, we are sure of those. In it she writes
13 requesting that they would:
- 14 "Take a small boy for a holiday each
15 year of the month of August, write to
16 him and send a parcel for Christmas,
17 Easter and his birthday and continue to
18 interest yourself in him when he goes
19 to Artane, go to see him occasionally
20 and take him out an odd time. This
21 means that the boy has somebody. He
22 has a friend and home behind him".
- 19 129 Q. Do you know was there much take up on that?
- 20 A. I would think there was. You will see there there is
21 a photograph at the end which shows the boys going
22 off on that to their befriending families. Yes, it's
23 number 47 the second last one. We are told that the
24 photographs show the boys with their little suits and
25 the little cases going off on their holidays. So, I
26 presume there was a take-up on that, but it would
27 have been relative as well. Not every child would
28 have gone obviously.
- 29 130 Q. Sister, I would now like to ask you about the regime

1 of medical care which existed.

2 A. Yes, from the discovery documentation that was
3 furnished by the Department of Education and Science
4 we get detailed reports regarding the quality of the
5 medical and dental care at St. Patrick's, Kilkenny.
6 All of the reports that we had access to through that
7 discovery are favourable and the care is frequently
8 referred to as very good or excellent.

9 131 Q. Yes. And I want to ask you about one case in
10 particular and we won't be mentioning the name, but
11 there is in the documentation, which is available
12 evidence that one of the complaints had a
13 stepbrother who had a condition of epilepsy and
14 subsequently died. This was at a time when he would
15 have been in the school.

16 A. That's right.

17 132 Q. And had been in hospital.

18 A. Yes.

19 133 Q. And we know from the records that this child had a
20 number of visits to hospital.

21 A. That's right.

22 134 Q. Was there any protocol in place in the school to deal
23 with children who might have had serious illness and
24 who would then die? Was there any protocol in
25 relation to dealing with (a) the illness and (b) how
26 the death was handled?

27 A. A child who would -- first of all, I don't think that
28 children would have been admitted with what was
29 considered a serious illness and epilepsy wouldn't

1 have been in that category. It would have been
2 considered something that could be handled on a
3 day-to-day basis. So, that a child who would have
4 had, for instance, some form of epilepsy would have
5 led the normal life within the school, normal insofar
6 as as he was capable of doing so, and his seizures
7 would have handled in the same way as they would have
8 been handled within a family.

9

10 Now, the child was obviously admitted to hospital on
11 occasion, I'm not sure why but possibly as a result
12 of seizure or following the seizures and he died in
13 hospital. So, we wouldn't have had children who were
14 -- they may have become ill in the course of their
15 stay but I'm not sure that children would have been
16 admitted with a profound illness to St. Patrick's.

17 135 Q. There is a document referring to this child which
18 states:

19

20 "This is to certify that the above
21 child is an epileptic and is mentally
retarded to a marked degree".

22

23 That would tend to suggest that, if the record is
24 correct, that a child with significant mental
25 retardation was probably within the school. Was
26 there any regime in place or protocol in place to
27 assess children as to the suitability for them to be
in an institution like that?

28 A. Yes. My understanding is that that child was
29 admitted when he was a baby. It would -- I presume

1 that his level of, or capacity would have become
2 evident as the years went by. We are fairly sure from
3 records that we have, and again we brought copies of
4 them, from correspondence with the Department and the
5 school over the years that children who had a mental
6 handicap of sufficient severity were not admitted to
7 St. Patrick's, for instance, we have one dated
8 6/7/'49:

9 "To certificate that [names the child]
10 is unfit for industrial training owing
11 to mental deficiency".

12 Again we have:

13 "This is to certify this child is unfit
14 for training in the above institution
15 because of his mental retardation".

16 I can check I presume those children would have
17 become of an age, those children were not admitted
18 because they were of an age where it was possible to
19 know the degree of their retardation. I have no
20 reason for why that child would have been kept to the
21 age of seven other than that his half brother was in
22 the school. He was obviously being cared for in the
23 infirmary and in the toddlers group. I'm not sure if
24 -- there is no record, but he may well have gone to
25 the primary school, we would have that in the primary
26 school records which we might not have looked up yet.
27 I would think that that was how it came is to be that
28 he remained there.

29 136 Q. In your search through all the records that are

1 available did you find any correspondence or anything
2 of that nature with the parents of any child who had
3 died in the school or anything to show what contact
4 was made or steps were taken to deal with what would
5 be a tragic situation?

6 A. Sure. We know from other institutions that there was
7 an incidental return book in which entries were made
8 every three months and in those returns there was a
9 column which was headed: "Discharged or died during
10 the month if a death or a discharge by order of the
11 Chief Secretary of State" and there was a column to
12 list where the children went into hospital and when
13 they were re- admitted. Now, St. Patrick's would
14 have had that system and I spoke with one or two
15 sisters in an effort to find out what happened when a
16 child died. It seems to have varied sometimes it was
17 the manager who tried to make contact with the
18 parents, sometimes it was the Department who made
19 contact with the parents.

20 137 Q. So far as your research is concerned you haven't been
21 able to find any copy of any correspondence or record
22 other than formal records in registers and matters of
23 that sort?

24 A. No, we have no records of that, at all of such.

25 138 Q. Was there a GP who would have attended the school
26 regularly?

27 A. Yes, indeed, and they are named in various places.
28 The dentist also did attend regularly. In fact we
29 know for a fact that the dentist that, I suppose

1 nothing changes really, it was very difficult to get
2 the dentist to attend because he was so booked up. We
3 have a note somewhere to say that actually the
4 Sisters got the dentist in at their own expense and
5 paid for 40 children to have their teeth seen to. So
6 the GP would have been very regular. I'd say the
7 dentist was not as regular at all.

8
9 The children would have had the normal childhood
10 diseases and I think there is a photograph of the
11 infirmary at the very back of this photograph album
12 in 1930's and it shows children we think with mumps
13 and other illnesses possibly.

14
15 The most common cause of death in the earlier years
16 for the children who died in St. Patrick's were
17 consumption, TB and heart disease. They were cared
18 for in the infirmary for minor illnesses and one of
19 the Sisters whom I said was there I think for
20 36 years she spent her time between the infirmary and
21 the nursery, the infirmary and the toddlers group
22 perhaps. She died in 1997 unfortunately because she
23 had most contact with the past residents, many of
24 them visited her and indeed came to her funeral. So
25 the information we have regarding the treatment of
26 the sick would depend very much on her, but we know
27 that they were cared for on the premises unless it
28 was necessary to have them taken to hospital and then
29 they went to St. Luke's in Kilkenny.

1 139 Q. Can I ask you now about the issue of Department
2 Inspections, were these frequent inspections or were
3 they rather random?

4 A. They seemed to have been fairly frequent. Certainly
5 they happened once a year sometimes more than once a
6 year and there is evidence that the Inspector would
7 have stayed overnight so that there would have been a
8 two-day inspection.

9

10 We also, apart from the discovery documentation,
11 which we got from the discovery to the Commission, in
12 the annals that we had discovered there are notes of
13 Inspectors visits which are not noted in the
14 Department's discovery document, for instance, on
15 page 90 of the annals we are told that a Mr. Cusson,
16 Chairman of the Industrial Schools Commission:

17

18 "Expressed himself very pleased with
19 all he saw and delighted to find the
20 boys so friendly and happy [that was in
'34]. They also asked for a free day
for them after he inspected them".

21 Then we have:

22

23 "Ms. McNeill, an inspectress, visits
24 our school generally twice a year and
25 is always extremely pleased with
everything especially the health and
comfort of the boys".

26 So, while the Department -- we have no records
27 whatsoever of inspections. We only have what was
28 discovered to us through the Department.

29 140 Q. Would it be fair to say that from what has been

1 discovered it appears that there were regular
2 inspections?

3 A. They were regular and there seems to have been
4 on-going -- in fact the relationship seems to have
5 been very good, because you will find notes to the
6 effect that the inspector discussed with the manager
7 the improvements she was putting in place and then
8 she would express herself as very happy with whatever
9 had been put in place, so ...

10 141 Q. In the statement which you have provided to the
11 Commission you have "general observations".

12 A. Yes.

13 142 Q. And are there general observations you would like to
14 make here now that you have the opportunity to speak
15 on behalf of the Order?

16 A. If I may. I suppose these arise from my having spent
17 the time over the last few years trying to get a
18 sense of what has gone on in the various institutions
19 and now particularly the intensive work that would
20 have been carried out in the last couple of months in
21 relation to St. Patrick's even though our records are
22 as I indicated in the beginning.

23

24 I think, I first of all do want to pre-empt what the
25 conclusions the Commission will draw. I respect the
26 fact that they will draw their own conclusions about
27 St. Patrick's in due course, but there are some
28 general observations that I think I would like to
29 make recognising the fact of what was said already

1 that some of the past residents probably will not
2 agree with what I say. First of all, I would like to
3 say that St. Patrick's operated a general system that
4 was common to all such institutions at the time. The
5 very fact that large numbers of children, and we
6 there that there were up to 200 at times, were housed
7 in an institutional setting did result in systems and
8 structures which insured that there was good order
9 and discipline and good physical care of the
10 children, but often at the expense of the kind of
11 system we would expect today; a more personalised and
12 child focused service. I think that is self-evident
13 from our investigations of these institutions.

14
15 I think that the children were normally well cared
16 for in a physical and educational sense according to
17 the standards of the particular time and constantly
18 it is very difficult to keep that context in mind. I
19 find it difficult myself to keep the context in mind
20 and try to go back into those years and imagine what
21 they were like without using the mindset of 2005.

22
23 However while they were cared for in the physical
24 maybe and educational sense they did not have the
25 experiences and the interrelationships of a child
26 reared in a good and loving home setting even from
27 1933, even in the 30's and 40's. They did not have
28 the day-to-day interaction with family, with extended
29 family, with neighbours, with friends and indeed with

1 other school children, which would have been a
2 feature of other children's lives.
3
4 I think it is true to say that it was not possible to
5 give them the love and the time and the individual
6 attention that would generally be the experience of a
7 child in a good home at any such time. The fact that
8 a Sister or staff but usually a Sister had to be both
9 mother and father to 30 or more children would alone
10 have precluded this.
11
12 I would just like to stress that I think I lose
13 sight of that, these Sisters were for the most part
14 untrained. They had 30 to 40 children to care for
15 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They did what they
16 could to make sure the children were well and happy
17 but it was an impossibility. It was an impossible
18 situation in which they found themselves. I'm quite
19 sure that as a congregation we too did not recognise
20 at that time the support systems that might have
21 helped the Sisters in their work with the children.
22
23 It was wasn't possible for them to give each child
24 particular attention and care. There wasn't the
25 training of the Sisters or the staff that might have
26 enabled them to compensate somewhat in this area and
27 I think that is quite significant in St. Patrick's
28 particularly because it closed in '66. However at the
29 same time our sources do indicate that they did have

1 an appreciation to some degree of the needs of
2 growing children, and, for instance, in the
3 Inspector's report in 1939 referring to the small
4 children he writes:

5 "The Sisters appeared to be very
6 understanding with these children and
7 allow them a fair degree of latitude as
8 one would hope for in training little
9 boys".

9 There was the other aspect maybe just in relation to
10 this too. The fact that the school was quite distant
11 from the town I think meant that both the Sisters,
12 the staff and the children were more cut off
13 especially in the earlier days when transport would
14 not have been there from an institution that might
15 have been situated within a town.

16
17 The Sisters, I think this too is another aspect, the
18 Sisters and the staff were not made aware of the
19 backgrounds of the children or the reasons why they
20 were in St. Patrick's. Now, that was important to
21 St. Patrick's, I think it was more important maybe in
22 other institutions as well, I find it very difficult
23 myself at this day and age to comprehend how a child
24 could be received into an institution and the staff
25 not to know what the child had suffered before he or
26 she came. That was a huge factor I would say missing
27 in the care of the children.

28
29 All of the children who arrived in St. Patrick's if I

1 tried to put myself in their shoes they would have
2 been fearful and they would have been upset and they
3 would have been lonely. Again just imagining the
4 situation from the court to going down in the train
5 to Kilkenny with an escort and then being driven out
6 to this huge institution, up a big, long avenue
7 separated from what you knew, that must have been a
8 huge factor in the children's first impression of St.
9 Patrick's.

10
11 Some of them would have experienced deprivation and
12 neglect and even violence during their short lives
13 prior to coming to St. Patrick's, now we are aware of
14 that reading their histories prior to when they came
15 to us.

16
17 A number of children would probably have arrived in a
18 seriously stressed and traumatised state. It seems to
19 me without any training in this area that if a child
20 arrived in those days in a traumatised state, the
21 child would have been very silent and quiet and,
22 therefore, would have been perceived to be a good
23 child and the reasons for the child's maybe quiet and
24 withdrawn behaviour might not have been explored.

25
26 There was no service available to attend to the
27 individual, emotional or psychological needs of the
28 boys either when they arrived at St. Patrick's or
29 thereafter. That was just a feature of the day.

1 That's not a criticism of anybody, it just was the
2 way it was. In any event there would have been very
3 little understanding or appreciation of those needs
4 in the way that would have been common today I think.
5
6 While we know the general organisation and routine of
7 the school it is possible that events occurred of
8 which the sisters and the staff were not aware,
9 although there is no evidence of this in the
10 documentation. I think I said earlier that no matter
11 how much you tried to care for your child or your
12 children even in a family you cannot preclude the
13 possibility of bullying or exploitation or whatever,
14 as we know, tragically.
15
16 The children were closely supervised but this may not
17 have precluded isolated incidents of rough play,
18 bullying, etc.
19
20 The harshness of punishment would probably have
21 varied depending on the personality of the staff and
22 the sisters. I'm sure that some of the punishment
23 must have been experienced by the children as harsh
24 and humiliating and unmerited.
25
26 Undoubtedly each child and each Sister and each
27 member of staff has their own interpretation of what
28 life was like in St. Patrick's institution.
29

1 From my meetings with the Sisters, this would not
2 just have been recently, we would have met with them
3 way back when the whole issue of abuse surfaced in
4 the late 1990s. From my meetings with them and
5 particularly the Sisters from St. Patrick's their
6 memories are overwhelming positive in relation to the
7 children. Even my last meeting that was expressed.
8 While it can't compare with anything I say about the
9 children those Sisters are extremely distressed at
10 what is now unfolding, because they perceived their
11 relationship with the children as positive and happy.
12 This has been confirmed in our meetings with the
13 Sisters and those who worked in St. Patrick's. It
14 also echoes many of the comments through the annals
15 as, for example, just a small example of an extract
16 written from a letter I quoted already by the manager
17 where she is asking for families to take the children
18 she says:

19 "As for the boys themselves they are
20 delightful, normal in every way and
21 100% boy".

22 That is on page 109 of the annals. So the
23 perceptions differ and I appreciate and understand
24 that.

25
26 I think the Sisters and I believe that they did all
27 they could to provide for the children to the best of
28 their ability. They took a genuine interest in them
29 both while they were resident and after they left.

1 There would have been quite a substantial degree of
2 contact with past residents up to a number, up to
3 recent years. That contact would have been
4 particularly with Sister whom I mentioned,
5 Sr. Assumpta, many of the boys would have kept in
6 contact both by letter and by personal visits with
7 her, because she was the longest there and they would
8 have remembered her most strongly, but also with
9 other Sisters. Then there was a system in place in
10 the latter years I suppose in maybe the 80's
11 certainly in the 90's where many of the boys or a
12 number of the past residents came back to visit in
13 St. Patrick's and that would have been very much
14 facilitated during the Summertime. They often bring
15 their families with them.

16 143 Q. Sister, I wonder could I just interrupt you at that
17 point and ask you something in relation to those
18 visits? Has that pattern of former residents in the
19 school coming back either themselves or with their
20 families, has that changed in recent times?

21 A. I think I would have to say yes, that it has lessened
22 certainly and I think I can understand that. It has
23 lessened maybe because the boys find it difficult now
24 to come back to visit because of all that is going on
25 in terms of their address scheme and the Commission.
26 Maybe.

27
28 I also know for a fact, not so much in relation to
29 have St. Patrick's, but other institutions that they

1 were advised by their legal teams not to be in
2 contact with us and this caused great pain.
3
4 Now, in fact, I would have to say that some of the
5 past residents have ignored this and there are
6 relationship continuing of which maybe the legal
7 teams are not aware. Indeed we have encouraged that
8 insofar as that is possible, because I sometimes
9 think the past residents themselves are not fully
10 aware of -- I don't know what I want to say -- they
11 are not fully aware of the implications of everything
12 and they see their relationships with the Sisters as
13 very direct so they don't let anything else, some of
14 them, intrude on that.
15
16 I think just in relation to the interests the Sisters
17 took in them I think that, for instance, in 1966 when
18 the institution was closing the Sister who was the
19 manager at the time received a list from the
20 Department of where those children were going to be
21 transferred and she noted in a letter back to the
22 Department that some of the boys would be separated
23 from their friends and she wrote back to the
24 Department, she says:
25 "Allow us to make a few alterations as
26 these boys have friends who will be
27 helpful to them later on".
28 So at least there was some effort there to keep the
29 boys together.

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I know from their on-going contact with past residents that the Sisters would have presumed that the memories of the men were generally positive while not precluding the loneliness and deprivation expressed by some of them as a result of the systems that were in place in any such institution.

We are now aware that since the complaints surfaced in 2000 that some past residents have unhappy and painful memories of St. Patrick's which have affected them adversely in their later lives. As this information has gradually come to light and emerged in the last four or five years the Sisters who knew St. Patrick's have expressed deep regret and sadness and they are sentiments that are echoed by me, myself and by the congregation as a whole.

Finally, if I may, the sources and the records available to us are limited, very limited in relation to St. Patrick's. They don't provide us with a comprehensive and developmental record of St. Patrick's, but within the limitations of what we have it seems reasonable to me to conclude that the Sisters did their best with the resources available to them in terms of staff, child ratios, finance and the approach to child development generally accepted at any particular time in the history of the institution. However, having said that, it is clear

1 that the Sisters and the staff, no matter how good
2 the level of care they gave to the children could
3 never have substituted adequately for a normal, happy
4 family experience of childhood and that would have
5 been true of the children of St. Patrick's as well.
6 MR. McGOVERN: I would like to thank you
7 very much for your
8 evidence. There may be some questions that others
9 will wish to ask you, but I have no further
10 questions.

11
12 END OF DIRECT EXAMINATION OF SR. O'NEILL BY

13 MR. McGOVERN:

14
15 MR. MOORE: I have no questions,
16 Chairman.

17 MR. RYAN: Mr. Lowe, yes. We will give
18 you a another chance at the
19 end if you want to come back, Mr. Moore.

20
21 SR. O'NEILL WAS THEN QUESTIONED, AS FOLLOWS, BY

22 MR. LOWE:

23
24 144 Q. MR. LOWE: I have only one question.
25 I'm struggling with the
26 notion of the school for young boys under the age of
27 ten being called an industrial school with some
28 notion of industrial training. Can you throw some
29 light on that?

1 A. That indeed is a title we would have struggled with,
2 because in my memory up to about four years ago, we
3 always referred to St. Patrick's as an orphanage and
4 it was only when we started all of this I discovered
5 it was in fact an industrial school. The boys were --
6 the jobs which they were given to do I presume were
7 the industrial component of the school, but I'm not
8 so sure they trained them to do anything
9 systematically like carpentry or -- there is no
10 evidence of training in that sense of the little
11 boys. Maybe those who were involved in the tailoring
12 room or in the dairy or in the -- I don't know about
13 the farm because they weren't systemically involved
14 there, they got some training, but it would have been
15 more I think a training in maybe attending to
16 different things, being systematic, being disciplined
17 in their approach to work, I think that may have been
18 the component.

19 MR. LOWE: Yes, the letters which you
20 circulated this morning
21 they do refer to people being unfit for industrial
22 training.

23 A. That's right, yes. I have no way to reconcile the
24 notion of an industrial school with -- of children
25 being trained in industry with the children of St.
26 Patrick's. I presume it was simply the jobs that
27 they did and they did work, you know, they did the
28 cleaning and the tidying and they did work out in the
29 farm a little bit, picked the fruit, tailoring room.

1 We have no other evidence of actual training.
2 Actually if you go way, way back to the early 1800's
3 there is more evidence because there is reference
4 there to some kind of, I don't know, you wouldn't
5 call it flower arranging, but they certainly would
6 seemed to have made some kind of floral things and
7 sold them, but nothing in the later years that I can
8 find that I would have considered industrial.

9

10 END OF QUESTIONING OF SR. O'NEILL BY

11 MR. LOWE

12

13 SR. O'NEILL WAS THEN QUESTIONED, AS FOLLOWS, BY

14 MR. RYAN:

15

16 145 Q. MR. RYAN: Sister, you mentioned
17 visits from two people that
18 couldn't be explained, well I know the Cusson one,
19 that was District Justice Cusson who produced a
20 report in the 1930's so that explains that one.
21 Ms. McNeill I have a feeling that we have come across
22 that, but I just can't put my finger on that, that
23 may explain it.

24 A. McCabe, Ms. McCabe seems to have been very
25 ... (INTERJECTION).

26 146 Q. MR. RYAN: That's very clear.

27 A. Yes.

28 147 Q. MR. RYAN: Dr. McCabe was the medical
29 expert in the Department of

1 Education and we know all about that. Can I ask you
2 something more generally. I appreciate that what you
3 are doing is looking back assembling as many sources
4 as you can for the purpose of assisting us in our
5 work, producing these, collating it and looking at
6 them and interpreting them as best you can. If it
7 came to issues with the members of the community, the
8 nuns, disciplinary issues, whatever, where would that
9 be recorded, or where would that be, where would the
10 records of that be?

11 A. In relation to St. Patrick's we don't have any
12 records. Some other institutions we have what are
13 called Punishments Books and there is a detailed
14 record of every time. We have nothing in relation to
15 St. Patrick's. No such book.

16 148 Q. MR. RYAN: Sorry, well you are
17 answering another thing
18 that I was -- it is an interesting thing and thank
19 you very much. But that is the Punishment Book that
20 is required to be kept where children are given
21 punishments. There isn't such a book in respect of
22 St. Patrick's.

23 A. Not for St. Patrick's.

24 149 Q. MR. RYAN: No, I'm more concerned
25 with issues of discipline
26 regarding nuns. Presumably ... (INTERJECTION).

27 A. Discipline of them?

28 150 Q. MR. RYAN: Yes, that must have arisen
29 presumably in the 30 odds

1 years we are talking about. Assuming it did, where
2 would one find records of that?

3 A. I'm finding it difficult to imagine -- if there were
4 difficulties, can I just say it colloquially, if
5 there were difficulties with the Sisters, say she --
6 I don't know what she would be doing.

7 151 Q. MR. RYAN: Let me take an example.
8 suppose a nun was accused
9 by another nun of treating children brutally. I'm not
10 saying there is such a thing, of course, I'm just
11 taking it purely as an example, suppose for the sake
12 of argument.

13 A. Yes.

14 152 Q. MR. RYAN: Where would that be
15 recorded?

16 A. I have never come across the situation you describe.
17 Now, what would have happened I presume that if such
18 a thing happened that it would have been reported,
19 I'm only imagining this now.

20 153 Q. MR. RYAN: Yes, I appreciate the
21 limitations of the --
22 because if it is too much guesswork and if you want
23 to think about it and if you find there is something
24 you want to tell us about it you can furnish it
25 through Mr. Moore, Ms. O' Cleirigh, there is no
26 problem about that.

27 A. No, I don't think. I would have met these Sisters
28 from St. Patrick's in a group a few times so they
29 would have heard each other talk. I presume it would

1 have been reported to the Superior. If it was
2 serious enough it would then -- we had no problems in
3 the regions at that time as we do now, so it would
4 have come directly then to the Superior General who
5 would probably have taken whatever action would have
6 been appropriate. Now, would that have been listed,
7 documented anywhere. I presume if it was of a
8 serious enough nature it would have been written in a
9 letter. We have nothing to indicate
10 ... (INTERJECTION).

11 154 Q. MR. RYAN: As far as you are aware
12 there is no -- and this is
13 not suggesting that there is or there isn't, but as
14 far as you are aware there is no established protocol
15 or procedure or book-keeping or records being kept of
16 issues concerning discipline, inter se, among the
17 nuns?

18 A. No, because most of it would have been personal in
19 the sense of infringements of the rule perhaps or
20 being late or whatever else. I have never come across
21 or even heard of major, kind of, issues of discipline
22 like that, well, there would be. In my experience of
23 the last nine, 12 years, whatever length of time I
24 have been in this particular ministry, if there are
25 difficulties with people they are handled at a
26 canonical or legal level.

27 155 Q. MR. RYAN: Yes.

28 A. So there would have been visitations of the
29 institution and of the house. Those reports, I mean

1 there are they short, there was nothing in them in
2 relation to the institution of any moment, of
3 anything I think. So I really don't know, no we
4 would have nothing, I mean there is no such thing of
5 a records of Sisters and opposite them saying, you
6 know, "this happened in whatever year and this is the
7 action that was taken".

8 156 Q. MR. RYAN: "X was in trouble for this
9 in 1940 and Y was in
10 trouble for that", all right.

11 A. No.

12 157 Q. MR. RYAN: No, I understand.

13 A. No, there isn't.

14 158 Q. MR. RYAN: Thank you very much. The
15 other thing was the
16 community annals, how were they kept as far as you
17 know?

18 A. I know very well because whether they are good and
19 bad depended on the people who wrote them. For some
20 institutions they are extremely well kept and for
21 some they are not. Those annals were kept in the
22 office of the Superior, there would have been an
23 annalist, a Sister who was dedicated to write them
24 up. The memory and the recollection and the
25 day-to-day memory of the Sisters usually written at
26 the -- we still write them, usually at the end of the
27 year they are brought up-to-date. Actually we have
28 given the originals which are handwritten, we have
29 them for St. Patrick's, we have discovered those to

1 the Commission. What we did, these ones, we simply
2 abstracted everything relating to the institution
3 from them.

4 159 Q. MR. RYAN: I understand. They were
5 kept at the end of the year
6 somebody would write them up, is that right?
7 Presumably if some significant event happened.

8 A. Yeah, now different houses do it in different ways,
9 but then a copy was always sent in at every six
10 years, a copy of the previous six years annals were
11 sent into the generalate, so we would have a full set
12 of, well not full for all, but we would have annals
13 for most of our houses.

14 160 Q. MR. RYAN: No, I was just curious as
15 to how they were compiled.
16 My guess would be that if something significant
17 happened and there was paperwork you would keep the
18 paperwork knowing that this was going to have to be
19 written up at the end of the year.

20 A. That's right, yes.

21 161 Q. MR. RYAN: Thank you very much indeed.
22 Does anybody want to ask
23 anything arising out of that? Very good. Thank you
24 very much, thank you very much, Sister.

25 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

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27 THE WITNESS THEN WITHDREW
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1 MR. RYAN: Now, Mr. McGovern next we
2 go into private session,
3 isn't that right, starting tomorrow.
4 MR. McGOVERN: That's correct.
5 MR. RYAN: We hope to be able to
6 finish this phase of the
7 Inquiry dealing with the specific people who have
8 made statements to us by the end of the week.
9 MR. McGOVERN: That's my understanding,
10 Chairman. They are
11 scheduled to take place from tomorrow through to
12 Friday and including Friday.

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