
HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY

being heard before:

SIR ANTHONY HART (Chairman)

MR DAVID LANE

MS GERALDINE DOHERTY

held at

Banbridge Court House

Banbridge

on Thursday, 11th September 2014

commencing at 10.00 am

(Day 49)

MS CHRISTINE SMITH, QC appeared as Counsel to the Inquiry.

1 Thursday, 11th September 2014

2 (10.00 am)

3 SISTER BRENDA (called)

4 CHAIRMAN: Good morning. Sister Brenda has taken the oath
5 in the past.

6 MS SMITH: She has, yes, Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN: That continues to bind you, Sister, as I am sure
8 will appreciate. So there is no need for you to be
9 sworn again.

10 **A. Thank you, Chairman.**

11 **Reading of statement of WITNESS SUA27**

12 MS SMITH: Chairman, before taking Sister Brenda before her
13 evidence there is a statement that has been received by
14 the Inquiry from the Sisters of Nazareth which I propose
15 to read at this point, which is at AUS5958.

16 CHAIRMAN: This is --

17 MS SMITH: This is the --

18 CHAIRMAN: What is her reference?

19 MS SMITH: Her reference there -- she has been given
20 actually an Australia reference, which is SUA27 --

21 CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

22 MS SMITH: -- and the statement is -- reads:

23 "I was born on ...", and she gives a date, "in
24 County Clare. I joined the Sisters of Nazareth in
25 February 1931 and was professed in August 1933.

1 I recall travelling to Australia with some of the
2 children. Myself and SR139 sailed on board the Ormond
3 in 1947. We were accompanying the migrant children to
4 sail to Australia. The trip took about six weeks. All
5 of our children were from the north of Ireland and we
6 had never met the children before our sailing.

7 My memory is that a Christian Brother sent by the
8 bishop came to say that the government wanted Catholic
9 children to populate Australia. We left from
10 Southampton with about 85 children aged from 4 to
11 10 years. This was just after the war and we thought
12 the children would have a good chance to make a life in
13 Australia.

14 SR139 and I had never seen the children before, so
15 it was a daunting challenge for us to take charge of
16 them for this long trip. To assist in the care of the
17 children on board we had a nurse named Walsh, a priest
18 called Father Rodgers and around seven helpers. The
19 helpers got passage for about 5 pounds. It was hectic
20 on board trying to keep the children occupied but we did
21 our best.

22 We tried giving them school for a few hours a day
23 but the rest of the time we organised games and other
24 entertainment. We tried to ensure that the children did
25 not annoy the passengers. The passengers were very

1 helpful and friendly and I do not recall any incidents
2 on the boat. They were very friendly towards the
3 children.

4 The sailors were very good to the children, as were
5 the other passengers. I do not recall any child being
6 particularly sick or ill during the journey -- maybe the
7 odd bout of sea sickness if we hit a rough patch.

8 We disembarked at Fremantle. The Superior from
9 Nazareth House, Geraldton came to meet us and took the
10 girls back with her to Geraldton, Western Australia.
11 The boys went with the Christian Brothers to Tar..." --
12 Tardun I think that should be -- "which is north of
13 Geraldton. I believe this was badly organised.

14 Once all the children had gone to their appointed
15 places Sister SR139 and I boarded the ship and sailed to
16 Melbourne."

17 She signed it and dated it 2nd September 2014. You
18 will be aware from her date of birth that this Sister is
19 now 101, almost 102, years of age, which -- we felt it
20 wouldn't be appropriate to ask her to come to speak to
21 the statement personally, Chairman.

22 CHAIRMAN: It would seem without checking the dates of the
23 sailing she must have gone on one of the earliest, but
24 not the earliest, sailing.

25 MS SMITH: I think that --

1 CHAIRMAN: The earliest was the Asturias.

2 MS SMITH: Yes, I think that's correct. Certainly she
3 doesn't give the date of when the Ormond arrived --

4 CHAIRMAN: I am sure we can find that out.

5 MS SMITH: -- but we can check that from records.

6 CHAIRMAN: Yes.

7 SISTER BRENDA (cont.)

8 Questions from COUNSEL FOR THE INQUIRY

9 MS SMITH: Good morning, Sister.

10 **A. Good morning, Christine.**

11 Q. You are the spokesperson for the congregation of the
12 Sisters of Nazareth. You have provided the Inquiry with
13 two statements, one dated 6th July 19... -- sorry --
14 2014, which can be found at AUS11403, and if we can just
15 go to the last page of that statement, 11414. So this
16 doesn't appear to have been redacted, but it doesn't
17 need to be. You have signed that statement on 6th July.
18 Isn't that correct, Sister?

19 **A. That's right, yes.**

20 Q. Then a second statement, which is at 5950 to 5951. This
21 is a second statement which you have provided to the
22 Inquiry, and if we could just scroll down to the second
23 page, please, that statement is signed by yourself on
24 8th September of this year?

25 **A. That's correct.**

1 Q. And I just want to confirm, Sister, that this is
2 information that you want the Inquiry to consider in
3 respect of this module of evidence --

4 **A. Yes, please.**

5 Q. -- and together with anything that you add --

6 **A. Yes.**

7 Q. -- this morning?

8 Now if we could go back to the first statement,
9 please, at 11403, and in that statement, Sister, at
10 paragraph 3 -- 2 and 3 you set out what you -- your
11 understanding is of the historical background to the
12 child migrant scheme, which you say was a scheme set up
13 by British and Australian government as well as Catholic
14 and voluntary homes in the United Kingdom. You say that
15 the history was characterised by two salient
16 perceptions: the positive benefits to deprived children
17 in the general social conditions of the time and the
18 advantages to the colonies who received the children.

19 At paragraph 3 you talk about:

20 "The governments and charitable bodies alike
21 formulated and operated child migration policies with
22 the best of intentions."

23 You then talk about the schemes that went back into
24 the 17th century right through to the end of the
25 Australian scheme in the late 1960s. Excuse me. You

1 say that:

2 "Within each epoch migration is seen as a
3 constructive way to help destitute, abandoned, orphan or
4 legitimate -- illegitimate children to a better life in
5 the British colonies, and it seems as if the policy
6 perfectly matched the needs of children to the social
7 and economic needs of the receiving countries.

8 The participation of the Sisters of Nazareth", you
9 say, "can only be understood by taking into
10 consideration the historical perspective and for many
11 years the migration scheme was perceived by the Sisters
12 and the wider community as a good outcome for children."

13 You make the comment that:

14 "The Derry Journal at the time recorded it as a very
15 positive move for the children concerned."

16 At paragraphs 16 through to 18 you discuss this
17 further. Sorry. It should be at page 11411. You talk
18 there about the rationale for the Sisters'
19 participation, and you say the positive benefits to
20 deprived children in the general social conditions of
21 the time and the advantage to the colonies who received
22 them was essentially the rationale. The scheme intended
23 that the children receive a better quality of life and
24 better prospects in the future and it was effectively
25 a state-sponsored scheme which promoted the

1 opportunities for those who went. Sorry. I just --
2 yes. You say:

3 "The decision to become involved in the scheme in
4 Northern Ireland was taken by the Superior General and
5 her council in conjunction with the Superiors of the
6 houses in Northern Ireland. There would have been
7 dialogue between the parties concerned but the final
8 decision would have been made by the Superior General
9 and her council. Emigration authorities would also have
10 played a large role in the final decision, as evidence
11 dictates not all children were accepted for the scheme."

12 Now if we can just pause there, Sister, to talk
13 a little bit about the congregation's involvement. We
14 have seen from the records that you have provided to us,
15 the General Council minutes, that the first involvement
16 of the Sisters would have been in 1926.

17 **A. Yes.**

18 Q. That's with regard to sending children to Australia.
19 You have indicated here that there would have been
20 discussion between the Superior General and the homes
21 from which children would have been emigrated?

22 **A. Yes.**

23 Q. I just wanted to check with you was that something that
24 you have seen in the records or why was that?

25 **A. Well, a big decision like that would be discussed at**

1 a General Council meeting with the Superior General and
2 her council and the decision was made, and then the
3 Superior General would then consult with the Superiors
4 of all the homes in the UK about this scheme, and
5 subsequently then the Brothers would go and discuss the
6 life in Australia with the children in the homes.

7 Q. I think you were -- you indicated when we were speaking
8 that the Sisters were invited to join the scheme?

9 A. We were invited to join the scheme, yes.

10 Q. And that was by the government and, in fact, then it was
11 encouraged by the Catholic hierarchy --

12 A. Absolutely.

13 Q. -- both in the UK --

14 A. And Australia.

15 Q. -- and in Australia. If we could just go back to
16 paragraph 4, which is at the bottom of 11403, you say
17 that there was little evidence of any formal or defined
18 policy, and you do say that:

19 "It seems that the congregation's response to the
20 initiative was very cooperative and operational
21 response. Again little in the archive about contact
22 with state agencies. So we are trying to look at what
23 is available and provide information to the Inquiry."

24 There is some documentation which shows that there
25 was correspondence with the Australian Catholic

1 Immigration Council, and there's a letter certainly that
2 is at 10733 to 34, and this is a letter which is being
3 written by the Sisters of Nazareth to The Very Reverend
4 and Dear Canon Flood:

5 "Thank you for letters and forms received."

6 This is dated 1956. It names children there whose
7 names will be redacted and can't be used outside the
8 chamber, but it is -- I have opened this document
9 earlier this week or perhaps last week. I am not quite
10 sure when I did, but it seems to indicate that:

11 "The mothers of these boys, who were unmarried at
12 the times of their birth, have never visited or
13 contacted us in any way since leaving them in our care
14 as infants. Communications forwarded to the address
15 given in the register have been returned marked
16 'Unknown'. Last efforts made through welfare officer
17 and letter in December 1955 of no avail."

18 It sets out:

19 "The usual procedure here is the mother brings the
20 infant along, has it admitted and promises to support
21 it. She gives her address, which may not always be
22 correct -- the correct one. Possibly she is faithful to
23 her promises for six months or one year and then
24 disappears."

25 Then she describes the boys in more detail in that

1 letter.

2 Now, Sister, this is an example of communication
3 between the Sister who was nominating these children for
4 migration explaining why I presume she was signing the
5 consent form in respect of them, and I will come back,
6 if I may, shortly to the issue of consent, but it would
7 seem that there is other documents involved -- showing
8 involvement with both the Crusade of Rescue, the Child
9 Welfare Council in England, or in the UK, I should say,
10 but based in London, and the Australian Catholic
11 Immigration Committee, and if we can maybe just look at
12 one of those documents, please, at AUS5341.

13 Now this is a document, Sister, which -- it's from
14 the Catholic Child Welfare Council in Coleshill in
15 Birmingham, dated 1st October 1954, and it says:

16 "Dear Mother Superior, St. Joseph's, Termonbacca,
17 Londonderry."

18 So it is a letter from the Child Catholic Welfare
19 Council, also known as the Child Catholic -- the Rescue
20 -- sorry -- Crusade of Rescue:

21 "Dear Reverend Mother,

22 I return herewith birth and baptismal certificate of
23 AU 22 who was rejected for emigration
24 some time ago."

25 Now again I have used a name there that will be

1 redacted and can't be used outside the chamber. Then it
2 names two other boys and says:

3 "I shall be pleased to hear whether these two boys
4 are still available for emigration, also if you have any
5 other children under 12 years of age to put forward as
6 we have several nominations in hand at present."

7 That's dated in October 1954.

8 We can see a letter at AUS5337. This is clearly
9 a letter from Australia House and it says:

10 "Dear Madam,

11 I refer to the boys on the attached list whose
12 applications have been submitted by the Australian
13 Catholic Immigration Committee for migration to
14 Australia.

15 Arrangements have been made for these boys to be
16 seen by an Australian selection officer, Mr A. Gross, at
17 the Employment Exchange, Bishop Street, Londonderry, at
18 3.00 pm on Tuesday, 24th March 1953.

19 It would be appreciated if you would arrange for the
20 boys to be present at this time to see Mr Gross, who
21 will advise you regarding medical examinations after the
22 interviews."

23 That's March 1953.

24 Now I am drawing the Inquiry's attention to those
25 documents -- and I will come back to discuss them

1 a little bit further -- but at this stage it is clear
2 from these two documents that it wasn't just the Sisters
3 of Nazareth who were essentially selecting children and
4 migrating them. There was a very definite process that
5 was involved involving the Catholic hierarchy and the
6 Australian Catholic hierarchy, as it were --

7 **A. Yes.**

8 Q. -- as well as the government clearly of Australia in
9 that process?

10 **A. That's correct.**

11 Q. So although there's no evidence of a defined policy with
12 regard to the congregation's involvement, one of the
13 things that you talk about at paragraph 9 of your
14 statement, if we could go to that, please, which is at
15 page 11409 --

16 CHAIRMAN: Just before we leave that, Ms Smith, it refers to
17 an enclosure with a list of the names. Do we have that?

18 MS SMITH: I don't believe --

19 CHAIRMAN: You said you would be coming back to it.

20 MS SMITH: No, I am going to come back to it. We do have --
21 we don't have that enclosure. We just -- there's
22 various items of correspondence that Sister Brenda and
23 her representatives have provided to us which show
24 certain correspondence, but I don't believe we have the
25 enclosure with the list of names.

1 CHAIRMAN: So we can't identify how many children were
2 spoken to on that occasion?

3 MS SMITH: No, we can't.

4 CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

5 MS SMITH: Sorry, Sister. I was just asking you about the
6 involvement in the -- again we were talking about the
7 rationale behind the Sisters' involvement. As you say
8 in paragraph 9, one of the purposes of your involvement
9 was, as is recorded in the paragraph 9 there:

10 "The only other reference to emigration in the
11 period between the two world wars occurs in 1928 when
12 the General Council minutes refer quite bluntly to the
13 'emigration of children -- of the children in our houses
14 so as to spread Catholicity'",

15 a word that -- I think most of us would now say
16 "Catholicism", but certainly that was the word that was
17 being used back in 1928. You say:

18 "About that time the Christian Brothers in Australia
19 had offered to take fifty boys to their farm school and
20 to be entirely responsible for their education.

21 By the outbreak of the war in 1939 some 112 Nazareth
22 House boys emigrated to the Christian Brothers'
23 residential establishments in Western Australia."

24 You say:

25 "Both the British and Australian governments were

1 grant aiding each boy to the amount of 13 shillings per
2 week and the boys were to be trained by the Christian
3 Brothers for at least ten years."

4 You go on to discuss, as we were discussing, that:

5 "Although no formal policy or procedure
6 documentation of the congregation or the two governments
7 has survived in the general archive ... it is quite
8 clear that the Sisters cooperated in the prescribed
9 procedures. The correspondence suggests that a sailing
10 was missed as documentation was not completed and the
11 forms appear not to have been fully completed as when
12 the parents were alive their full addresses were to be
13 given and at the consent section it is clear for the UK
14 scheme that the father was to complete this as he was
15 still living."

16 You say:

17 "That supports the view that the Sisters acted in
18 good faith in the selection, but that there were
19 substantial checks in place to oversee the procedure."

20 Now one of the questions that the Inquiry will be
21 looking at is what -- how did the children -- how did
22 the Sisters, how did the congregation -- on what basis
23 did you believe that these children were going to
24 something better? Where would that have -- that
25 guarantee have come from?

1 **A.** Well, we would have been told it by the authorities,
2 number one. Number two, two of our sisters went out to
3 Australia to look at the venues that the children would
4 be going to and, number three, we trusted the
5 governments that they knew that the places the children
6 were going would have been a suitable place for them.

7 **Q.** I take it also that the involvement of the Catholic
8 hierarchy would have been a matter that would have led
9 you to trust what was happening to the children?

10 **A.** Absolutely, yes.

11 **CHAIRMAN:** I think it is correct to say that the policy of
12 the British government was to approve individual
13 institutions in Australia as suitable --

14 **MS SMITH:** Yes, that's correct, Chairman.

15 **CHAIRMAN:** -- institutions to which children could be sent.
16 It wasn't just a blanket authorisation.

17 **MS SMITH:** Yes. I think that reassurance would have come
18 through to the Sisters that they were going to
19 an appropriate place in Australia.

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** Equally can I suggest to you, Sister, that the fact that
22 these children were going to homes that were run by your
23 Order would have been a reassurance?

24 **A.** Certainly our own sisters would have known the
25 accommodation that the children would be going out to,

1 but the Sisters out there also would have known of the
2 homes that the boys would have gone to and also some of
3 the girls went to Subiaco to the Mercy Sisters. So they
4 would have known of those.

5 Q. That -- there was -- if I can put it this way, within
6 the Catholic ethos there would have been trust between
7 institutions run by other Orders?

8 A. **Completely. Completely.**

9 Q. Are you aware, though, of any formal steps? I mean,
10 have the documents shown you any formal steps that were
11 taken by the congregation themselves to check conditions
12 or is this just something that you're aware of from the
13 general knowledge?

14 A. **Well, from general knowledge, but also it was our own**
15 **congregation that the girls went out to. So we would**
16 **have known what they were like.**

17 Q. And at paragraph 18, in fact, you say that in the early
18 days the Christian Brothers built a house for the
19 Sisters in Tardun to care for the boys and the
20 congregation would have known the conditions of the
21 Nazareth Houses in Australia through the application of
22 your ethos and by way of visitation, as with all other
23 houses.

24 "As for the other establishments, we believe the
25 Sisters in Australia would have known and visited them

1 on occasions."

2 **A. I think when the Sisters first went out to Tardun, there**
3 **was no house and they were kind of sleeping under**
4 **canvas. The Brothers built them a convent and they were**
5 **in it a short time and then Geraldton came on the scene**
6 **and the Presentation Sisters took over in Tardun.**

7 Q. If we could just look at another document, Sister. This
8 is another letter from the Catholic -- Australian
9 Catholic Immigration Committee to the Mother Superior in
10 St. Joseph's in Termonbacca. It is dated 21st March.
11 Sorry. I should have given the reference number.
12 AUS5215.

13 Sister, can I just confirm with you that you are
14 able to read what's on the screen, because I know you
15 have forgotten your glasses today?

16 **A. Yes.**

17 Q. We can enlarge it a little bit further if you need it.

18 **A. No. That's fine. Thanks.**

19 Q. You say that -- sorry. Just this letter is dated
20 21st March and it is written to the Mother Superior and
21 it just says:

22 "Dear Mother,

23 I have just returned from a visit to Australia and
24 beg to advise you that after a number of years battle
25 with the Home Office here I have succeeded in securing

1 approval for most of our institutions in Australia who
2 are prepared to take British migrant children, both
3 girls and boys. Under the circumstances it will now be
4 possible for us to proceed with the migration of many of
5 the children whom you first submitted."

6 So it would appear that there was in or around the
7 early 1950s some correspondence in Australia between
8 this -- the Immigration Committee, the Catholic
9 Immigration Committee, and the Australia government to
10 seek approval there for the homes that were being sent,
11 and clearly the ACIC is informing the Mother Superior of
12 Termonbacca that those homes had been approved by the
13 Australian authorities.

14 I will come back to that letter in due course, but
15 it is clear from the documentation that the -- the
16 congregation worked closely with the Child Welfare
17 Department in crusade -- the Welfare Council I should
18 say in the UK and with the Australian Catholic
19 Immigration Committee?

20 **A. That's right.**

21 Q. In your statement at paragraphs 7 onwards -- sorry -- in
22 paragraph 8 you were able -- you record the details of
23 those sailings which you were able to identify from the
24 records, and it is fair to say that record-keeping in
25 those days would not have been up to modern standards,

1 and it would appear from what we have learned in the
2 Inquiry to date that the Sisters' records are sadly
3 lacking in not just detail but in actual existence.
4 There's a lot of missing documents.

5 **A. A lot of missing documents, yes.**

6 Q. But the last sailing we know took place on 24th
7 December 1956, and I wanted to ask you, Sister, have you
8 any idea yourself or does the Order know why that was
9 the last sailing from Northern Ireland?

10 **A. I would presume, and it's just a speculation here, that**
11 **the thinking of migrating children had changed about --**
12 **in the early '50s, mid '50s, and that was why they**
13 **stopped sending children.**

14 Q. But there's nothing in the documentation to indicate why
15 this was the last sailing from Northern Ireland --

16 **A. No, no.**

17 Q. -- that you can discover?

18 **A. No, none.**

19 Q. Just in regard to the numbers who actually went out from
20 Northern Ireland from the Sisters of Nazareth, at your
21 statement at 11409 you thought that there were 122, but
22 you provided the Inquiry with a second statement,
23 paragraphs 6 and 7 of AUS5950. If we could just look at
24 that, please, 5950. You record there at paragraph 6 --
25 sorry -- it's 5 actually. As a result of a further

1 review of documentation you believe that your first
2 statement was incorrect and you continue to try to
3 identify correctly as many children as possible. You
4 say:

5 "I have attached a list of children amounting to 107
6 who can be identified in the documents and have been
7 located in the Sisters' registers. It is accepted that
8 these children were resident with the Sisters of
9 Nazareth and went to Australia.

10 I also attached a further list ... amounting to
11 four, for whom there are documents suggesting that they
12 were connected to the Sisters of Nazareth and went to
13 Australia, but for whom we can find no record in our
14 registers."

15 I am just going to pause there, Sister, because one
16 of the documents you provided to us was a list of
17 children compiled by Sister John Ogilvie for the benefit
18 of Miss Keenan's report. In that we were able to
19 identify at least one other of those children, but you
20 would accept in -- anyway that it is likely that those
21 children were connected to the Sisters of Nazareth prior
22 to their departure. So that essentially is 111 children
23 identified as going from Northern Ireland from Sisters
24 of Nazareth homes?

25 **A. Yes, that's correct.**

1 Q. In Northern Ireland I should say. What -- I have
2 discussed the fact that there has been this involvement
3 with the various government bodies, with the Catholic
4 Child Welfare Council and the Australian Committee, but
5 I want to know from you, Sister, the first layer, as it
6 were, in involvement or in a child migrating, the first
7 layer is the selection by the Sisters of Nazareth, the
8 people who were looking after the children in the homes
9 here, and I just wonder what you want to say about how
10 those children were selected?

11 **A. They would have been selected according to the precept**
12 **of the Australian government that they were white. That**
13 **was the first thing. They had to be white. They had to**
14 **have good health and in the -- they had to have good**
15 **health and of good stock, and then in about the middle**
16 **of the -- 1947 or something the Australian government**
17 **then said that we were sending sub-standard children and**
18 **they then required us to have an IQ test for the**
19 **children.**

20 Q. Yes. I'll come on -- come on to that detail shortly,
21 Sister, but what I am -- I mean, the first thing that
22 happens is okay, Mother Superior in the home is asked to
23 send children or to nominate children for selection and
24 then we know that they under... -- have to undergo
25 various tests --

1 **A. Yes.**

2 Q. -- and procedures before that nomination is accepted,
3 but I am curious to know as to what the thinking was,
4 "Well, it is and not who is going", for
5 example?

6 **A. I would surmise that the Sisters chose children who they**
7 **thought, well, they had no contact with family, or who**
8 **had permission from their family to be migrated, and who**
9 **the Sisters thought would have a better life and**
10 **a better quality of life out in Australia than they**
11 **would have at home, especially in the early days when**
12 **there was so much deprivation.**

13 Q. But there is nothing in the documents that you have
14 been able to examine that suggests --

15 **A. No, that's just my speculation.**

16 Q. -- that there was any sort of policy, because one of the
17 things that has been suggested, as you are aware, by
18 applicants to the Inquiry is that it was the children of
19 unmarried mothers, for example, who were chosen?

20 **A. I don't think that came into it at all, but we had no**
21 **policy as such that I can find, but my speculation is**
22 **that would be the criteria that the Sisters would have**
23 **picked, chosen, nominated the children to go to**
24 **Australia.**

25 Q. We know that from some children that they were asked

1 whether or not they wanted to go.

2 **A. Yes.**

3 Q. We have heard of hands going up, the entire two hands
4 going up from eighteen children and so forth, but
5 I wondered, Sister, I suppose in that regard asking
6 children of a certain age whether or not they wanted to
7 go might not have been what we would term today as
8 informed consent. It seems to be that there was very
9 little information given to the children about what was
10 ahead of them.

11 **A. My understanding is that Brother -- one of the Brothers,**
12 **either Brother Creehan or ^{Brother Conly}, would have come to**
13 **Nazareth House and spoken to the children and gave them**
14 **a glowing report I presume of Australia, and then would**
15 **ask who wanted to go, and obviously children being**
16 **children would have put their hands up.**

17 Q. And we know from documentation we have seen and what we
18 have heard is that there were some boys who volunteered
19 to go but whose parents or grandparents refused to let
20 them go?

21 **A. That's correct.**

22 Q. So -- and certainly it seemed to be something that was
23 attractive to children, the way it was presented to
24 them.

25 **A. Absolutely.**

1 Q. But would you accept, Sister, that essentially it was
2 not really an informed consent on behalf of those
3 children, given their age?

4 **A. Of course, definitely. What would children know?**

5 Q. Just for completeness, we were talking there about there
6 seems to have been a difference in procedure, if I can
7 put it that way, with regard to the selection of
8 children after they had been nominated by yourselves.
9 Initially there doesn't seem to have been a terribly
10 complex process. As you say, they were of good health,
11 good white British stock, as it were, and then after
12 a while the Australian authorities were requesting more
13 information about the children, and there's some
14 documentation clearly in respect of that.

15 If we could look at AUS333, this is at paragraph 27
16 in your statement. You talk about believing that
17 doctors were nominated by the Australian authorities to
18 carry out examinations. Sorry. If I can just call up
19 5332, please. This is a document again that's from
20 Australia House and it seems to be just a pro forma
21 letter, but it says:

22 "Dear ...",

23 and I presume they would be the head of the home
24 who would be written to:

25 "Further reference is made to your application for

1 migration to Australia."

2 It says:

3 "In this connection would you please make
4 an appointment with ..."

5 Now this is clearly a pro forma letter that would be
6 used by Australia House for anybody applying to migrate
7 to Australia and the first two paragraphs would really
8 relate more to an adult who was applying to go out but
9 then it says here:

10 "When this has been done you should make
11 an appointment for a medical examination with an M.F.
12 Leslie, 2 Dacre Terrace in Londonderry.

13 Attached hereto is a medical examination form."

14 So this is the basis on which you say that the
15 doctors who carried out the medical examinations were
16 nominated by Australia House --

17 **A. Australia House.**

18 Q. -- and the Australian authorities. So it wasn't the
19 local GP who was carrying out the examinations?

20 **A. No, but -- yes, and sometimes the doctors actually came
21 into Nazareth House, but they were nominated by
22 Australia House.**

23 Q. If we could just look at the next page, please, which is
24 5333, and this is a -- probably accompanied that letter,
25 which says:

1 "Medical examination.

2 The cost of medical examination must be paid by
3 yourself and the fees chargeable by the medical referee
4 is as follows."

5 So there was clearly a panel of doctors who carried
6 out medical examinations on behalf of the Australia
7 authorities for both adults and children, because the
8 fees charged were 1 pound, 1 shilling for a person over
9 16, and 7 and 6 for a child under 16 years.

10 "A separate certificate must be completed for each
11 individual applicant 16 years of age and over. The
12 medical certificate, if satisfactory, will remain valid
13 for six months. Should departure be delayed beyond this
14 period, applicants may be required to resubmit
15 themselves for examination in order that the certificate
16 may be checked and endorsed.

17 Under no circumstances will any medical certificate
18 be accepted unless duly certified by the medical referee
19 and signed by the applicant in his presence."

20 There is a note in relation to female applicants.
21 It clearly shows that these were, as I say, panel
22 nominated doctors carrying out -- who were being paid.
23 One can assume from that that the payment would have had
24 to be made by the Sisters of Nazareth and then
25 presumably they were refunded that, because there is

1 a document that I have seen -- I am not sure if I can
2 quite put my hands on it -- which talks about a refund
3 for medical examinations to the Sisters. I will find
4 that document. I know it is in the bundle I was looking
5 at earlier.

6 It is clear also then there was an interview to be
7 carried out. If we look at AUS5344, this again is
8 presumably to the Mother Superior of Termonbacca. It is
9 to St. Joseph's Home.

10 Dear madam,

11 I wish to refer to the applications for migration to
12 Australia for a number -- of a number of boys from St.
13 Joseph's Home, which you forwarded to Canon Flood
14 recently."

15 This is from the Office of the High Commissioner for
16 Australia at Australia House, the Chief Migration
17 Officer.

18 "In order to reach an early decision about these
19 boys, arrangements are being made for the child
20 migration officer, Mrs B. Hunt, to call at St. Joseph's
21 Home next Friday, March 23rd at about 11.00 am to see
22 these boys.

23 It would an appreciated if you would advise me if
24 this arrangement would not be convenient to you."

25 So in March 1956 there are -- clearly they are being

1 interviewed by an official from Australia House.

2 Obviously it is probably a local person nominated by
3 them to carry out the interviews. So the boys were
4 spoken to before they migrated.

5 **A. They were.**

6 Q. So there was another layer of the process before they
7 were actually accepted --

8 **A. Yes.**

9 Q. -- for migration. All of this seems to have been put in
10 place subsequent to the first group going out in 1947?

11 **A. Yes.**

12 Q. I am just talking now about post-war migration, because,
13 as I indicated yesterday, there was documentation to
14 show that the Australian authorities were unhappy with
15 the first batch of children who went out and they seem
16 to have put all of these hurdles, if you like, in the
17 way of a child being sent out until they passed each of
18 them, although interestingly, despite that, we certainly
19 saw documentation to suggest that one child was sent
20 despite the fact that they had heart problems or medical
21 problems.

22 So it is clear that while the Sisters may have
23 chosen a child to nominate, that child was not migrated
24 to Australia unless all of these steps --

25 **A. That's correct.**

1 Q. -- were completed?

2 **A. That's correct.**

3 Q. Can I ask -- we talked a little bit about parental
4 consent. Sorry. Just before I move on to that, one of
5 the things that we have heard from people is that
6 there's children -- there's a complaint from children
7 who were born in the Republic of Ireland and who were
8 brought from the home -- Nazareth home in Sligo. Have
9 you any comment or explanation or anything you want to
10 say about that, Sister?

11 **A. Well, there's -- I would imagine, and this is my own**
12 **thoughts on the subject, that the Sisters wouldn't have**
13 **thought about north or south. If the child was in**
14 **Nazareth House, Derry, Nazareth House, Belfast, they**
15 **would have been eligible to go to Australia. That's all**
16 **I can comment on that.**

17 Q. What about Sligo, which was across the border?

18 **A. But they came up to -- they came up to Belfast or**
19 **Termonbacca.**

20 Q. We have heard from some that they simply were
21 transferred to Termonbacca to meet up with the boys who
22 were going from there, that they had actually been in
23 the house in Sligo as a resident.

24 **A. Yes. I can't really comment, because I have no evidence**
25 **of why that was so.**

1 Q. If we could just go back to your statement at
2 paragraph 20, which is at 11412, this is -- at
3 paragraph 19 there, in fact, you are talking about the
4 selection of children and you say:

5 "The selection of children put forward would be
6 those children who were orphaned, abandoned or who
7 expressed a desire to go to Australia and would have
8 complied with the criterias set out by the government at
9 the time."

10 You say at paragraph 20:

11 "The fact that most parents of the children did not
12 contribute financially in part or in whole bore no
13 bearing on the selection process of children. They were
14 very much selected on their physical health, as evidence
15 shows some children were rejected by the authorities due
16 to poor health or any health defects."

17 I just want to pause there and say -- ask, Sister,
18 that -- you say that the fact there was no contribution
19 from parents wasn't a factor in selection, but I wonder
20 was there any financial incentive for the Sisters of
21 Nazareth in sending children out?

22 **A. None whatsoever, no.**

23 Q. There may have been an incentive, however, for those
24 homes in Australia to receive such children, as they
25 received payments for them?

1 **A. I don't think the finance came into in the equation at**
2 **all, Christine. I think it was just for the child's**
3 **betterment. The money didn't come into it, but we --**
4 **the British government or the Australian government paid**
5 **for the child's passage.**

6 Q. We heard yesterday from the applicant who spoke to us
7 yesterday that she remembers seeing documents in
8 Australia which suggested --

9 **A. 10 pounds.**

10 Q. -- that there was 10 pounds being paid for every child.

11 **A. Yes, but that was for their passage or to get them**
12 **clothes for going over for whatever, but it wasn't -- it**
13 **wasn't for any other reason.**

14 Q. Coming back to the issue of parental consent, which you
15 deal here with your statement, you say that despite
16 a detailed search there is no documentation or evidence
17 that attempts were made by the congregation to explain
18 the implications of the scheme to parents of the
19 selected children. It is believed that the Sisters
20 would have spoken with the parents if the parents were
21 known, could be located and alive, and explained the
22 scheme when they sought their permission for a child to
23 participate, but that is an assumption. You base that
24 assumption on the fact that there is reference in
25 a letter, and I think that should be SND -- it might be

1 HIA121 -- and discussed in his oral evidence to being
2 selected, but then not going because his parents went
3 ballistic, and you say that is supportive of the
4 assumption that the parents of children selected were
5 consulted and their opinion sought before any child was
6 sent. Again SND1 described how his grandmother refused
7 to allow him to go. We have seen documentation, which I
8 am not going to call up again, but there is clearly
9 reference to SND's grandmother refusing consent and to
10 other children whose parents refused consent to allow
11 them to go.

12 One of the concerns that you will have heard raised,
13 though, is that a number of applicants believe that
14 their parents did not actually consent. They could have
15 been located and did not actually give consent, and they
16 have been told that their parents were lied to when they
17 came back to the homes looking for their children.

18 I wonder what you want to say about that, Sister?

19 **A. Well, my understanding is that the Sisters would have**
20 **sought parents' or guardians' consent for the child**
21 **going out to Australia where possible. It wasn't always**
22 **possible, because the Sisters didn't know where they**
23 **were, and there is evidence that they have looked and**
24 **the parent is no longer there at a known address. So**
25 **they did try to look for parents, and obviously if they**

1 **did send children out without the parents' consent that**
2 **were around, well, that was wrong and it shouldn't have**
3 **happened.**

4 Q. You recall, Sister, Margaret Humphreys gave evidence and
5 I read a witness statement in respect of one of the
6 applicants to the Inquiry. She was talking about trying
7 to trace this child's mother, and there was a document
8 which was in the possession of the Sisters of Nazareth
9 and it had -- on the back of it it had a comment --
10 sorry -- the mother's signature saying that she
11 relinquished all -- sorry -- it was HIA333 -- I just
12 wanted to check the reference number -- that she
13 relinquished all rights to her child. Now on that
14 document there was also an address for the mother. I am
15 just wondering did the Sisters instead of trying to
16 contact her take the fact she had relinquished her
17 rights to her child as sufficient authority to allow
18 them to send that child for migration?

19 A. **I think in that particular case the Sister -- the mother**
20 **relinquished all contact with the child. Another factor**
21 **is I think when he came back, the Sister concerned**
22 **thought it was in the child's best interest-- well, the**
23 **man's best interest that he didn't have another**
24 **rejection and that his mother rejected him and gave him**
25 **up totally. So she did it with the best of intentions**

1 **but maybe wrong -- wrongly so.**

2 Q. But I am wondering -- I mean, I can appreciate that's
3 the reason that you say that he was not given the
4 information when he came back looking for it.

5 **A. They didn't actually have it the first time he came.**
6 **They only found it later on I believe.**

7 Q. Although what we have been told, Sister, is that he was
8 given the one side of that document, not what was on the
9 back of it, but he was given a photocopy of the front
10 page and not the back page, and on the back page his
11 mother's signature relinquishing him was there with
12 an address that would have allowed him to locate her
13 during her lifetime. However, that is a separate issue
14 from what I am trying to ask, which is that that kind of
15 handing over to the Sisters by the Mother, essentially
16 saying, "Here's my child. He's yours. That's it. I'm
17 finished with him", would that have given the Sisters
18 the permission without actually going back to the
19 mother?

20 **A. I would think so, and I also believe that it was done**
21 **in -- that was used -- that evidence was used if a child**
22 **was to be adopted is my understanding of it.**

23 Q. Without actually -- even if you had the address, because
24 in that case it was clear there was an address for the
25 mother and she -- it would have been possible to locate

1 her. We know that now, but certainly it would have been
2 possible to take steps to locate that particular lady.
3 So can I take it from what you are saying that it is the
4 position that if a mother had signed such a document,
5 the Sisters wouldn't have made -- taken any steps to try
6 to locate her?

7 **A. If they had need to, I suppose they would have, but**
8 **evidently in that case they didn't.**

9 Q. Can we -- I appreciate this is speculation, but can we
10 assume that a similar course might have been taken in
11 other cases?

12 **A. It's speculation.**

13 Q. But in any event in the situation where parents came
14 back and may have been told that their child was
15 adopted, in a good home in the Republic or in a home in
16 England or whatever, and where that child had gone to
17 Australia, you accept on behalf of the congregation that
18 they ought not to have been told that?

19 **A. Absolutely. It was wrong.**

20 Q. If we can move on to what steps were taken to check up
21 on children once they had gone through the whole
22 process, were accepted and were migrated, are you aware
23 did the congregation ever get any written reports from
24 the homes in Australia, for example, about how the child
25 was getting on?

1 **A.** Certainly the Superior of each home -- well, in this
2 case Geraldton and Camberwell, Melbourne -- they would
3 have been in constant touch with the Superior General.
4 So there would have been lots of communication that way.
5 I haven't seen any written evidence except I believe
6 there's a letter -- I just can't put my hand on it --
7 from one of the boys in Tardun writing to the Superior
8 in Termonbacca, but if I find it, I'll certainly pass it
9 on to the Inquiry.

10 **Q.** Yes, and certainly the history of foundation that you
11 brought back yourself from Australia --

12 **A.** **Yes.**

13 **Q.** -- in Geraldton does record about the migrant children
14 settling well and things of that nature.

15 **A.** **Yes, that would have been in the Council book.**

16 **Q.** They are recorded. So those -- if I have got my process
17 right, there is also -- every so often the homes are
18 visited --

19 **A.** **Yes.**

20 **Q.** -- by someone --

21 **A.** **Visitor.**

22 **Q.** By the visitor. In fact, that's what you were doing
23 yourself this summer in Australia, but those -- the
24 visitor would have access to those --

25 **A.** **Oh, absolutely.**

1 Q. -- foundation books?

2 **A. Yes.**

3 Q. And would then report back on the visitation to the
4 mother house?

5 **A. Yes, yes.**

6 Q. We have heard -- HIA306 said that he saw a nun from
7 Nazareth Lodge who he thought was in Australia on
8 holiday. I just wonder what you think she was actually
9 doing there.

10 **A. Well, undoubtedly she wasn't on holiday unless she was**
11 **an Australian and it was her visit home, but if that was**
12 **the case, I don't think she would have gone round the**
13 **homes. She would have been at home. So probably**
14 **I would presume it would have been a visitor had gone**
15 **around.**

16 Q. And you -- I mean, it's clear that she went to one of
17 the boys' homes as part of her visitation.

18 **A. I don't think it would have been part of the visitation,**
19 **certainly not, but she may have visited them.**

20 Q. And would that have been with the purpose of checking
21 how --

22 **A. Yes.**

23 Q. -- the migrant children --

24 **A. Yes.**

25 Q. -- were faring?

1 **A. Yes, I would say so.**

2 Q. She would then have prepared a report, which should have
3 been --

4 **A. Not necessarily, because it was an ad hoc visit. So it
5 wouldn't have been part of her official visitation.**

6 Q. But might she have made some sort of comment about,
7 "I also went to see Clontarf or Castledare" --

8 **A. Verbally.**

9 Q. -- or wherever?

10 **A. Verbally, but not written.**

11 Q. So it wouldn't have formed part of the written report?

12 **A. Definitely not.**

13 Q. But there might have been some information coming back
14 about conditions there?

15 **A. Yes.**

16 Q. I take it also that there's nothing -- just about -- was
17 there ever any specific visit to check up on the boys'
18 homes that you are aware of, because obviously there is
19 this visitation situation with the girls' homes, the
20 Nazareth House out there, but the boys' homes, would
21 there ever have been anybody go out from the Sisters to
22 look specifically at the boys' homes?

23 **A. Well, when the boys went out and they went with the
24 Christian Brothers, that's an organisation or
25 a congregation in its own right, and they would have**

1 looked after the boys and they would have taken control
2 and charge of the boys. So really the Sisters had no --
3 no control or say in the -- in that -- those homes, but
4 I know the boys from Tardun came to visit Nazareth
5 House, Geraldton at least three times a year, and
6 I think yesterday you showed a slide and you actually
7 saw the boys sitting on the fountain there. So that's
8 proof that they did go and it is also written in the
9 council books that the boys from Tardun came to visit.
10 That's all. We would have no control over the Christian
11 Brothers.

12 Q. But would you have had some -- any concern to see that
13 those boys were doing well? They had come from
14 a Nazareth home initially.

15 A. Yes, but they were handed over to another congregation.
16 So -- that we had nothing to do with. So we would have
17 presumed that they were getting well cared for, and
18 certainly when the boys came from Tardun, there was
19 never any record of any of them saying they were not
20 treated properly.

21 Q. If I can move on to paragraph 27, this is where we
22 discuss what you are aware of with regard to the
23 Northern Irish government and their knowledge. You say:

24 "It has no evidence -- the congregation has no
25 evidence to suggest it informed the Northern Ireland

1 government of its plans to send children from Northern
2 Ireland to Australia or consulted directly with them."

3 You say you can't -- this is about the doctors, that
4 you believe they were state-nominated doctors, but
5 nominated by the State of Australia it would appear
6 rather than the Northern Irish government or the UK
7 government.

8 You say that:

9 "The Stormont government was written to by the
10 Australia Catholic Immigration Committee and this
11 committee undertook to advise the Sisters immediately in
12 1949 if there was anything in the proposed Act", which
13 would have been the Children and Young Persons Act 1950,
14 "which may stop any of the children going to Australia.
15 There is no evidence of the congregation receiving any
16 guidance or other communication from the Northern
17 Ireland or Westminster government about the operation of
18 the scheme in Northern Ireland."

19 If we could just look at that document that you're
20 talking about there, it's AUS333. Can we try 337? Just
21 I might have written it down wrongly. I think we have
22 already called it up. So ... AUS5333. Sorry. 5327
23 actually. Sorry. That was the medical examination. It
24 is 5327.

25 This is a letter from the Australian Catholic

1 Immigration Committee in August 1949 to the Reverend
2 Mother thanking her for her letter of 27th July:

3 "I am very glad indeed to have a list of the
4 children and we are delighted that you have so many to
5 go. I will start trying to get their birth certificates
6 right way. I expect you will have all their baptismal
7 ones? I am also enclosing all the necessary forms --
8 three for each child. There is no hurry for these as I
9 shall have to wait to get the birth certificates before
10 sending them in to Australia House and this may take
11 some time. Another delay is that Father Nicol is not
12 coming back until October and will not let me send any
13 children until he gets back -- goodness knows how many
14 children I shall lose by this manoeuvre, as what with
15 the parents getting tired of waiting and your Irish
16 Children Bill coming in next month. However, it will
17 probably come all right in the end."

18 I pause there to make the comment, Sister, that this
19 clearly shows that the Australian Catholic Immigration
20 Committee were involved in the administrative process,
21 as it were, for migrating the children.

22 **A. Yes.**

23 Q. But the last paragraph reads:

24 "I shall be writing to Stormont this week so that if
25 there is anything in the proposed Act which may stop any

1 of the children going, I will let you know at once. I
2 am not sure if I shall be over in September now -- as it
3 all depends on Father Nicol's reactions when he returns,
4 but I am hoping that he will agree to sending as many
5 children as possible on the first ship available."

6 It is signed Norah Montaldo.

7 Then it goes on:

8 "PS. With the forms if you would just fill in the
9 bits marked X on the top on each one. This isn't very
10 clear. I mean one form of each three, and I will fill
11 in the other two of each set.

12 Stamped addressed envelopes in case you have to
13 write for consents, etc."

14 So it would appear that the Australian Catholic
15 Immigration Committee are effectively carrying out a lot
16 of the administration and are essentially saying to the
17 Mother Superior in whichever home this was, but it is
18 obviously Northern Ireland, and presumably around 1949
19 it might have been Termonbacca, but we are not clear --
20 it's saying, you know, "You just fill in the top bit and
21 we'll do the rest".

22 **A. Yes.**

23 Q. So a lot of the work was done by others on behalf of the
24 Sisters?

25 **A. Yes.**

1 Q. But the point about this letter is that it says they'll
2 be writing to Stormont "this week", which was in
3 August 1949. We do know there is a progress report. We
4 haven't actually got the letter that was written to
5 Stormont, but we have seen the quarterly progress report
6 that was enclosed -- I pulled that up yesterday --
7 talking about the Scottish and Irish situations, and
8 there was a thank you letter on the government file, on
9 the Ministry of Home Affairs file, thanking Miss
10 Montaldo for her letter in which that document would
11 have been enclosed.

12 To the best of your knowledge, Sister, any of the
13 children who were sent by the Sisters of Nazareth -- and
14 when I say "sent", selected for migration -- did they --
15 was the consent of the Minister of Home Affairs ever
16 sought in respect of any of the children who were sent
17 --

18 **A. I don't think so, no.**

19 Q. -- of those 111? It would be a fair assumption that
20 those were then all voluntary placements --

21 **A. Yes.**

22 Q. -- and were not the subject of Fit Person Orders?

23 **A. Yes.**

24 Q. Now, Sister, you will be glad to know that I have
25 covered the matters that I wish to address with you and

1 I'm sure the Panel will have some questions for you and
2 I'll hand you over to them very shortly, but at this
3 point I'm just wondering if you are -- if you wish to
4 add anything to what is in your statement. I haven't
5 gone through it paragraph by paragraph, but I have
6 touched on a number of issues. If there's anything you
7 want to add to what's in that or is there anything else
8 you wish to say on behalf of the congregation?

9 **A. I think hindsight's a great thing and I think -- looking**
10 **back now, I think the congregation regrets the grave**
11 **injustice done to these children in sending them out,**
12 **not just to the children but to their families as well,**
13 **and I think no matter -- the most eloquent apology, or**
14 **the most beautiful monument, or no matter how much money**
15 **they receive will never make up for what we took from**
16 **them in sending them there.**

17 I know some made good lives for themselves, and
18 having been out in Australia and spoken to some migrant
19 children, they still have this, "What if ...? What if
20 I had stayed in Ireland?", even though they had made
21 good lives for themselves out there, and I think we have
22 to acknowledge -- that's the government, the British
23 government, the Australian government, the churches, the
24 congregations, the institutes -- we all have to put our
25 hands up and acknowledge that maybe it wasn't the right

1 **thing, even though it was done in the best interests of**
2 **the child at the time.**

3 **I just thank the Panel for listening to me.**

4 Q. Thank you very much, Sister.

5 A. **Thank you.**

6 **Questions from THE PANEL**

7 CHAIRMAN: Sister, I wonder if I could just try and
8 summarise in a few sentences what seems to be the
9 overall position in general terms about the role of your
10 Order in what happened.

11 There are a number of different strands to this it
12 seems clear. I list them in no particular order of
13 significance, but, first of all, British governments
14 over many years were prepared to support and encourage
15 organisations to send children to various parts of what
16 was then the British Empire and later the British
17 Commonwealth, such as Canada and particularly Australia.

18 However, they left the process to individual
19 organisations to manage and so on, and we have heard
20 that other organisations, secular organisations, such as
21 the Fairbridge scheme and Dr Barnardo's took part.

22 There were quite a number of organisations, some of
23 which were other Christian denominations, such as the
24 Church of England, Presbyterian Church, the Methodist
25 Church, but there was definitely a second element, which

1 was the desire of the Australian authorities to have
2 more people come to Australia for the reasons that have
3 been described.

4 Another strand was the desire on the part of the
5 Australian Roman Catholic authorities, particularly in
6 Western Australia, to encourage significant numbers of
7 Catholic children, and preferably young Catholic
8 children, to come out to increase the proportion of the
9 Roman Catholic population in Australia, and also to
10 provide what they regarded as a better life for children
11 from the United Kingdom, although, of course, there were
12 indications, which I am sure you are aware of, that
13 there was a desire to fill the institutions that were
14 created in Australia. Many of these institutions were
15 to varying degrees physically built by the children who
16 went out --

17 **A. Yes.**

18 Q. -- particularly Bindoon. We have seen pictures of --

19 **A. I have been there, Chairman.**

20 CHAIRMAN: Yes. Although the building was designed by one
21 of the Brothers, the children did an awful lot of the
22 physical work of constructing the building --

23 **A. Yes.**

24 CHAIRMAN: -- developing the farmland, uprooting trees,
25 digging, fencing, all those sorts of things.

1 So far as the Sisters of Nazareth were concerned,
2 they received appeals from the Catholic Church in
3 Australia to be sympathetic to this type of request, to
4 support it, and, as you pointed out, the Order did have
5 its own homes in Australia and I think opened a number
6 of homes during the period that we're talking about.

7 So all of these factors were part and parcel of the
8 decisions that were made by others and to which the
9 Sisters, if I may use the modern expression, bought in.

10 When it came to actually doing this in practice we
11 have heard this morning the various procedures. I am
12 not going to go over those again, but one aspect of it
13 that may be of interest to the Inquiry is this.
14 Children were sent from many other homes run by the
15 Sisters of Nazareth, not just the four in Northern
16 Ireland. There were homes in Scotland and in England
17 and possibly even in Wales, although I can't remember.

18 **A. Yes, yes.**

19 Q. And indeed the Order as a whole sent a very high
20 proportion of the Catholic children who went to
21 Australia, roughly speaking about two-thirds I think --

22 **A. Yes.**

23 Q. -- and of that two-thirds about 10% or so came from
24 Northern Ireland.

25 Each home, as you told us in relation to the first

1 module -- I think the expression you used was
2 "semi-autonomous".

3 **A. Yes.**

4 Q. We have heard in the first module one of the applicants
5 saying that he remembered one of the Sisters in
6 Termonbacca I think it was saying that there weren't
7 going to be any more children going in 1953, and we do
8 know that no children went I think I am correct in
9 saying from Derry at all --

10 **A. That's right.**

11 Q. -- after 1953.

12 **A. That's correct.**

13 Q. But Children went from Belfast homes.

14 **A. Yes.**

15 Q. Was it ultimately left to the Mother Superior of each
16 home and her council to decide whether they'd take part
17 in this whole process?

18 **A. I think they would have been given the green light by
19 Hammersmith to participate in the scheme. It would have
20 to have been sent from -- permission would have to be
21 sent from the Superior General and her council, and so
22 if the Superiors of each house had got that permission
23 to join the scheme, then the Superior of the house would
24 have been in touch with the migration people to say they
25 had so many children.**

1 Q. Yes, but what I -- I am interested in is that's one side
2 of the coin, but it also seems to be the case that for
3 whatever reason the two homes in Derry decided that they
4 wouldn't send any more children, but the Belfast homes
5 continued to do so until December 1956. I just wondered
6 was there some reason for this difference in attitude
7 that you are aware of?

8 **A. Not that I'm aware of, Chairman, unless the immigration**
9 **people were looking for girls. Maybe there's more girls**
10 **in Belfast than there was in Derry. I mean, that's just**
11 **speculation. I don't know.**

12 Q.

13 **A. Sorry.**

14 Q. Then a completely unrelated question that I would just
15 like to raise with you. At the end of your first,
16 longer statement you said that the congregation had set
17 aside a sum of money in Australia to assist any issues
18 arising from child migrants and you then go on to say
19 that in 1995 the Superior General of the day I take it
20 paid the passage of about fifty child migrants to return
21 to the United Kingdom. Is that correct?

22 **A. That's correct, yes.**

23 Q. Does that mean it came out of the Order's funds?

24 **A. Yes, yes.**

25 Q. Thank you, and you refer to the assistance of Caritas

1 Social Action. What is that organisation? I take it
2 it's a Catholic --

3 **A. It's a Catholic organisation, a Catholic organisation**
4 **that helps in -- that helped us with the migrant**
5 **children.**

6 Q. Yes.

7 **A. Those children actually came to Hammersmith and had**
8 **a big reception, because I was actually there at the**
9 **time.**

10 Q. So is it a -- perhaps some sort of umbrella Catholic
11 social work organisation --

12 **A. Yes, yes.**

13 Q. -- in the United Kingdom?

14 **A. Yes, it's in the United Kingdom.**

15 Q. And then they helped with the practical arrangements --

16 **A. Yes.**

17 Q. -- of reuniting people with their families in the United
18 Kingdom?

19 **A. Yes, and Ireland.**

20 Q. And in Ireland, if, of course, the people wanted that.

21 You may be aware that it seems that other bodies
22 such as the Christian Brothers, other Orders such as the
23 Christian Brothers, have also --

24 **A. Yes.**

25 Q. -- provided financial assistance for people to come

1 back.

2 **A. That's correct, yes.**

3 Q. Yes. Thank you very much.

4 MS DOHERTY: Thanks, Sister. Can I just go back to the
5 issue about the gentleman that was looking for
6 information about his mother? If I understood you
7 right, you indicated that the nun that was involved
8 wanted to save him from a second rejection. I think
9 that's what you said, from being rejected. Are you
10 aware if she had any basis for that? Had she been in
11 contact with the mother? Was there any reason for her
12 to have any assurance that that would be it?

13 **A. I think because of what was written on the envelope,
14 that she relinquished all contact with the child.
15 I presume that was her basis.**

16 Q. So even though that was years and years before, she
17 assumed that that would still be the case?

18 **A. Yes.**

19 Q. Okay. Can I just ask when you mention you were there at
20 the Hammersmith meeting, can you say something about how
21 that went when the migrant children ...?

22 **A. There was -- well, we were expecting 22 and actually 55
23 I think came. So I remember well, because there was
24 a big rush to get more teacups and saucers and things.
25 There was a great reunion, and there was just**

1 a wonderful atmosphere, and that was before they went to
2 their various homes or wherever -- country to find their
3 relations or whatever, but there was a great reunion
4 even among the migrants themselves and the Sisters.

5 Q. And was there any acknowledgment in the way that you
6 have acknowledged today that with hindsight there was
7 an injustice? Was there any acknowledgment of that at
8 the time?

9 A. I don't think so. I don't remember. I don't recall,
10 but I know the Superior General was there and she did
11 speak to them, but whether she apologised or not I can't
12 recall.

13 Q. Okay. Thank you, Sister.

14 MR LANE: I'd just like to make sure that I've understood
15 properly about the follow-up. You mentioned that there
16 was a lot of communication between the homes in
17 Australia and the Superior General and that there were
18 visitations. So any information could have got back to
19 Hammersmith, but would that have then gone on to the
20 homes in Northern Ireland to keep them informed about
21 how their children were?

22 A. Yes, yes, it would, yes.

23 Q. And in what sort of way? Just telephone calls or would
24 there have been records passed out?

25 A. In the early days I know it was telegrams, but then

1 obviously there would have been with better
2 communication telephone calls, yes, and when the
3 Superior General and her council would come over to
4 Ireland, then they would communicate, or there would be
5 letters written.

6 Q. Would that have gone on to their records, the children's
7 records, at all or just been something that the Sisters
8 were aware of?

9 A. Over here? No, I think it was just something the
10 Sisters were aware of themselves.

11 Q. Right. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you very much, Sister Brenda, for
13 assisting the Inquiry today. We are aware you have been
14 present I think every day. I am sure you will be
15 relieved to hear that we haven't anything else to ask
16 you today, although I imagine we may well see you at
17 a later stage of our work --

18 A. Thank you very much.

19 Q. -- which is next year. Thank you for coming.

20 (Witness withdrew)

21 MS SMITH: Chairman, that concludes the evidence for today.
22 There are two witnesses -- we have received statements,
23 one from the Health & Social Care Board and one from the
24 Department of Health as the successors in title of both
25 the Trusts -- sorry -- the welfare committees and the

1 Ministry of Home Affairs.

2 Now I have indicated to the representatives for each
3 that there is no requirement for them to come to give
4 evidence unless they wish them to be called, and
5 I certainly understand from Mr O'Reilly on behalf of the
6 Department that Dr Harrison, who is provided
7 a statement, will not be attending.

8 I am awaiting confirmation from Ms Smyth, who should
9 be e-mailing me this morning to let me know whether they
10 wish to call Miss McAndrew.

11 If neither are actually coming to give evidence on
12 Monday, then it may be that we are in a position to deal
13 with submissions on Monday rather than on Tuesday, but
14 I believe my colleagues would be better placed to answer
15 whether they would be ready or not.

16 MR MONTAGUE: I have no difficulty with that, Chairman.

17 MR O'REILLY: I don't have.

18 CHAIRMAN: Very well. Thank you, gentlemen, for that
19 indication. We have seen the reports. They do not
20 really throw -- or the statements. They did not really
21 throw any significant additional light at all. They
22 merely reaffirm or repeat things that have already been
23 addressed at some length, and therefore even if they are
24 read out, it would probably be only a brief summary of
25 small parts of them. So I think in those circumstances

1 we might go to the closing submissions on Monday, if
2 that's convenient to everyone.

3 MR MONTAGUE: Certainly, Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN: I would anticipate we would therefore complete
5 them on Monday.

6 MR O'REILLY: I would have thought so.

7 CHAIRMAN: Yes. Very well. Thank you very much.

8 (11.35 am)

9 (Hearing adjourned until 10 o'clock
10 on Monday, 15th September 2014)

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