

HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE
INQUIRY

MODULE 2 CHILD MIGRATION SCHEME

SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE SISTERS
OF NAZARETH

INDEX

1. BACKGROUND	PAGES 2-12
2. RECORD KEEPING AND SEARCH FOR IDENTITY	PAGES 13-20
3. CONSENT	PAGES 20-29
3. IRISH CITIZENS EMIGRATED UNDER UK SCHEME	PAGES 30-31
4. APOLOGY	PAGE 32

TURLOUGH MONTAGUE QC
SARAH WALKINGSHAW
15 September 2014

1.BACKGROUND

1. The Inquiry has commissioned and obtained a substantial body of research on the history of the Child Migration schemes from Britain to Australia and has heard evidence from Dr McVeigh and Dr Humphreys on the experience of former child migrants from Northern Ireland. The Inquiry has also been provided with a report prepared by Tuart Place on the impacts and outcomes of Child Migration that are universal. The evidence which the Inquiry has heard from applicants, both oral and documentary, reflects the key problems summarised in the Tuart Place report¹:-

- i) Obstacles to access to information and records relating to their identity or family history;
- ii) Loss of national identity and cultural heritage.

Of these negative outcomes, the problem of loss of identity in the search for past records is having a major impact on many applicants' sense of self and identity.

The Inquiry is respectfully referred to chapter 9 of the Australian Senate Report 2004² and in particular to the recommendations therein. The Sisters of Nazareth are anxious to assist former child migrants from their homes in accessing records in their possession and the congregation welcomes this opportunity for the Inquiry to make recommendations on how to address this issue.

¹ AUS-6056-6067

² AUS-1642-1675

Another major issue for applicants to the inquiry was their belief that they were emigrated without the consent of their mother or other relative. This will be addressed in Chapter 3.

2. Sister Brenda McCall, in her evidence to the Inquiry on behalf of the Sisters of Nazareth, expressed regret at the congregation's participation in the child migrant programme which was devised and operated by the United Kingdom and Australian governments.
3. The genesis of the Sisters of Nazareth participating in the child migrant programme is reflected in the General Council chapters and although this documentary evidence was opened to the Inquiry, it bears repetition given the focus in this Module on the Congregation's role:-

"1923 Mother General said that Major Macauley is very anxious for us to send out children about 12 years of age to Australia and thinks the Government will pay their passage and also for the Sisters who may accompany them. If they could be sent to Brisbane after an arrangement has been made with Archbishop Deehig, who is also anxious for Catholic girls to go there – the members agreed it would be a good thing but the scheme would need to be well

thought out and none but Nazareth House children to be sent and to be entirely in the hands of the Sisters".³

And

"1928 Emigration of the children in our houses so as to spread Catholicity.

Rev Mother General said that Christian Brothers in Australia had offered to take 50 boys to a farm they had acquired there, and to be entirely responsible for their education. The offer will be availed of, as soon as the Brothers can make definite arrangements for the boys to go out. Reports very satisfactory of girls who had emigrated under the care of our Sisters and been received in our house at Brisbane. The Bishop there is very interested in the Scheme. A site for a new foundation has been procured in Melbourne. This house might be used to receive children emigrated from the Home houses.

The majority of the children in the English homes emigrate to Canada under the care of the Catholic Rescue Society. Reports of these children are good and the supervision exercised over them in Canada is highly satisfactory".⁴

And

³ AUS-5386

⁴ AUS-5391

"1935 Sending girls to Australia. Rev Mother General said she wished to ask the opinion of the chapter on this matter (and told the members that) about 2 years ago a Catholic gentleman in London called for her and asked us to send some of our girls out to Australia for the spread of Catholicity. The matter was brought before the General Council and all were in favour of it, if it could be satisfactorily arranged. But out in Australia Brisbane seemed to be the most suitable place for our girls – we spoke to Archbishop Deehig who not only approved of and encouraged the proposal but was prepared to get a hostel for them, but this we shall not require as we have now a large home in Brisbane. All we propose is, to send out for a beginning about 20 girls from 12 to 16 years old under the care of two Sisters who will be allowed reduced passages, and as Queensland is a very Catholic state and considered the best for our girls, arrangements could be made to have them sent to our home in Brisbane, in the first instance, and they could help with the work and be trained more or less for situations for about 2 years or so – there are much better openings for girls in Australia than at home, and as a rule, they get on better. Care must be taken in the selection of these children so as to send out sensible, well developed, healthy girls who are likely to turn out well, otherwise they may not get a good name for Nazareth House and we may not be able to continue sending them. The (?) General for Queensland has agreed to take out children under 12 years free, and those over 12 for £5-£10 each. The remainder of passage money (about £32) to be paid back to the Government when these girls go to work and earn it.

*This matter was discussed at some length – the majority approved of the scheme if it could be worked out – it would help to spread Catholicity. Our Superior remarked that sending out children to Canada, through the Catholic Immigration Society was very satisfactory”.*⁵

4. The foregoing extracts reflect the appeals made to the Sisters of Nazareth by the Catholic Church to send children to Australia. In her thesis *“A History of the Child and Juvenile Migration Schemes to Australia”* Dr Ann Mary McVeigh said:-

“The Roman Catholic Agencies tried to encourage as many as possible of the children in their care to take advantage of the ‘wonderful opportunity’ offered to them. In the initial stages of the Catholic scheme, the only children considered eligible were voluntary cases, ‘most of whom had been deserted by their parents, and children under the old Poor Law system and from the old Industrial Schools’. Later, all children in the care of the Catholic Agencies were offered the choice. In the voluntary cases, ‘there was considerable reluctance on the part of Catholic authorities to send children overseas if they were not genuine

⁵ AUS-5389

orphans and parental consent was unobtainable. That reluctance had to be balanced against what were perceived to be the considerable advantages of growing up in Australia rather than in Britain. It is also the case that each child was interviewed by officials from Australia House in London before being accepted for migration. This was in part to establish parental consent, or the validity of the reasons for its absence".⁶

5. The influence of Brother Conlon who took charge of Tardun in or about 1933 in recruiting child migrants from Britain generally, extended to Northern Ireland also. He was described in the Tardun records as being *"a highly educated gentleman...of an intensive practical mind".⁷* In May 1933 he was commissioned by the Archbishop of Perth to deal with all matters connected with Child Migration following the Archbishop's receipt of two letters from the English Catholic Hierarchy one of which stated:-

"Emigration has proved a great blessing in many cases, in giving boys and girls a completely new start, far removed from undesirable influences".⁸

⁶ AUS-1246/7

⁷ AUS-5694 para 7

⁸ AUS-5695

6. The Archbishop of Perth continued to direct all Child Migration information to Brother Conlon. In a letter of 20 July 1937 the Archbishop wrote:-

"I have just been speaking to the Prime Minister over the telephone. With regard to the emigration of children, he is of the opinion that everything is now in order. He has spoken to the Premier, Mr Wilcock, who is favourably disposed towards a subsidy similar to that granted to Fairbridge. He himself – Mr Lyons – can speak for the Federal Government – they will be prepared to subsidise on a similar basis also and he says that the Home authorities are becoming more enthusiastic..."

Generally speaking, 'adult emigration' is not favoured in Australia but there is a strong feeling which favours 'child emigration', being the best solution to the problem of filling our empty spaces with the most suitable types of citizens..."

In order to make the 'Catholic Child Emigration Scheme' the success it deserves, and to assist the Bishops and Priests in England to put the Scheme into operation on a successful and permanent footing, we are sending Brother Conlon as our representative of England, with full power to negotiate and finalise all matters in connection with the Scheme....We are confident that his

advice and experience will prove very helpful to all who are interested in placing this laudable Scheme on a lasting and successful basis".⁹

7. In 1938 the Prime Minister of Australia wrote to Brother Conlon confirming Government funding to provide assisted passages from the United Kingdom and at the same time the United Kingdom Government confirmed its approval in principle for funding for migrant children.
8. It was against this background that on 12 May 1938, Mother M Macniece, Superior General of the Sisters of Nazareth at Hammersmith, London wrote to Brother R. Conlon as follows:-

"With reference to our conversation this morning about the emigration scheme for Western Australia, we have considered your proposal and have decided to send two Sisters to look after the boys on the voyage on the condition that a Brother will accompany each party. We are hoping that your good Superior General will be able to arrange for a Brother accustomed to teaching and looking after boys".¹⁰

9. An agreement was made between the Superior General and Brother Conlon which is set out at AUS-5706/8 to which the Panel is referred together with AUS-5720 et seq.

⁹ AUS-5698/9

¹⁰ AUS-5706

10. The Inquiry has examined a number of child migration forms in which the consent to emigration was signed by Brother Conlon¹¹ and heard evidence of Brother Conlon coming to the Nazareth Homes to talk to children about going to Australia. For example, HIA278 deceased said in her statement of evidence at paragraph 10 that she recalled Brother Conlon coming to Nazareth House, Bishop Street, Derry and calling out her name. HIA309 said at paragraph 29 of his statement that Brother Conlon came in 1946 to talk to the boys about going to Australia and he described him as a very good Brother who did not hit him or any of the other boys. HIA284 told the Inquiry that he recalled Brother Conlon visiting Nazareth Lodge in 1946 in giving a talk to 30/40 boys. He describes how they had to sit a test in order to qualify to get to Australia and that Brother Conlon brought books about Australia. He reassured them life would be good in Australia and in the applicant's words Brother Conlon said *"the aboriginals were great, there was plenty of orchards and food and we would never go hungry, there was plenty of open space and we would not feel confined by four walls and that we should not worry about going there"*.

11. As the Inquiry has heard, and the Chairman has observed, it was not only the two Governments and the Catholic Hierarchy which supported emigration; a number of charitable bodies and religious congregations participated in the Scheme. In the early part of the last century the British Medical Journal

¹¹ For example HIA332, HIA324, HIA338, HIA330, HIA334

published correspondence on child emigration including a letter from George Johnston in the BMJ May 14 1910 as follows:-

"I have read Dr Dunlop's letter in the Journal of April 23rd advocating child emigration as a solution of the problem of "dependent children: and suggesting that some scheme of child emigration should be included in our Poor Law system.

Does he mean that power should be given to the Poor Law authorities to take children away from such parents as "cannot afford to, will not maintain them properly" and send them to the colonies, even without the consent of the parents?. Such a power could not be exerted except in cases in which the grossest cruelty or neglect could be proved. Who is to decide upon the amount of unworthiness on the part of parents that would justify such a measure?

In the case of orphans and other children thrown entirely upon the hands of the Poor Law authorities, Dr Dunlop's suggestion is much to recommend it. It appears to be generally agreed that child emigration is a sound expedient if properly supervised. We have at present no real systematisation of any such work.

Two plans have so far been adopted, and those on a quite inadequate scale.

One is the "boarding out" of destitute children with colonial families, sometimes as adopted children, sometimes, without any pre tense of charity on the part of the hosts, for payments. The other method is that training such children at home, before sending them to the colonies in early youth.

In the former case there is an obvious risk of the children being exploited for the advantages of those who took charge of them in the colonies. Haphazard foster parentage is bound to have drawbacks. In the latter case the youth is sent to a new life in a new country lacking the essential training of a young emigrant, and therefore in a much less advantageous position than he would have occupied at his age had he been sent to the colony as a child, and educated and practically trained on the spot.

A solution of these difficulties possibly lies in the farm school method, which is a policy, I believe, of the Society for Furtherance of Child Emigration, founded last year at Oxford by colonials. The Society proposes to take waif children to the colonies at the age of 8-10 and to give them a complete general and agriculture education on the society's farms in the two colonies.

At the Emigration Conference initiated by the Royal Colonial Institute, to be held on May 30 and 31, this question is, I believe, to be discussed".

2. RECORD KEEPING AND SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

1. The congregation acknowledges that record keeping during the relevant period of child emigrations from the Nazareth Homes was limited. This must be assessed in the context of the standards of the day. There were many obstacles to maintaining records relating to a child's parents not least because many mothers wished to maintain confidentiality particularly in respect of illegitimate children. Participation of the congregation in child migration to Australia coincided with an increase in the number of illegitimate children born in the post World War II period.
2. Whilst commentators have stated the post war conditions in the United Kingdom were no excuse for the emigration schemes, the war itself produced new social phenomena and the admission records of Termonbacca evidence what historians refer to as a spike in illegitimate births during the war years.
3. In his review of the Two Part TV documentary "*Love Child*" Mr David Lane wrote of the parental pressure during the post war era on girls who got pregnant, many of whom were sent away to mother and baby homes for the duration of the pregnancy and birth, only being allowed home when the baby had been adopted. Mr Lane commented:-

"In the 1950s and 1960s, the stigma of illegitimacy was such that many young women in their late teens and early twenties were more or less forced to give up

their babies. They were expected to go away to mother and baby homes, and 6 weeks later, sign over their child to someone else. They were then expected to make a fresh start and forget the babies they gave away".¹²

Mr Lane also observed that it was not until the Children Act 1975 that children were given the right to search for their birth parents.

4. The admission records of Termonbacca disclose that:-

"1930 - 1934 – 7 of 63 admissions were illegitimate;

1934 - 1940 – 42 of 85 admissions were illegitimate;

1940 – 1945 – 43 of 104 admissions were illegitimate; and

1950 – 1955 – 47 of 80 admissions were illegitimate".¹³

5. The social stigma attached to illegitimacy was such that mothers would often conceal the pregnancy and would not disclose it, except perhaps to a close relative at a later date.
6. The social stigma at that time was very real in both urban and rural communities and perhaps with heightened stigma in the latter. The map provided by the Child Emigrant Trust suggests that single mothers came from all Northern

¹² Childrenwebmag March 1st 2006

¹³ SND-5681

Ireland to seek help from the Sisters of Nazareth. HIA333's mother discovered she was pregnant in 1937. She was unmarried and resided in a village. She kept her pregnancy a closely guarded secret and in an account of his experience, it is speculated that possibly a maximum of three persons knew about her pregnancy: herself, the child's father and the local parish priest [A copy of the publication will be provided]. This is typical of the experience of many mothers in Ireland during the relevant period.

7. Many such mothers did not maintain contact with their child once placed with the Sisters of Nazareth. Some mothers moved address, emigrated or subsequently married.

8. An example of one of the obstacles to identifying mothers is revealed in correspondence from Catholic Family Care Society (NI) to the Catholic Child Migrant Centre in Perth concerning a child migrant who had been in Nazareth House, Derry.¹⁴ His unmarried mother had booked into hospital for her son's birth under the child's father's name. A line of enquiry had been pursued through the hospital and it was only in obtaining the records from Nazareth House that the mother's surname was ascertained.

¹⁴ AUS-5241

9. Further correspondence from Nazareth House, Bishop Street to the Catholic Family Care Society (NI) 16 December 1994¹⁵ illustrates additional difficulties faced by former child migrants. Records were being sought for a former migrant, born on [REDACTED], who was not admitted to Termonbacca until 1944 and left 3 years later in 1947. Writing on behalf of the congregation, [REDACTED] SR 2 said:-

'I sincerely hope, that despite the fact that the above is very minimal, I do hope it will be of some help to you'.

10. The willingness of the congregation to assist former child migrants is reflected in the correspondence relating to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at AUS-5266-5269. In respect of the former, [REDACTED] SR 2 corresponded with both the Catholic Family Care Society (NI) and Dr Humphreys of the Child Migrant's Trust. In respect of the latter, [REDACTED] SR 2 corresponded with and met her and corresponded with members of her family.
11. In a letter from the Superior General of Nazareth House, Hammersmith in December 1993¹⁷ the Superior General stresses that the congregation is anxious to help migrants and provides the particulars of Mr Michael Lyons who has been appointed by the Catholic Childrens' Welfare Society in England to assist

¹⁵ AUS-5253

¹⁶ AUS-5261-5265

¹⁷ AUS-5278

any migrant in any way possible regarding any information relating to the families, records etc and that the Sisters of Nazareth and Christian Brothers are paying for the services of Mr Lyons. **SR 2** followed up this correspondence with a letter dated 24 January 1994¹⁸ wherein she explained that in the 1930s/1940s the files were not kept as they are today. She went on to say:-

“With regard to your request for papers stating that your brother was actually in care in Nazareth House I wish to confirm that according to our records there is no evidence of him ever being in care here. He was however admitted to Termonbacca on 20 January 1946 and discharged from there on 28 March 1953.

In relation to your request for school papers and school group photographs I regret to inform you that we would not have access to Christian Brothers’ records, who incidentally are no longer residing in Derry.

As regards to health and farm records, to our knowledge none were kept at that time.

I enclose a copy of all the information I have on record. Unfortunately X I feel this will be of little consolation as you already have this.

¹⁸ AUS-5285

X, I can offer my sympathy and my regrets that I cannot be of further help to you”.

12. In his evidence to the Health Committee 3rd Report (UK) Mr Luce of the Department of Health said:-

“Our perception is that the voluntary organisations who in the past were emigrating children, are doing what they can to help make available their records to the children themselves, or to others with a bona fide interest. It is not a particularly easy thing to do. I think I am right in saying that until well after the war, until 1955, that there was actually no legal obligation on any child care agency to keep records for a specified time. I think I am right in saying that it was only in 1991, under Regulations made through the Children Act of two years previously, that the Department of Health put an obligation on local authorities and other agencies dealing with children to keep records for, I think it is now 75 years. The sending agencies do appear to have actually kept records. They do appear to have kept records, although naturally over a very long period some of those records will have met with accidents, they will have been lost, or they will have been fires or whatever. But our perception is that they are really trying to be helpful. I know that there were perceptions – particularly in the late 1980s and quite a lot of the contacts appear to have started from the emigrated children and organisations acting on their behalf – there were perceptions at that time that the going was very slow and there might

have been some reluctance. I do not think that is something I can comment upon. Our perception is that sending agencies are really to be helpful”.

13. With regard to the proposal of a comprehensive database, Dr Luce expressed scepticism:-

*“It is not particularly clear to us that it would be sensible to try to collect all these voluntary body records and put them onto one database...If we or somebody else actually did that there would be a period during which the records would become more or less inaccessible because they would all have to be gathered in and sorted”.*¹⁹

14. However it was noted by the Health Committee that the Catholic Child Welfare Council *“had a developed database since 1994, containing details of all known former child migrants sent to Australia through Catholic agencies and institutions”*. The Inquiry has heard evidence in respect of the database and the acknowledgment by Rosemary Keenan in her Analysis of the Database that considerable credit should go to the Sisters of Nazareth who spent 1500 hours cross checking the references to children sent by the order against extant records

¹⁹ AUS-3030

from the 26 Nazareth House homes across the UK which sent children to Australia.²⁰

15. The Health Committee also heard evidence that Nazareth House Sisters *“throughout the country have spent £1.4 million supporting the reunions back here in England”*.²¹

16. In the interim report of the Western Australia Western Committee into Child Migration (November 1996) it is recorded that the UK Investigative Visit was hosted in Hammersmith by the Sisters of Nazareth and “whilst at the headquarters, we were shown the impressive arrangements which were in place for the storage and improve accessibility of their records. It was clear that much work was being done to provide as much information as possible for a complete database of all Catholic child migrants.

17. It is submitted that the examples cited in the foregoing reflect the desire on the part of the Sisters of Nazareth to do their utmost to help make available their records to individual former child migrants or to persons acting on their behalf such as the Child Migrants Trust.

²⁰ Aus-7103

²¹ AUS-3365

3. CONSENT

1. An analysis of the extracts from the registers in Hammersmith disclose that there are 40 children for whom consent was sought or for whom it was not possible to seek consent. This goes beyond the 20% of cases of consent cited by Rosemary Keenan for the whole of the UK. The register suggests there was a genuine effort to ascertain whether there were parents who could maintain contact with their children: *"mother in service"*; *"parents dead"*. There were cases in which children had been adopted or fostered and such placements had fallen through. There were instances in which the mother had deserted or was irresponsible, or had neglected the child, and there were children for whom a mother or another family member gave consent.

2. The following is a summary of the extracts:-

Extracts from the registers found in Hammersmith

1. **HIA 337** (dob **██████**) - mother gave up claim to this child/ Written RC
2. **██████████** - letters to mother returned as N/K/ wrote August
3. **██████████** - foster mother dead/ left to go to AUST
4. **HIA 278** - Mo Dead/ father in hosp/ Geraldton/ brother in army
5. **HIA 340** - adopted 1953/ returned 1954/ Camberwell
6. **HIA 474** - mo in jail no supervision/ mother deserted.

7. [REDACTED] - uncle signed paper to give [REDACTED] to NH care and for him to go to Aust.
8. **HIA 285** [REDACTED] - Mo mar in England - gave child - Fr Maguire
9. **HIA 395** [REDACTED] - mother mentally Ill.
10. [REDACTED] - mother found dead
11. [REDACTED] - fathers address NK / Mother in America
12. [REDACTED] - given up by her mother
13. **HIA 401** [REDACTED] - mother irresponsible
14. **HIA 303** [REDACTED] - mother irresponsible
15. **HIA 339** [REDACTED] - mother going to GS convent Newry
16. [REDACTED] - Mo RIP/ [REDACTED] - A SR Geraldton
17. **HIA 279** [REDACTED]
18. & **HIA 309** [REDACTED]
19. & **HIA 296** [REDACTED] - mother dead/ bro [REDACTED] RIP/ SRS work. Father gave permission for 3 boys to go to Australia
20. [REDACTED]
21. & [REDACTED]
22. & [REDACTED] / [REDACTED] - mother dead/ father a pedlar/ 2 sisters
[REDACTED] Sailed August 29/8/49 - [REDACTED] 1/8/25 here.
23. [REDACTED] - Mo RIP/ Father mentally ill
24. [REDACTED] - mother in service
25. **HIA 350** [REDACTED] - mother, grandfather, Bro – RIP
26. [REDACTED] - mother deserted can not be traced
27. **HIA 306** [REDACTED] - given for adoption/ Fos parents in mental home
28. [REDACTED] - mother in service

29. [REDACTED] **AU 29** - adopt - no claim on child
30. [REDACTED]
31. & [REDACTED] - parents dead/rec by Fr McLaughlin -
uncle. 2 SRS sailed 29/8/47.
32. [REDACTED]
33. & [REDACTED] - FA RIP/Geraldton/Mo seriously ill -
RIP/2 Bros in TB.
34. [REDACTED] **HIA 240**
35. & [REDACTED] **AU 64**
36. & [REDACTED] **HIA 323** - in [REDACTED])/ A Bro [REDACTED] & 3 SRS mother
deserted children/ have brother **HIA 240** in [REDACTED] & Bro [REDACTED] (not
AUST)
37. [REDACTED] **HIA 332** - mo married Protestant wanted boy RC - [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] - mother gave consent
38. [REDACTED] - parents dead
39. [REDACTED] **HIA 305** - mother did not want this baby
40. [REDACTED] **HIA 284** - rickets on admission

3. In addition to the foregoing children, in the statement of evidence of HIA324
deceased, he recalls that he had no visitors at all in Termonbacca except for a
woman who visited and gave him thruppence before he went to Australia. It is
submitted this is hardly a coincidence and it supports the proposition that
attempts were made by the Sisters of Nazareth to get parental consent and in this
instance was given.

4. The case of HIA332, although his mother gave her consent, his consent form was signed by Brother Conlon and the Mother Superior. It is also notable that on the day of his departure a woman arrived and shook his hand (paragraph 6 of his statement). Thus the fact that a consent form does not contain the signature of a parent does not mean that consent was absent.
5. In the case of HIA349 his consent was signed by Brother Conlon and the Mother Superior, his mother died before he emigrated.
6. The above list does not include HIA63 whose mother signed his consent.
7. In the case of HIA311, his mother sent him to Australia to prevent adoption by his aunt and uncle. His mother wrote to him when in Tardun so she clearly knew of his whereabouts in Australia.
8. In the case of HIA325 his mother consented.
9. The statement of [REDACTED] **SR 189** is an important document in that it reveals the reasoning re adoption where there was no contact from a natural parent. As the statement is silent on whether the mother consented to emigration, it appears as though the congregation may have applied the same criteria for emigration if the home had lost contact with a child's parents or relatives. This is consistent

²² AUS-11016

with the following evidence given to the Australia Senate Committee by Professor Sherrington and Dr Coldery:-

(i) *Both Professor Sherrington and Dr Coldery stated that on many occasions the Societies and orphanages simply lost contact with parents. Professor Sherrington noted that the organisations then formally or informally assumed the role of in loco parentis. Dr Coldery had written (consent of parents) that sometimes the mother who had left a child in the care of the church would return for the child when her situation improved, but often visits by the mother became more infrequent and the child was 'abandoned – deserted for all practical purposes' and migration to Australia seemed the best option".²³*

(ii) *As Dr Coldery has noted in some instances the agreement by parents to the adoption of their child was taken by institutions as agreement to migration. The Committee received evidence that some parents had agreed to adoption but at no time were they informed that 'adoption' could mean migration to Australia".²⁴*

²³ AUS-2694

²⁴ AUS-2696

iii) CCS (Westminister) formerly the Crusade of Rescue submitted to the Western Australia Select Committee entry child migration that extant records show that attempts were made to locate relatives prior to migration with a number of letters returned as the whereabouts of the addresses were unknown".²⁵

Professor Sherrington noted that *"on other occasions that efforts were made to protect children from their past particularly if their mothers were unmarried when they were born".* Professor Sherrington concluded that the relationship between parents, their children and institutions were complex and depended upon a number of circumstances.²⁶

10. In her statement of evidence to the Inquiry HIA150 told how she was taken by her father to a family to be looked after and they looked after her until she was aged 7 when she was admitted to Nazareth House, Derry. Her brother and sister were admitted to Nazareth House in Belfast for some years but her mother took both of them back into her care in 1947/1948. Her mother had visited them on Sundays when they were in care but she did not visit the applicant. She was subsequently told that the Sisters of Nazareth came to the family who had reared her for the first 7 years of her life and advised that HIA342 would have a better life in Australia. She also told the Inquiry that upon leaving Nazareth House

²⁵ AUS-2696

²⁶ AUS-2696

Geraldton, that SAU 7 told her she should write to the family who had cared for her in Derry. The foregoing is another example of the congregation consulting relatives or persons who had contact with a child.

11. In the case of HIA322 whose child migration form was signed by the Mother Superior and in which it is recorded that his parents are not in contact, it is clear from the correspondence that the congregation was challenged as to why parental consent was not on his form²⁷.
12. It is respectfully the foregoing supports the following findings/conclusions of Dr Mc Veigh in her thesis:
 - i) The RC authorities tried to encourage children to take advantage of the "wonderful opportunity." In the initial stages of the scheme the only children who were considered eligible were voluntary cases whose parents had abandoned them and children under Poor Law system and from the industrial schools. Later all children in the care of catholic agencies were offered the choice.

"There was considerable reluctance on the part of catholic authorities to send children overseas if they were not genuine orphans and parental consent was unobtainable. That reluctance had to be balanced against what were perceived to be the considerable advantages of growing up in

²⁷ AUS-10733

Australia rather than in Britain. It is also the case that each child was interviewed by officials from Australia house in London before being accepted for migration. This was in part to establish parental consent or the validity of the reasons for its absence" (CCWC)

"From 1947 all children were interviewed personally at least twice by Australia house officials plus a further Medical examination. They were always asked if they wished to go to Australia. Permission was sought from a parent or guardian. No one was considered without full consent. Months beforehand a lot of work went into this preparation, birth certificates and baptismal certificates had to be procured. A medical clearance and school report obtained" (SR 121 Nazareth Lodge 1952) ²⁸- the agencies took the view that abandoned children should not be prevented from migration if it was considered in their best interests by an inability to obtain the parent's consent. Another reason why consent from parent may not have been forthcoming may have been that the parent was incapable of making the proper decision. ²⁹

- ii) - even where consent given parents and guardians retained the right to change their minds. "From one home in Ni three lads out of 12 approved had to be withdrawn because consent was not forthcoming" "in another example it was the child's grandmother who refused consent."³⁰

²⁸ AUS-1246

²⁹ AUS-1248

³⁰ AUS-1250

13. Points arising from registers -

There are 40 children for whom consent was sought or for whom it was not possible to seek consent. This goes beyond the 20% of cases of consent cited by Rosemary Keenan.

Suggests that there was a genuine look at who could take care of these children "mother in service", "parents dead".

There were cases in which children had been adopted or fostered and placement had fallen through.

There were cases in which the mother had deserted, was irresponsible.

There were cases in which the mother or another family member gave consent

4. IRISH CITIZENS EMIGRATED UNDER THE UK MIGRANT SCHEME

1. A number of the applicants to the Inquiry have complained about and questioned how they, as Irish citizens, were allowed to be part of a United Kingdom child migrant programme. It was evident from their evidence that these applicants feel very strongly about this issue and the consequences thereof. This is particularly poignant given the Irish Government's refusal to join in the programme:-

"In spite of a meeting with Irish Prime Minister De Valera, the Irish Government refused to participate in the Scheme. In a memo dated 22 July 1938, the Department of the Taoiseach noted "...that Brother Conlon should be informed that the Government do not propose to participate in the Scheme" and in a letter dated 16 August Brother Conlon was informed: - "...that the Scheme was not approved".

2. There is no evidence that the Sisters of Nazareth gave any consideration to this issue. The only surviving Sister from the relevant period, SAU 27, is aged 102 and her involvement was limited to accompanying children on one of the sailings to Australia. What is beyond dispute is that the UK and Australian

Governments would have known a child's nationality from his/her child migration form.

3. HIA305 is in an example of a child born in [REDACTED] in County Donegal on 21 February 1947 whose place of birth is recorded in his Child Migration Form which was provided to the Department of Immigration, Australia House, London.

5.APOLOGY

1. The Inquiry heard Sister Brenda McCall express the congregation's regret at its participation in the Child Migrant Programme. Ms Doherty enquired of her whether an apology was given by the congregation when it hosted a reception for 55 former child migrants in its home in Hammersmith.
2. In 2005 the Sisters of Nazareth issued a statement of apology to the Australian Child Migrant Project as follows:-

"We, the Sisters of Nazareth, sincerely apologise and are deeply saddened by the pain and distress suffered by so many men and women as a result of the Child Migration Scheme. We wholeheartedly commit ourselves to continue to support those who contact us and warmly welcome each one to Nazareth House, welcoming accommodation if required".

3. The Congregation confirms that they remain committed as aforesaid and they continue to welcome and to assist all former child migrants who contact them.