



the hand off the board at the bottom. Each letter is called and confirmed (or erased, corrected and called again) before going on to the next. S and T could not, therefore, have been produced together. It will be seen that S and T are at one end of the board and R at the other, so could not have been touched together. A proper reading of the book shows not several, but two only, words were given. They were "string" and "quince" and the words alone were given—the piece of string at which the questioner is supposed to have glanced being a figment of Ms Houston's imagination. Miss McDonald spelt the first nine letters of these two words correctly to the point when "t" was called for "n", these being adjacent on the board. Perhaps she chose the "t" quite deliberately as she had already gone way beyond the slightest possibility of chance. (For those mathematically and objectively-inclined, taking "x" as the number of letters correctly indicated in order, the chance of the message thus far spelled being produced accidentally is 26 to the (x-1), i.e. 26 multiplied by itself 8 times.) Incidentally, as the Master had asked everyone to leave the room during this message-passing Ms Crossley was alone with Ms McDonald and there was no-one present to eye-point or in any other way give a clue.

Of this test, Master Jacobs states on page 4 of his Report:

"Finally, she completed the test with a sufficiently correct answer to satisfy everyone that the answer had to be her own answer and not that of Miss Crossley, who could not have known what it was."

Regarding the second of these inaccurate paragraphs of the review, careful reading of the book reveals that Miss McDonald was required by the Master (who was in charge of the examination, after all)

1) to converse with him before witnesses using her "yes" and "no" responses and

2) to move her arm without support in order to do a part of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.

In this regard the Master's Report on page 6 states:

"Miss McDonald was required to point to the square on her board which in her opinion contained the number corresponding to what in her opinion was the appropriate picture in the book to describe that word. She was able to do this without anyone supporting her arm, because the squares on her board were so large that there could be no mistaking which one was being pointed to. Accordingly she has the unaided ability to express opinions. Of 75 pictures illustrating increasingly sophisticated words (e.g. 'ingenious' and 'jurisprudence') she answered 68 correctly."

and, on page 4,

"She indicated, by use of her tongue, that she understood what I was saying."

I suggest that Ms Houston might have done well both to read "Annie's Coming Out" objectively, and to supplement her knowledge by reading the Master's Report before making the totally erroneous statement that this hearing produced "no further evidence".

There is a further statement that Ms Crossley does not attempt to alter the alphabet board so that it requires less precise, less ambiguous movement. This is quite untrue. There are three possible ways to make the use of communication boards more precise. One can:

1) Spread the letters further apart. This would have moved the outer letters beyond Anne's range of movement.

2) Use a two-point-per-letter system, such as a grid or a colour-coded grouping of letters. This doubles the time and effort needed to produce the message and is also subject to ambiguity in that only a capable receiver can remember whether he is watching for the first or second point.

3) Provide the communicating person with physiotherapy and proper seating and positioning to enable her to point more precisely.

We have chosen the third method with great success. Miss McDonald, Ms Crossley and I have also, of course, tried a variety of other arrangements of letters over the last two and a half years, but still find the old board, with slight modification, the quickest and most effective. With Anne's physical progress it has, however, developed from a cumbersome magnetic board to a foolscap-sized card stuck to the dining-room table or folded into a handbag, and it now includes a few short-cuts such as "U" for "you", "C" for "see", "Y" for "why", etc. Also "O" has been moved to the end of its line to separate it from the other vowels for greater clarity.

The review states of Anne McDonald, "She does not seem to realise the importance of proving that she is not retarded." Such proof should never again be demanded. It is not expected of anyone else; it is not important; and has already been given in full.

Anne McDonald, although physically handicapped, is not a mentally retarded child. Nor is she a frog to be callously dissected on a scientist's bench. She is an intelligent, sensitive, adult citizen with a right to respect and courtesy. Ms Houston owes her, and Ms Crossley, a profound apology.

BOOKS RECEIVED

These books will be reviewed in this and coming issues.

Forward, S. and Buck, C. *Betrayal of innocence: incest and its devastation*. Penguin, 1980.

Parizeau, A. *Parenting and delinquent youth*. Lexington Books, 1980.

Pincus, Lily. *Death and the Family*. Faber, 1974.

Poulsson, M. and Spearritt, P. *Sydney: a social and political atlas*. George Allen & Unwin, 1981.