

One child, who was brought to the school apparently about to die from severe lung-disease, has been restored to health and vigour; and another, who has long been in the school in a feeble condition from constitutional disease, has much improved.

The two cripples whose cases were mentioned in former reports are both in excellent health, and able to walk a considerable distance.

I regret that I have to state that the drainage from new houses above the school, on which I previously reported, has not been properly attended to.

I am, &c.,

ARTHUR G. PURCHAS,
Medical Officer of Auckland Industrial School.

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

CANTERBURY.

SIR,—

12th July, 1899.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Burnham Industrial School for the year 1898:—

The health of the school has been generally satisfactory, no serious illness having occurred. In November an outbreak of German measles, now prevalent in Christchurch, occurred at Burnham. Forty-four boys and five girls took the complaint, which proved very mild in the majority of cases.

Excluding this epidemic, the percentage of illness was lower than in 1897. Fifty-six boys were attended for sixty-seven different complaints. Fifteen girls were attended for twenty-one different complaints. The inmates numbered on the 31st December sixty-six boys and twenty-seven girls. The percentage of inmates attended was 76 per cent., as against 91 per cent. in 1897. Twelve cases of illness were sent to Christchurch Hospital.

The principal ailments are the result of defective constitutional conditions: thus, chronic inflammations of the eyes and ears, enlarged glands, and skin-diseases have been as numerous as before, no improvement being recorded. This is an especial reason for improving the milk-supply, which is very defective. In January last we had five cows milked on the farm, but last winter our own dairy failed altogether, and the school was entirely dependent on condensed milk. This does not afford the same nourishment as fresh milk; nor can it be used economically in large enough quantity. No food is so important for delicate children as a liberal allowance of fresh pasteurised milk.

The reduction in the amount of illness is due to the marked diminution in the number of cases of rheumatism, with its allied complaints, sciatica, lumbago, and neuralgia, which I attribute to your beneficent rule in allowing me to substitute warm woollen jerseys in place of the thin cotton waistcoats formerly worn by the boys. These complaints had been very prevalent among the boys, although absent among the girls. I attributed them to the very cold easterly winds to which the boys are exposed when working in the large, bleak paddocks at Burnham, situated as it is in the middle of a vast open plain without any shelter.

Ulcerated sore throats have occurred on many occasions, caused by sewer-gas. The drains are old and badly constructed. They are insufficiently trapped, and totally devoid of ventilation. I think it would be a great advantage if the closed drains could be abolished and open drains substituted, as has been done at Sumner with great success.

The four epileptic and imbecile girls still remain at Burnham. It would be a mutual advantage to both the school and these afflicted girls if they could be removed to a special home in the country, where they would be engaged in gardening or other outdoor pursuit, and live under suitable conditions, such as vegetarian diet, absence of excitement, and certain rules of conduct and moral training. The detention of similar cases in lunatic asylums is even more undesirable.

I beg to draw your attention to the fact that most of the cases of illness among the girls occur in those who have been in service for a short time, and return to Burnham through their health breaking down before they are accustomed to service. As long as such girls take situations in Canterbury, so long will it be necessary for them to have a home like Burnham to which they can return for rest and change and medical treatment.

In conclusion, I beg to offer the following recommendations: (1.) That the girls should be regularly drilled or have calisthenic exercises. At present the boys alone are drilled. (2.) That trees should be planted at the corners of every paddock to provide shelter. (3.) That 1 acre of lucerne be sown and irrigated this season as an experiment, to ascertain the possibility of providing food for dairy-cows.

I have, &c.,

W. H. SYMES, M.D.,
Medical Officer.

The Hon. the Minister of Education.

OTAGO.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 23rd May, 1899.

I have the honour to forward my annual report regarding the sanitary state of the Industrial School, Caversham, and the health of the children domiciled therein.

The average number has been seventy-five: Boys, 42; girls, 33. There have been no deaths, or cases of prolonged sickness, despite an epidemic of measles, which luckily occurred during the summer months.

It is gratifying to record that the new buildings are being proceeded with, and to note that when completed the management will be relieved of a great responsibility. One of the improvements has proved a twofold blessing, the reservoir formed for storing water on the hill for fire-extinction making an excellent swimming-bath, of which the boys gladly avail themselves.

The measles epidemic alluded to above affected the boarded-out children in this district. All attacked made good recoveries.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

ROBERT BURNS, F.R.C.S. Ed.