

*Tea, 6.30 p.m.*

Sunday: Tea, bread and jam or butter.

Monday: Tea, bread and golden syrup.

Tuesday: Tea, bread and butter.

Wednesday: Tea, bread and dripping.

Thursday: Tea, bread and jam.

Friday: Tea, bread and golden syrup.

Saturday: Tea, bread and butter.

Fruit or pie in season.

This table is a considerable improvement on the former one, but we recommend that hot boiled or baked meat be supplied at dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and vegetables in addition to potatoes on Fridays. We think this dietary would be satisfactory, although it is not equal to that at present in use at Burnham, which appears to us to be somewhat beyond the requirements of such an institution, and which is set out in the appendix.

“4. That the boys have been and are poorly and insufficiently clothed.”

The clothing has, in our opinion, been sufficiently good in quality, although made of rough material; the shirts being of a strong, coarse linen; the coats, vests, and trousers of coloured moleskin. Vests are not usually worn with every-day clothes. The boys wear no underclothing in summer, but in winter a flannel shirt or jersey over the day shirt is worn by some of the boys, while others have only the linen shirt. Many of the jerseys are thin, and some not whole. The school- and working-clothes are old and patched, but quite wearable. They have, in addition, one Sunday suit and one picnic or gala suit.

It seemed to us the boys were, on the occasion of our visit on the 25th July, lightly clad for the season of the year, and we recommend that either under-vests or outside jerseys should be worn in addition to linen shirts by all the boys during the winter months. On a visit made on the 3rd August we found the boys wearing new outside jerseys with waistcoats and coats. They were decidedly overclothed on that occasion. We have medical evidence that the ordinary clothing is adequate for purposes of warmth. While it may be truly said they have been poorly clad, we cannot, in view of the fact that there has been no death at the school for over six years, and no case of pulmonary disease or other illness for more than two years, and that at the present time there is not a cough or a cold amongst the 120 boys, say they have been insufficiently clothed.

“5. That certain of the work required to be performed by the inmates has been and is too hard, especially for lads of tender years.”

The evidence adduced and our observations do not establish this complaint, in support of which it was endeavoured to be shown that lads of tender years were sent up a hill about 1,200 ft. high, ascended in a distance of 75 chains, three or four times a day to bring down heavy posts and poles.

We are satisfied that during the last four or five years none of the boys have been up the hill more than twice in a day, and but seldom more than once; but when the boundary-fence was in course of erection, in 1894–95, on some occasions boys did make four trips in the day. The work of bringing down posts, &c., was not too heavy: bringing them up on the other side of the hill, a distance of 10 to 20 chains, would have been if each post was carried by a single boy, but two or three assisting lightened the work when necessary. We are satisfied that the work was no harder than is frequently being done by bush-settlers' sons of the same age. The boys went to work in large numbers, and regarded it more as a holiday than work. Residents in the neighbourhood say there was no appearance of severity in enforcing the labour, but that, on the contrary, it was done with much hilarity. Some of the boy witnesses stated that they preferred this work to lessons. Work on the hill was not continuous, but at intervals as occasion required.

“6. That boys who have died at the school have been buried in the grounds connected with the school.”

This is perfectly true, but is no ground for complaint. Those who have died at the school have been buried in a public cemetery dedicated and gazetted ten years ago, being 5 acres in extent, part of the school estate, sufficiently remote from the school, and perfectly sanitary. The school is seven or eight miles distant by the nearest road from any other cemetery. Four boys have died at the school and one at the hospital since 1890—viz., one in 1891, two in 1893, and two in 1894—and these have been buried in the cemetery. No death of an inmate in the school has occurred during the last six years.