

ally. The Sisters of the Convent also visit occasionally. Miss Simpson teaches a Sunday-school class every Sunday. The Rev. Mr. Inwood has a singing class every Thursday. He also holds a Sunday-school once in three weeks, and confirmation classes at intervals. Mrs. Kay holds a social conversational class once a fortnight, and Mrs. Cunningham has given two teaching lectures on botany. A few entertainments have been given at the Home by Christchurch musical societies.

The work done by the girls is now entirely restricted to their own requirements. Until recently the stockings of the Burnham boys have been mended at Te Oranga, but this is now discontinued, and in future the boys will have to mend their own stockings. The girls' work now consists of three hours, school-teaching daily, all their own dressmaking and washing, gardening, poultry-keeping, milking and butter-making, cutting firewood, and all the domestic work of the Home. All the vegetables used, except part of the potatoes, are grown by the girls. All the butter and jam used is made by them. The floors are waxed with beeswax made by them from their own bee-hives.

The Matron has four attendants and a gardener. There is also a resident State-school teacher, who holds classes twice a day and two evenings a week.

The girls are divided into two classes, which are kept entirely separate, and not allowed even to speak to each other. Each girl on arrival is placed in the second class, from which she is promoted to the first class after a reasonable term of good conduct. It is proposed to form a third class shortly for the very worst girls.

All the good-conduct girls went into camp on Quail Island for two weeks' holiday in January, 1904. It effected a marked improvement in their health and spirits. It is to be sincerely hoped that this very successful experiment may be often repeated. No change could be more suitable from the confinement and routine of the Home, though most of the girls express themselves as happy and contented at Te Oranga.

The thing most wanted now to improve the institution is a proper recreation-ground, provided with a tennis-court and gymnasium. Both classes of girls have small recreation-grounds of their own, but they are small and taken up with clothes-lines, &c. If a third recreation-ground were formed and adapted for tennis and gymnasium, it might be called a "neutral ground," and used alternately by either class. Such recreation as it would afford must not be viewed as a luxury, but rather as a means to health of body and mind. The girls are busily occupied from morning to night, and the routine would be less irksome if varied a little by healthy recreation in the open air. The girls can only remain at Te Oranga a few years; they must leave at or before twenty-one years of age. It is the more reason to improve them as much as possible while there, so that the State may reap the benefit afterwards.

I omitted to mention that the small church at Burwood has had to be enlarged at a cost of £200, on account of the Te Oranga girls. This is a heavy charge on such a poor and sparsely populated district, and some means should be devised to assist the parish to meet it.

I have, &c.,

W. H. SYMES, M.D.,

Medical Officer.

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 6th June, 1904.

I have the honour to report that the health of the children on the books of the Christchurch Receiving Home has been fairly good during the past year, with the exception of one death, that of a girl in service, who died at the Hospital on the 20th October, 1903, from eating match-heads.

The average number of children was 235.25 per month.

The Home was removed from Barbadoes Street to Hereford Street on the 24th September, 1903.

The principal difficulty we have to contend with is the want of proper accommodation for sick girls, who have frequently to leave their situations and return to the Home for rest and treatment. The majority of these cases are not sufficiently serious to require them to be sent to the public hospital, even if it were possible to obtain admission for them. Unfortunately, the present Receiving Home building is very ill adapted for cases of illness, on account of the small size of the rooms, and the lowness of the ceilings, which are only 9 ft. high. Thus, the best of the upstairs rooms has three beds, with 1,400 cubic feet air-space, allowing 470 ft. per bed, which is barely sufficient for a healthy person, whereas sick patients require from 1,200 to 2,000 cubic feet. Also, the minimum floor-space required in hospital wards is 100 square feet for ordinary cases, and 150 ft. for infectious cases, while the floor-space per bed in the Receiving Home is only 55 square feet. The window-space is equally deficient. None of the rooms are properly ventilated, and only two of them are provided with even partial appliances for ventilation. It is necessary that the girls who return to the Home to recruit their health should spend as much time as possible in the open air, but the small garden-space in front of the Home is too close to the street to allow the girls to remain there, and the very small paved yard at the back is absolutely sunless, and generally damp. The consequence is that the girls are mostly confined to the house, except when an attendant is free to take them for a walk in the town. A better plan would be to have a suitable building away from the centre of the town, with enough ground for the girls to spend most of their time in the garden. There is plenty of land to be bought for £300 to £400 an acre in the south-west part of Christchurch, which is much higher and more healthy than the present site. A single-story building would save much of the labour wasted in the present two-story building. One large dormitory, with an attendant's room at each end, would be healthier than the present little bedrooms, which have no such supervision. Also, the attendant's time would be saved in taking the girls and children out for air and exercise. Many out-of-door games and amusements, which are now impossible, would be most beneficial to both the girls and the children.