

One great advantage in having the Home situated on a larger piece of ground would be the facility of isolating any doubtful case of illness at the earliest moment, and so preventing the spread of infection. Thus, on two occasions girls have been sent back to the Home slightly indisposed, and have communicated diphtheria and measles to all the other inmates, causing the Home to be closed and great expense to be incurred for disinfection. A couple of rooms detached from the main building would prevent all this. This is the more necessary because, in addition to the actual residents in the Home, a large number of children are being continually brought to the Home for inspection and clothing.

I wish to bear emphatic testimony to the excellent training in domestic work which the girls receive from the staff. I know by experience, and I have been assured by many ladies, that the girls trained at the Receiving Home are much better domestic helps in proportion to their age than the average met with in Christchurch households. The discipline they undergo at the Home renders them more amenable to instruction and correction than girls who have not had the privilege of such training. The advantage to the State of having so many girls well trained should more than repay the expense incurred. It is all the more necessary that a suitable Receiving Home should be provided. All the girls seem very fond of the Home, and are always glad to return to it.

The treatment of sick inmates of the various Government institutions here is becoming every year a more difficult matter. I am often called upon to provide treatment at the same time for inmates of the Receiving Home, the Deaf-mute School, the Te Oranga Reformatory, the Burnham boys, and the police. Sickness is influenced by the seasons, and breaks out everywhere about the same time. In theory, I am supposed to send all such cases, if serious enough, to the Hospital, but the latter contains only 120 beds, which are occupied by people from all parts of the country, a considerable proportion of whom are in good circumstances and can afford to pay the charges. It is, more often than not, impossible to obtain admission for the above inmates, and there is often much delay in waiting for beds. Thus, a girl at the Receiving Home, requiring a serious abdominal operation, last September, had to wait more than a month for admission. It would be of great benefit to the various Government institutions if we could have a small hospital ward in connection with the Receiving Home, where all our patients could be sent without delay. All cases of tuberculosis should be sent to Dr. Greenwood's Sanatorium, near Christchurch, where Government patients are admitted at the reduced charge of £1 10s. a week, with very satisfactory results.

This charge of £1 10s. a week made by Dr. Greenwood for the children of the Receiving Home is a special concession made to me, as the Department does not see its way to pay any more. The lowest fee charged to other Government patients is two guineas a week, which is, I am informed, much less than the cost per head at the Cambridge Sanatorium. Hitherto we have been greatly assisted in the care of delicate children by Mrs. Knott, who has a very healthy house, with lofty well-ventilated rooms, on high ground at Addington, 31 ft. above sea-level, and very dry. The removal of our girls from Mrs. Knott has compelled Mrs. Knott to give up her house and go to Cheviot. The change to the Receiving Home told directly on E. P., who became so much worse that I had to send her to the Hospital. It is hopeless to attempt to keep tubercular children at the Receiving Home in Hereford Street, which is in the lowest and dampest part of Christchurch, and only 8 ft. above sea-level. It might, perhaps, be arranged to find a family on the Sandhills, near Dr. Greenwood's Sanatorium, which would receive our delicate girls at 15s. a week; but it will be very difficult to find a nurse equal to Mrs. Knott to take care of them. In any case, nothing could be worse than shutting them up in the close, stuffy little rooms they are in now. We have had two girls in bed there for nearly a month, with nothing more wrong than anæmia, who would have been well in a fortnight if living in the open air. It is only a waste of time and money to keep girls there to recruit their health from the effects of domestic service. I have no prejudice against the house; it is an excellent doctor's residence, and would sell or let readily to a doctor, as it is built expressly for that purpose. Its situation is extremely good for medical practice; its excellent stables and coach-house, with many other conveniences, would exactly suit a doctor, but are not of much use to us.

In regard to hospital admission, the subject was discussed at the last meeting of the Medical Society. The statements contained in my letter to the *Press*, of which I enclosed you a copy, were more than confirmed. Dr. R. Anderson, of Sydenham, stated that he had long come to the conclusion that Sydenham was in bad repute at the Hospital, because he had generally been unable to get poor people admitted. Dr. Clayton, medical officer to the Charitable Aid Board, stated that as his poor patients had been so often refused he could only conclude that charitable-aid patients were not wanted at the Hospital; so whenever he was very anxious to get a patient admitted he employed another doctor to apply for the bed. He considered this the only way to get his patient admitted.

I have, &c.,

The Secretary for Education, Wellington.

W. H. SYMES, M.D.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 10th June, 1904.

The health of the boys at Burnham has been generally good during the past year. There has been one death, that of James Douley, who was found drowned in a water-tank on the 11th April, 1903. He was a boy of weak intellect, and the inquest resulted in a recommendation by the jury that further means should be adopted for classification.

The average daily number of boys in residence at Burnham during the past year has been 100·58, out of 252 on the books, the rest being in situations, chiefly on farms.

The Director is assisted by the following staff: one Matron, one Sub-matron, two school-teachers, and thirteen attendants, most of whom are charged with some branch of instruction.