

now holds it. Town sections 130 and 131 are occupied by David Atkinson, and he makes use of them, or at least did so to a late period. Sections 127, 128, and 129 were lately occupied by James Neilson, but I understood lately that he had transferred his interest to his wife's brother, James Lockhart. It was Mrs. Neilson who told me this.

Town section 133 is let to James McElwain; I do not know for what rent. Town sections 143 and 136 are let to Messrs. Abram; I do not know for what rent.

There would be no difficulty in letting these lands, or most of them. I know there are parties willing to take some of them. It would be better to let them even at low rents than to let them lie idle with rates accumulating upon them. There is more than £100 owing to the Town Board at the present time on these properties. I think if they were offered for leases of twenty-one years to public competition as to the amount of rent, that a good rental might be obtained for them.

Mr. Watt and his partner have a suburban section (No. 41), which is near the suburban sections of the hospital. They let the suburban section to the military authorities at a rent; I do not know the amount. The military occupied that section with huts, and pitched their tents all over sections 33 and 34 about eight months without paying any rent. Rates were accumulating during this period.

The property was dealt with to its detriment by the turf being dug up to build cooking-places for the military. They stripped the turf off considerable portions of these sections for that purpose.

Mr. Watt further states: I have heard read the evidence of Mr. Field. I feel convinced that he has been misinformed by Marshall as to his having tendered rent to any of the trustees. He did not at any time offer to pay me any rent. I do not know of Neilson's occupation of sections 127, 128, and 129; nor do I know of sections 134 and 136 being let to Messrs. Abram.

With respect to the suburban section let by Messrs. Taylor and Watt for £1 a week, adjoining the sections of the Hospital Reserves, they may have been occupied by camp followers. A man, Neilson, had a canteen there, but I do not think they were occupied by the military.

The whole surface of these sections was very irregular. The benefit we gained by the occupation was, that the land was left more level than it was before. It was for about six or eight months that this occupation lasted.

THURSDAY, 14TH OCTOBER, 1869.

Dr. Earle, being duly sworn, states: My name is Robert Charles Earle. I reside in Wanganui, and am a M.R.C.S.E., L.S.A., and L.M. I am Acting Provincial Surgeon, in the absence of Dr. Gibson, to the Wanganui Hospital. It is built on land reserved for the purpose in the town of Wanganui. The building is of timber and shingled, and is plastered inside. It contains three wards, a surgery, kitchen, two upstairs rooms for the attendants, and a room formerly used as a bath room. The land on which it stands, I should think about half an acre, is fenced in. The building is in a dilapidated state, both externally and internally. If practicable, that is if the framework would support it, it requires to be reshingled and generally to be repaired externally, and replastered internally. There is no spouting and no water available on the premises. The well on the premises is useless for dietary purposes, from the water being impregnated with filtration from adjoining privies. There is but one privy on the premises for the use of men, women, and children, and hospital attendants, and this is so dilapidated as to be almost useless; in addition to which, from the diseases of some of the patients, the use of it is dangerous to others. The hospital is to accommodate eleven patients. The number of patients varies with the time of year. It is sometimes completely filled. It is a refuge occasionally to the houseless having some slight complaint to justify their being sent there in preference to the gaol. The expenses of the hospital are defrayed by the Provincial Government. The accounts are sent to Major Nixon, who forwards them to Wellington. The supplies are furnished upon contract. I cannot state the exact expense per annum. My annual fee for attending is £150. The hospital attendants were a man and his wife, at salaries of £40 a year each. About two months ago the man died, and there being in the hospital some men partially convalescent able to do a little work, I have employed them to do the work of the assistant.

I have looked at the descriptions of the lands granted as an endowment for the hospital, and think that an income which would be important to the well-being of the hospital might be raised from them. Were they offered to tender at a favourable opportunity, for terms of twenty-one years, I think they would produce a substantial rental.

The Commissioner proceeded with Dr. Earle to take a view of the hospital premises. The land is in luxuriant grass. The building—a respectable building for the time when it was put up—appears to have arrived prematurely at a decaying stage, from want of occasional inspection and repair. The guttering round the roof, never well constructed, has in some parts got choked with grass, which holding the water has caused the guttering to decay, till it is now useless for the purpose for which it was put up. The shingles of the roof are black with damp and decay; and in one place the roof has somewhat sunk in. The damp appears to have penetrated the building, and to have affected the laths of the ceilings of the passage, and of one or more of the wards, causing the plastering in large patches to fall away. The drinking water is fetched from a distance. The walls of the building are in parts rotted by the wet, from which the maintenance of a proper guttering would have preserved them. The perfect cleanliness of the interior, and the brightness of every article in use, are matters worthy of note, and very creditable to the female assistant. It was stated that the windows were not watertight, and that the roof was supposed to be not waterproof.

In the afternoon the Commissioner visited the cemetery. It is divided into two portions by the road. The portion on one side is appropriated to Roman Catholics, that on the other side is used in common by the other denominations. The fences were in good order, and the graves (including those not railed in) were neatly kept.

FRIDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 1869.

An appointment having been made for the attendance of Mr. Hutcheson, Secretary to the Trustees of the Cemetery, the Hall was attended, and meeting him afterwards the Commissioner found that his