

a state of great virulence, and in other cases had passed that stage and was dying out; it must therefore have been of considerable standing. The existence of these diseases does not necessarily imply any appearance of debility. If one child had been previously diseased it might have communicated the disease to all the others. Previous to the inspection now exercised at admission, we had cases, in the Orphan Home, of these skin diseases, but never to the same proportion.

Of the elder children, one, a girl called Rachael Bartelman, was clean and tidy, and was one of the two who were not diseased; but, generally, the skins of the children were not so clear as they should have been.

In an institution where there is not regular medical inspection, it is very possible that itch may spread to a great extent, without any particular want of care being proved thereby, because it is mostly troublesome at night, when the children are less under supervision, being in bed.

The clothes were in some cases scanty, and not very particularly clean, but this does not imply much, considering that children dirty their linen very fast.

If I had seen them before admission, I should have refused them, as we have no sufficient means of isolation at the Orphan Home, and it is directly against one of our rules. They should have been otherwise disposed of temporarily, until they were in a fair condition to be taken in.

I have never seen the Three Kings institution. I think it very probable that these diseases might have been imported into that institution by diseased children admitted there, where, I am informed, there was no previous medical inspection. A single child so affected might communicate the disease through a whole school. Even then, however, if sufficient care had been taken in washing the children the existence of the disease must have been observed. I specially refer to the case of a Half-caste girl called Mary Jones, who was very much diseased. Under the most favourable circumstances, it is possible that itch could be cured in three days.

I also attend the Maori Orphanage of the Sisters of Mercy at Freeman's Bay. There has been no case of skin disease in that establishment brought under my notice. There are only a few girls there, perhaps not over twelve in all. The Superioress is very careful, and I do not think that these diseases would exist there without its coming under my knowledge.

Extract from evidence of Mr. *Reader Wood*, Architect and Estate Agent, taken on 5th April, 1869.

Mr. *R. G. Wood*, being duly sworn, states: My name is Reader Gilson Wood. I reside in Auckland, and am an architect and estate agent and sharebroker. In compliance with a letter addressed to me by the present Commissioners, I made a professional visit of inspection to the three institutions specified in that letter. I proceeded first to visit the Three Kings, on the 29th March ultimo. The endowment consists of about 500 acres of land,* all fenced; about 100 acres are in very excellent grass. There are two enclosures of arable land, recently cropped with potatoes, and the rest is uncultivated. The whole property is let to Captain Machell for 10s. per acre, for, I think, seven or ten years, very recently. The buildings consist of—

1. A house occupied by Captain Machell as his private residence. It is built partly of stone and partly of wood, the latter portion being put up by the present tenant very lately, the value of this addition being from £50 to £60. The whole is in fair tenantable repair. In estimating the value of the buildings on these estates generally, I have proceeded on the principle of estimating their value for the purposes for which they were built; their mere selling value would be materially less. With the above explanation, I estimate the house now under mention is worth about £150.

2. A dwelling-house of two stories, containing eight rooms, built of timber, in the occupation of the Rev. James Wallis, Wesleyan minister. The house is well and substantially built, and well finished inside, but is in want of painting and re-shingling. I value it at £250.

3. A large building, consisting of a dining-room, thirty-five feet by twenty-five feet, dormitories, kitchens, matron's apartments, mangling-rooms, and store-rooms. The dormitories are large and roomy, and were very clean. The roof requires shingling, and the outside painting, otherwise the building is in fair tenantable repair. The value I estimate at £500.

4. A building called the schoolroom, sixty-three feet by thirty-six feet, well and substantially built on scoria foundations, timber walls, and roof covered with corrugated iron. It is in fair repair, and worth about £350.

5. A large scoria building, called the "old college," now used by Captain Machell as a stable, cowhouse, and carthouse. It is in a very dilapidated condition, but is worth to the estate, say, about £100 as farm buildings. It would not be worth repairing for the use of the school.

I think the terms of the lease are low, but the tenant is a good one; and, under all the circumstances, I think that a better bargain might very probably not have been made of it.

The selling value of the whole estate at the present time, subject to Machell's lease, might be about £4,000; but it would not be easy to find a purchaser for it, as encumbered with that lease.

There is accommodation for a considerable number of children, say 100 to 150. At the date of my inspection there were twenty-seven children, girls and boys—one Native, five Half-castes, and twenty-one Europeans. The children were taught by Mr. Wallis's daughters. They were all young, some only four or five years old, and all under ten years. The sleeping accommodation is very good, single iron bedsteads for each child and the whole exceedingly clean. I heard perhaps half-a-dozen of the children read, and they read as well as children of their age could be expected to do. The management seemed creditable to those in charge. They wore no shoes or stockings, but were sufficiently well clad.

NOTE.—The remainder of Mr. Wood's evidence is published with the evidence on the estates to which it respectively relates.

* This refers to the land immediately around the school.