

1902.
NEW ZEALAND.

HOME FOR INEBRIATES

(REPORT ON THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The SUPERINTENDENT OF THE HOME FOR INEBRIATES to the INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS, &c.

SIR,—

Home for Inebriates, Orokonui, Waitati, 8th July, 1902.

I have the honour to submit the first report on the Homes for Inebriates established at Waitati.

The purchase of the Orokonui Estate was formally completed about a year ago. The estate consists of 900 acres of freehold land, situated near the Township of Waitati, and a mile from the railway-station. Very little had been done in the way of fencing, but there was a valuable water-race cut for nearly a mile from the head of the Orokonui Stream to within less than a quarter of a mile from the homestead.

The buildings consisted of two blocks, the principal of which was erected about twenty-five years ago as a college. This is now the home for male patients. A few hundred yards away is a smaller eight-roomed house, formerly a master's residence, which is now the home for women. This latter building had been kept in good order, and needed little done to it beyond painting and a certain amount of repapering. Additions, involving an expenditure of less than £400, are approaching completion, and will afford with the pre-existing structure sufficient accommodation for ten female patients.

The college had suffered considerably from neglect and dampness of site. Though the building was erected on a ridge, with excellent facilities for draining in all directions, the drains had been carried underneath the structure instead of directly away, and being faulty, both in material and in laying, had led to soakage of the foundations and rotting of the piles. Most of the latter had to be replaced, and in one room the flooring-joists and flooring had also perished. With these exceptions, the timber was remarkably sound. There were, however, no proper sanitary arrangements, and the buildings had to be completely refitted as regards drainage, closet accommodation, baths, lavatories, and ventilation. The kitchen fittings were quite inadequate, and had to be replaced. Many other structural alterations had to be made, such as the removal of unnecessary partitions, the subdivision of dormitories into cubicles, the provision of more windows, the building-out of a balcony to supply closet accommodation, the carrying of a balcony round the front to serve as a fire-escape and promenade, repapering and painting throughout, &c. These works have been completed at a cost of £800, and the home for male patients is now as good as a new building, and affords ample accommodation for about thirty persons. The billiard-room and kitchen, &c., would serve for a considerably larger number, but the present dining-room and sitting-room accommodation would only suffice for the number mentioned.

As this building now stands it could not be erected for £2,000, and it has cost the Government, inclusive of 857 acres of freehold land, only £1,450—viz., £650 for the purchase of the college buildings and estate, and £800 for additions, alterations, and repairs. It might naturally be assumed that the land which has cost less than nothing would be of a negative rather than a positive value, but this is far from being the case. The flat land is rich, many of the slopes will crop well, and the steeper hills will carry a considerable number of stock when cleared, fenced, and freed from rabbits. There is an ample stock of firewood to serve all purposes for many years. The native bush, which has fortunately been preserved in one portion of the estate, and has not been entered by cattle, is certainly the most beautiful now remaining on the east coast of the province north of Catlin's River. The road to this, which will run for about a mile through the centre of the estate, is under construction, and will be completed within the year. A steam stone-crusher has been temporarily removed from Seacliff, and is now at work in connection with a quarry which we have opened out on the district road, close to the estate. The crushed metal will be used for putting the district road into proper order, metalling the internal roads under construction, asphaltting paths and ground round buildings, and constructing storage reservoir for water-supply. The last-named work is being pushed on, the delivery-pipes having been purchased second-hand, at less than half the cost-price, from the Taranaki Petroleum Syndicate.