

REPORT ON THE LUNATIC ASYLUMS IN THE COLONY.

PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY.

No. 12.

Mr. HARMAN to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,— Superintendent's Office, Christchurch, 1st August, 1872.
I have the honor herewith to forward a report, by the Inspector of the Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum, of an inspection made by him on the 30th ultimo.

I have, &c.,

R. J. S. HARMAN,

Deputy Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

Enclosure in No. 12.

Mr. J. W. HAMILTON to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

(No. 21.)

SIR,— Lunatic Asylum Department, Christchurch, 30th July, 1872.

I have the honor to report that I inspected "Sunnyside" Lunatic Asylum to-day, according to the directions of "The Lunatics Act, 1868." These directions were in every point strictly complied with.

All the books were closely written up to date, except the "Medical Case Book," (clause 25) in arrear since 20th May, after which date nine patients had been admitted. The medical officer's attention was called to this omission. Out of 112 patients (viz., males 74, females 38), one was under seclusion.

Allowing for the disorder and disarrangement incidental to a general half-yearly whitewashing and distemping of the inside of the building, I found everything in its usual satisfactory condition. About 60 out of the whole number of 112 patients were and are regularly pretty fully employed about the premises. They were mostly assisting in the work of cleaning and general scouring then going on.

The photographing room was being made tenantable, as recommended at my last visit. In my report to you of 17th January last, I gave reasons why, on public grounds, it is desirable to take photographs of patients. The chemicals for this work have hitherto been provided by the keeper out of his private funds. He has found the cost too heavy for him, and I recommend that the Provincial Government should in future defray it, so that the photographing may be resumed.

A proper drying ground, with posts and lines or wires, is required for the wash-clothes. They are now hung out on bushes close to or in view of the drive up to the front of the asylum, and are neither neat nor sightly objects, besides which they injure the trees they are hung on.

A poultry yard on the eastern approach to the building would be better moved away, out of sight from the front, to where the prevailing north-east winds will not drive the smell of it towards the asylum.

When the shrubberies and flower plots are put into good order this spring, no poultry or pigs ought to be allowed to wander about loose at the risk of injuring the borders and destroying all neatness of appearance. Many of the shrubs or trees appear to have been nipped by horses or cattle, and are consequently not flourishing, nor do they look sightly. I would recommend the fencing of the ground off into convenient sized enclosures, immediately about the main building, so as to utilize the keep as much as possible, while preserving neatness of appearance.

The four new attendants' cottages require, for appearance sake, a small enclosing fence and a little plot of garden round them.

In addition to the fire tanks about to be erected, I would recommend the erection of four tanks at the corners and on the level of the upper sleeping wards, to catch the rain-water off the iron roofs, and so as to save the labour of carrying water upstairs for so many persons for washing. I think the fire tanks should be utilized also for supplying water on both upper and lower floors, for ordinary daily use.

The walls of the new building are now finished to the full height all round. It is to be hoped that when the rooms in it are ready for occupation, some separate space will be provided for "curative treatment" of habitual drunkards. As this treatment has succeeded in thoroughly reclaiming more than one patient, it will be a great pity to be obliged, as at present, to refuse admission to this class of patients, especially where they are likely to be orderly and well conducted, and do not belong to the order of irreclaimable blackguards.

The sleeping wards for males are still greatly overcrowded, beds having to be made up on the floor.