

large increase of population, even the wealth and prosperity of the Province do not prevent the Gaol from having more than its usual number of inmates, so that the part occupied by the Asylum is urgently required for its ordinary purpose. On the other hand, while the number of the insane does not more than keep pace with the population, it is necessary to increase the accommodation. It is with much satisfaction, therefore, I have learned that it is the intention of the Provincial Government to erect an asylum on the Gaol Reserve, but quite disconnected. It will, I understand, be under the charge of the same master as at present, but with such extra subordinates as may be required.

I may, however, express my opinion that it would be more merciful to the insane if all the worst cases could be drafted to a central asylum, or at least that the smaller provinces should combine for this purpose. In a small asylum, containing ten or twelve patients, under the charge of an officer who has to fulfil the important duties of gaoler also, and dependent for medical aid on the casual visits of a Provincial Surgeon, with his numerous other duties, it is impossible, under such circumstances, that the patients can receive the same attention that they would in a large asylum under the charge of a master selected for that particular duty, and a medical officer who would probably devote his chief attention to them: being subject also to inspection by persons of leisure and experience. In a large asylum there are also great advantages, in the way of amusement and occupations, which must have a most beneficial effect on all cases where the malady has not become incurable. I visited, last year, the asylums of Canterbury and Otago, and was much surprised not only at the comforts and advantages provided for the unfortunate inmates, but also at the very large number of them. In a population such as that of a new colony, recruited chiefly from the healthy and energetic, whilst in youth, or at least middle age, I should have expected a low average of insanity; but such does not seem to be the case, and so far as my limited experience in this province enables me to form an opinion, I think that the excessive use of spirits, and probably of drugged spirits, has much to do with the populating the asylums. Cases of incipient insanity are frequently brought before me as Resident Magistrate, which are dealt with by a few days' remand for medical inspection, without a formal committal to the asylum. The men under the care of the Provincial Surgeon are generally dismissed, in a few days, cured, or "as well as they will ever be," and if their money is all gone, they will probably disappear for a time.

One disadvantage which results from the provincial system, as applied to the care of the insane, is the tendency to "pass them on." Several of those we have had in Napier Asylum have been inmates of those in other provinces: sometimes in more than one. There is a strong temptation to release the province of the burden, during the lucid intervals which occur in most cases, by discharging the patient, and charitably assisting him to seek his fortune elsewhere. In this respect the smaller provinces have the advantage that a lunatic must be a very hopeless case if he will return to them after he has experienced the superior advantages of the large asylums.

I have, &c.,

H. B. SEALY, R.M.,

Inspector of Lunatic Asylums.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

MARLBOROUGH.

No. 6.

His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Marlborough, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, Blenheim, 13th May, 1874.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular letter of 25th March, 1874, accompanied by a report on the Lunatic Asylums in New Zealand, and also of your telegram dated 12th May, 1874, requesting me to send in for Parliament the report required by section 60 of "Lunatics Act, 1868."

In reply, I have the honor to state for your information that no Lunatic Asylums at present exist in the Province of Marlborough, but that it is the practice of the Provincial Government to send patients for treatment to the Asylums at Wellington, Nelson, or Canterbury, the cost of their maintenance being charged to the Province of Marlborough.

I have, &c.,

A. P. SEYMOUR,

Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

CANTERBURY.

No. 7.

Mr. J. W. HAMILTON to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Canterbury.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 20th January, 1874.

I have the honor to report that I visited Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum this day. Owing to a protracted illness, this is the first occasion on which I have been able to make an inspection since 26th August last year.

1. I found the books all in excellent order and duly written close up to date. The "case book" (section 25) contained an account of the autopsy of patient No. 24, admitted February 27, 1864; and the Coroner's certificate of inquest held on the body 13th September, and copy of the verdict, was produced to me. I am glad to note this compliance with my suggestions in reports of 6th August last (par. 1) and 26th August (par. 4).