

13. I understand that after this removal is effected it is proposed to enlarge the recreation hall by throwing into it some sleeping-rooms above the billiard-room. While admitting that the increased number of patients calls for an enlargement of the hall, I must express my earnest hope that your Honor will not sanction any plan by which the fullest amount of sleeping room required by the male patients shall in the least degree be curtailed when the rooms now in use by female patients are vacated by their removal to their new wards. I sincerely trust that when this removal is complete there will be no more sleeping allowed in the male day-wards. In what seems to me a question of the health of the male patients before their recreation, I think I cannot express my opinion too strongly. I think that it would be for the decided benefit of both classes of patients, that every endeavour should be made, even at the risk of a little squeezing in the large new and airy female ward, to remove every one of the female patients and leave the old building free for use of male patients entirely.

With greater space, sleeping-rooms separate from day-rooms, and the present increased staff of attendants, I believe the general health of the patients will be so materially benefited that many will be able to perform valuable labour for the institution, and thus in some degree help to defray the cost of their own maintenance.

I have, &c.,

J. W. HAMILTON,

Inspector, Sunnyside.

His Honor the Superintendent of Canterbury,
Christchurch.

No. 8.

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

SIR,—

Christchurch, 12th May, 1874.

I have the honor to report that I inspected Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum this day.

1. I saw all the patients (151 in number, viz., males 101, females 50) excepting one female, out driving, and one male patient, sent into town.

2. The medical officer represents that he greatly needs for his information, when a new patient is received into his charge, the certificates which the two medical practitioners usually give to the committing Magistrate touching the patient's insanity (Lunatics Act, 1868, clause 5). Some Justices seem to consider these certificates as records of their Court, and not to be parted with, and only send up the bare order for admission. The medical officer is then left without any knowledge of the circumstances or of the previous state of health which may be supposed to have affected the patient's mind. In some special instances two or three weeks have elapsed before any decided symptoms of insanity have been noticed.

3. The information referred to is obviously so important for the medical officer to be placed in possession of before he undertakes the treatment of any lunatic, that I would urgently suggest that the General Government be requested to instruct the magistrates (or the clerks to the Bench) to append to all their orders of admission either the medical certificates referred to or copies of them. If any further evidence in detail has been given by the medical practitioners, it seems very desirable that a copy of that also should be sent up for the guidance of the medical officer at every lunatic asylum. I should state that this matter has more than once been brought to my attention by Dr. Coward in private conversations.

4. Two male patients who are violent to others are always kept apart; each in a large room in the two refractory wards, but where they can always see and converse with the other patients in the airing wards.

5. Mr. Pain informed me that he has never as yet received any formal appointment as clerk under section 23 of "The Lunatics Act, 1868." This being the case, no one is legally responsible for carrying out the clerk's duties, as prescribed by law, or punishable for neglect of them. I beg to submit that the appointment ought to be formally made out, even if Mr. Pain were not to remain permanently in it. Mr. Pain acts as clerk, head attendant, and storekeeper.

6. I met Mr. Chudley and Mr. Armstrong, the Government gardener, on the grounds, when the former produced a plan for laying out and planting the enclosure on the north side of the new female wards now building. With Mr. Armstrong, I think the plan a satisfactory one, and recommend that it be carried out.

7. It has been the practice to send the original order of admission to great distances for the indorsement of the Magistrate who signed it, to direct that the patient be discharged (clauses 71 and 72, Lunatics Act, 1868). It seems to me that such order should never leave the Keeper's hands, as it would constitute his only complete and safe answer to an action for trespass or false imprisonment, which a patient may possibly some day bring against him. The loss of an order of admission might entail great trouble and difficulty on the Keeper if required to answer any such action. Besides, under clause 56, the Inspector is to require production of all orders of admission received since his last visit. On the 2nd of last month I found one patient present, and on the register, whom I had never seen before, and who was waiting for the committing Justice's order of discharge to be received back from Timaru, indorsed on the original order of admission. The order consequently could not be produced to me in evidence that the patient was lawfully detained in the Asylum. I suggest that a printed form be in future used for discharges, to be drawn in such form as the Provincial Solicitor may consider sufficient.

8. *North House, Inebriates' Ward.*—The water here is unfit to use either for drinking or washing, being covered with a white scum. Either the reservoir to the artesian is made of bad cement, or a new well should be sunk. The distance to good water is too far for the patients to fetch it in bad weather.

If possible, employment ought to be found for the patients under curative treatment. One patient at present in this ward is able and willing to do carpenter's work or to copy plans. He would