

Recreation and amusements receive a fair amount of attention.
Divine service is conducted every Sunday in the Asylum chapel.

Hokitika Asylum.—The number of patients in this Asylum at the commencement of the year was 57. In the course of the year as many as 41 were admitted, several of whom were only remanded for medical examination, and liberated again in a few days, without being fully committed as lunatics; 22 were discharged recovered, including these “remand” cases, 4 were discharged relieved, and 5 died; leaving 67, of whom 49 were males and 18 females. There was thus an increase of 10 in the number of inmates; and, as there was no corresponding increase in the accommodation, the overcrowding, which was severely felt at the beginning, was greatly aggravated at the close, of the year. Plans had been prepared for a detached cottage, to hold 12 patients, which the Superintendent undertook to build, by the labour of the patients, of wood felled and sawn by them on the Asylum ground; but it was found impossible to get a good site for it on the reserve, which, though it extends far back into the forest, has an extremely narrow frontage, occupied entirely by the existing building.

The purchase of a section of five acres immediately adjoining the Asylum has now been nearly completed; and this will afford an excellent site for a supplementary building, which it is now evident will require to be considerably larger than was at first proposed.

The Asylum was inspected on the 16th December, which was a Sunday, so that the patients were not seen at work. All of them, except three, who were confined to bed by illness, were found walking about in the pleasant and well-kept gardens of the Asylum, and dressed with as much care and neatness as though they were a party of sane people going to church. There is something quite exceptional and exceedingly pleasing in the peaceful quietness and cheerful activity which characterize this little community, and make one doubt for a moment if they can really be insane. Much of this may be due to the fact that the community is a small one, and that the patients have the appearance of being drawn from a better class, both as regards mental and physical qualities, than those of any other Asylum in the colony. But the chief cause undoubtedly lies in the manner in which they are kept continually occupied in healthful and varied employments, in which they appear to take as much interest as though they were working for themselves.

Recreation and amusement receive a proper amount of attention.

The inmates are occasionally visited by clergymen, but there is no Divine service on Sundays.

Wellington Asylum.—On the 1st January there were 78 patients. During the year, 59 were admitted, 20 were discharged recovered, 8 relieved, and 10 died; leaving, at the end of the year, 99, of whom 61 were males and 38 were females.

The following is the greater part of the entry made in the Inspector's book regarding the state of the Asylum when visited on the 30th January and 1st February last:—

Only one patient, an imbecile paralytic boy, was found in bed. None were in seclusion; but one patient, R— P—, is apparently secluded during the greater part of most days in the week on account of her extreme quarrelsomeness, violence, filthy conversation, and obscene conduct. It is not satisfactory to observe such constant use of seclusion in the treatment of even such an undoubtedly troublesome and unmanageable patient as this; but is only fair to state that it appears to be unavoidable in the present condition of the building if her fellow-patients are to have any peace and quietness.

Only one patient is subjected to mechanical restraint of any kind. During the day she generally occupies a specially-made chair, furnished with a strap, by means of which she is fastened into her seat, when, as frequently happens, she is seized with a sudden fit of violent excitement. During the night, on account of her filthy habits, she wears a canvas dress, the sleeves of which are crossed in front of her, and fastened so that she cannot use her hands. By patient and close study of this patient, and firm treatment, it would be found that the use of restraint could gradually be abandoned.

Both seclusion and restraint are much less used since the Asylum has been placed under the care of the present Superintendent, Mr. Whitelaw.

Twelve males and 10 females are restricted to the airing-yards; all the others take exercise in the general grounds. All the patients, except 17 men and 12 women, engage in industrial employment of some kind, and a great deal of useful and ornamental work has lately been accomplished in the grounds by the labour of the male patients. Six men and 4 women are of wet and dirty habits: these numbers are smaller than at last inspection.

The patients were all remarkably quiet, and free from excitement during the visit, and none made any complaint.

Several very gratifying and almost unlooked-for recoveries have taken place, and one of these is ascribed by the Medical Officer almost entirely to the kindly tact and perseverance of Mr. Cook, the head attendant. The condition of some of the chronic incurable cases was noticed to be much improved.

There are three imbecile children in the Asylum, who present a pitiable sight in a community of adult lunatics. They have all improved somewhat in their condition since admission; but none of them is, properly speaking, a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. The want of a suitable place for them, and the fact that their parents cannot apparently be trusted with their guardianship, led to their being sent to the Asylum.

The clothing of the women is mostly good and tidy, though some of it is very old and shabby. Nice-looking tweed coats and vests are being gradually introduced on the male side, instead of the odious prison garb in which many of the men still continue to look degraded.

The front wards were found very clean and in excellent order; but much of their furniture is of a very poor description and uncomfortable. The day rooms require repapering. A great improvement has been affected by the introduction of gas, which enables the wards to be lighted in a more efficient and safe manner than formerly, when lamps were used. The back wards were also very clean, but presented the usual bare and dismal appearance. It is in these wretchedly-constructed wards that the overwhelming obstacles to good management, created by the present crowded state of the building, are most felt. There are fully twice as many patients in the Asylum as there is accommodation for.

The kitchen and scullery are very dirty. This is the unavoidable consequence of their extremely