

present building is not ill-adapted; and from which, after a few days of medical observation, patients, when necessary, could be forwarded to Wellington or Auckland.

With reference to the Wellington Asylum, which occupies a site in many respects singularly unsuitable for such an institution, and now contains about 140 patients, I do not recommend that it should be enlarged so as to accommodate a greater number—at any rate by means of extensions to the main building. A large portion of the old building requires to be pulled down; a suitable day-room, dormitory, lavatory, and attendants'-room should be provided for the refractory ward of each department; new workshops, laundry, &c., should be erected at a convenient distance from the main building, and large cheerful airing-grounds should be made on the flanks of the building as soon as the hills can be removed and flung into the gullies. But if the numbers continue to increase, and no doubt they will, relief from crowding should be obtained either by drafting chronic and incurable cases to asylums which have a large area of useful ground, or by means of cottages at a considerable distance from the main building. I would remind you that in previous reports I have strongly insisted on the necessity of regarding this asylum as a merely temporary one, and it was with the utmost reluctance, and under pressure of the fear of the terrible results which might arise from the over-crowding, that I advised extensions of the building, on the distinct understanding that they were to be makeshifts until a permanent asylum was built. In a few years at furthest an asylum for at least 300 patients will be required for this district, and a suitable site of at least 100 acres for such an institution should be procured without delay. Several sites have been proposed and reported upon, but they were either unsuitable, or the price asked for the grounds was more than the Government felt in a position to give.

The Nelson Asylum, though full, is not crowded, nor likely soon to become so, the bath-rooms and lavatories are small and badly constructed, and there is a want of suitable rooms for violent, destructive, and noisy patients on both sides of the house. Plans for an addition containing such rooms, new lavatories, and bath-rooms are now being prepared. Unless more land can be got for this asylum it would be obviously improper to increase its size.

At Hokitika no increased accommodation is at present required.

In the Appendix will be found three tables, supplied by the Colonial Architect's Department, showing the expenditure and liabilities on account of lunatic asylums and existing contracts for asylum buildings. From these it appears that the expenditure during the financial year ended the 31st March last was £39,604 5s. 6d.; and the liabilities on the 31st March were £24,911 8s. 10d.; and the total expenditure from July, 1877, to the 31st March of this year was £84,676 1s. 7d. The expenditure has been—at Auckland, £29,037 16s. 1d.; at Wellington, £11,859 4s. 8d.; at Christchurch, £27,290 19s. 4d.; at Dunedin, £15,323 6s. 8d.; at Napier, £87; at Hokitika, £1,042 18s. 10d.; and at Nelson, £34 16s.

COST OF MAINTENANCE.

The total expenditure on the management and maintenance of the insane was, as shown in Table XV, £35,259 14s. 5d., or £100 12s. less than that of the previous year. The amount received for the maintenance of patients and from the sale of asylum produce was £4,218 2s. 5d., or £242 9s. 3d. more than it was the previous year, and this, being deducted from the above sum, leaves £31,041 12s. as the actual expenditure by the Government, which is £343 1s. 3d. less than in 1879, notwithstanding an increase of 71 on the average number of patients resident during the year, and 80 in the total number under treatment. The cost of maintenance per head in the different asylums is shown in Table XVI. The average was £30 13s. 1d. per annum, or deducting repayments, £26 15s. 1½d., being less than it was the preceding year by £2 15s. 6d. There is a very considerable difference in the cost of maintenance for the year at the several asylums, and also in the same asylum from year to year. The principal causes of these differences were pointed out in last year's report, and are, to a certain extent, explained by the tables, which bring out the differences under separate items of expenditure. Excluding repayments, which are very unequal, it was—at Dunedin, £24 9s. 9½d.; at Auckland, £30 9s. 3½d.; at Christchurch, £32 0s. 8½d.; at Wellington, £35 4s. 10½d.; at Hokitika, £36 9s. 7½d.; at Nelson, £36 15s. 7½d.; and at Napier, £38 4s. 2½d.

There has always been a great disparity in the rates of wages paid to the attendants at the different asylums. Towards the end of the year considerable reductions were made in the pay of those at the higher rates. At Hokitika, where the men were getting £120, four of them had their pay reduced to £100, one only being retained at the former rate. At Dunedin, where they were getting uniformly £100, the pay of four was reduced to £90, and that of the other seventeen to £80. A similar change was made at Wellington, where the wages were the same, and in the case of two men were reduced to £90, and in that of the other seven to £80. At Christchurch, where the majority of the men were getting £127 15s., without rations, and others £109 10s., with rations, four of them had their pay reduced to £90, and the other ten to £80.

At Auckland six of the male attendants get £70, and ten only £60; and at Nelson one gets £70, and the other three £60. It would be better to raise the wages of all the men in these two asylums to £70. There does not appear to have been any difficulty at Auckland or Nelson in getting attendants at wages so much lower than those which have been given in the other districts; but, unless the pay offered to induce men to undertake the uninviting and responsible duties of an asylum attendant is considerably higher than can be got for other work, the class of persons from which the Superintendent can select his staff becomes exceedingly limited. Lately, male attendants have been engaged at Wellington for £60, and females at £30, and one or two men have been engaged at Christchurch and Dunedin at £60, and female attendants have been engaged at Christchurch at £45. But, although it seemed to me right to suggest that attendants should be engaged at these wages in a time of general depression, when there was reason to believe it was not necessary to offer any more, I now feel satisfied that they are not high enough to induce suitable persons to remain in the service, although they may enter it for a short time.

"THE LUNATICS ACT, 1868."

This Act appears to me to require alteration in many respects; but I have already forwarded to you an annotated copy with the suggestions which I have to make, and it seems unnecessary to repeat them here.