

With reference to the remarks made by the Deputy-Inspector and Medical Superintendent of the Christchurch Asylum regarding the central block, I may state that the plans, &c., for this work have now been sent in, and, as an amount has been placed for the proposed works on the Estimates, there is no doubt that it will very soon be duly authorised and proceeded with. Referring to the Deputy-Inspector's remarks regarding "any practicable outcome" of his reports on water-supply, fire-prevention, and drainage, I may state that these matters are all being acted upon. The matter of drainage has been a considerable time under consideration, but a definite decision cannot be come to till it is ascertained whether the proposals recommended can be made to work in with the general drainage scheme of the district. A fire-engine has been ordered and shipped; and a seven-horse-power steam-engine has also been sent down for such use as may be decided upon. Dr. Hacon, in alluding to the salaries paid to his attendants, remarks, that "their remuneration is not equal to that given to prison warders," the fact being that the attendants are supplied with free rations, which is not the case with gaol warders.

Referring to the Nelson water-supply, a scheme is now before the Colonial Secretary to give the asylum an unfailing supply throughout the year, and a sum has been placed on the Estimates for this service.

Referring to the remark made by Dr. Hacon that "Care should be taken to prevent the immigration of imbeciles and persons discharged from Home asylums," and recommending that "not only should careful inquiry as to possibility of former attack of insanity or hereditary taint be made, but on arrival here all imbeciles or lunatics should be at once noticed, and steps taken to return them," I may state that instructions were issued to Superintendents to take immediate action, under the Imbecile Passengers Acts, on the admission of a lunatic from shipboard. You are aware that, in every case reported, action has been taken, and the necessary bond entered into, as provided by the above-quoted Acts. The captain of a ship landing an imbecile or lunatic passenger cannot be compelled to take such a passenger back; and if he did take him back the chances are he would be compelled by the authorities at Home to contribute towards the maintenance of such imbecile or lunatic.

There were on the 1st January, 1881, 729 males and 395 females; total 1,124: of these, 188 males and 104 females were admitted for the first time, 44 males and 23 females were readmitted; making the total number admitted during the year, 232 males and 127 females. The total number under care during the same period was 960 males and 522 females=1,482. Of the discharges, 93 males and 65 females were discharged as "recovered"; 41 males and 36 females were discharged as "relieved"; and 8 males and 1 female as "not improved". Deaths, 49 males and 14 females. The total number discharged and died was 191 males and 116 females, leaving at 31st December, 769 males and 406 females in the asylums of the colony. The average number resident during the year was 748 males and 388 females. The increase of patients over the year 1880 was 40 males and 10 females=50.

Two very pleasing features are noticeable in the report, viz., that the amount paid for maintenance last year was £1,393 10s. greater than that paid in 1880; and that the four asylums which showed an increase in the cost per patient in 1880 all show a considerable decrease in 1881. There is only one asylum (Napier), which shows an increase last year; this is due to sundry necessary expenses which had to be incurred for the benefit and comfort of the patients confined therein.

I have, &c.,

L. W. LOVEDAY,
(for the Inspector.)

The Under-Secretary.

AUCKLAND.

Report by Mr. Thos. Macfarlane, Deputy-Inspector.

Auckland, 31st January, 1882.

THE number of the inmates during the year 1881 was 253, being one more than during the previous year, and during the same period 9 were discharged in excess of the number in the preceding year. In regard to the question of admission, I would venture to suggest that greater care should be taken in sending inmates to the asylum than has hitherto been done, as many patients are sent to asylums who ought not to be so—sent that their relatives may be relieved of the trouble and expense of keeping them at home. As stated by Dr. Young, one patient—a female—was sent in "from a scarlatina bed, with the cuticles peeling off in large flakes," and, had not great care been taken, the disease might have spread over all the patients; she only survived eight days. Another patient was sent in in consequence of a family quarrel, and was discharged in a few days; and there were other cases of a similar nature, all showing that more care ought to be exercised than has hitherto been done.

During the past year there was a case of suicide by a female patient: it took place about midnight; she tore up her sheet and made a rope of it, by which she suspended herself from a rafter in the roof. No blame was attached to any one, the night-nurse having seen her all right within an hour of the catastrophe, and only saw what had taken place on her next round. Another female patient died from having, in some unaccountable way, swallowed a button, which stuck in her throat, and was only discovered at the *post-mortem* examination.

With these and a few other minor exceptions everything has gone on smoothly and satisfactorily, but the great overcrowding in both departments renders it difficult to prevent accidents, and most certainly interferes with the health and longevity of the patients. This matter really requires immediate attention. The accommodation in the house is only for 157, while there are 253 crowded into it—30 being in the chapel, the clerk has to sleep in his office, the head attendant in the Superintendent's office, the cook in the pantry, six male attendants and laundress in patients' single rooms, while all the passages and day-rooms are crowded with shakedownis.

The suggestion which has been made to erect a wooden building on the farm which would contain all the working patients, would in a great measure relieve this overcrowding of the asylum, and this matter should also receive immediate attention, as the heat at the asylum is very disturbing and detrimental to the patients during the hot summer months.