

I had recently an opportunity of seeing the asylums in Dunedin, Seacliff, Sunnyside, and Wellington, but although some of them are crowded enough, yet in no case is the crowding so bad as here. While in Wellington I was informed that it had been decided to erect this building, and I earnestly hope it may be done at once.*

The farm-overseer and family live at present in a very miserable wooden house, old and filled with all sorts of vermin. While erecting the proposed new buildings, a very little additional expense would enable a house to be added to said building, and supply the present want.

The females were removed to the Whau in October last—the males having been removed previously to the new wing.

Since the arrival of the females, the accommodation in the kitchen is utterly inadequate for present requirements, and suggestions have been made whereby existing defects may be remedied, and the cooking done by steam and gas. The expense of the alterations would not be much, and if instructions were given to the Public Works Department here the matter would be attended to in a very short time.

And, while attending to these matters, instructions might also be given to the department to erect the workshops previously suggested; there is nothing of the kind on the premises. A plain wooden building in the hollow behind the asylum, capable of accommodating a carpenter, shoemaker, and tailor, a room each, and a straw-house near it, is all that is necessary to accomplish the object in view, and I hope this will be done.

The new laundry is proving a great benefit to the asylum; all the washing can now be done with the greatest ease, and much better than under the old system. The drying-room, however, is not acting so well as was anticipated; but the architect's attention has been called to the matter, and he is doing all he can to remedy the defect referred to.

From 60 to 65 females work—20 in the laundry, 23 at needlework, and about 20 at general housework. The confinements to the airing-court have been very few, and none have been locked up.

The erections for the gasoline are nearly completed, and it is expected to be in working order within a month.

The stores are carefully looked after by the Clerk and Storekeeper, and all the records of the asylum are carefully kept. Tenders have been called for the additional furniture and bedding, but nothing further has been done.

Divine service is held every Sabbath and every Wednesday afternoon: about 80 males and 24 females attend the first, and about 50 males and 20 females the second.

Since the women went out to the Whau, fortnightly entertainments have been given, attended by about 100 of both sexes. Nothing has yet been done to start a library, which is much required.

The operations on the farm have been carried on steadily and satisfactorily. About 100 or so of the males generally assist in outdoor work; of these, 30 usually work on the farm; 10 in the garden; 24 in the grounds, keeping them in order; 8 cutting firewood; 1 in the kitchen; and 26 indoor, cleaning, bed-making, and helping in wards. The result of the operations on the farm is much more favourable than was expected. This will be seen by a perusal of the balance-sheet, which shows a clear profit of £321 3s. 10d. The asylum used vegetables to the amount of £255 7s. 10½d., and potatoes, £92 7s. 11d.; total, £347 15s. 9½d. The crop of potatoes and vegetables now in the ground looks very promising. Additional ground is being already reclaimed and fenced in, and shortly we shall be able, after supplying our own wants, to sell a large quantity of produce; and it is worthy of consideration whether or not the hospital and stockade might not be supplied from this farm. The piggery has turned out a great success; we have been fortunate in getting a good stock of pigs—perhaps the best breed in the colony; and every one could be sold at high prices. Of course we only kill those that are of an inferior class, but good eating.

With the exception of the few cases mentioned in the report of the Medical Superintendent, the health of the inmates during the past year has been very fair: the healthy position of the asylum, notwithstanding its crowded state, and the pleasant walks through the grounds and farm, contribute largely to this result; and, when the additional accommodation shall be secured, the health of the patients will be greatly improved.

All the officers of the institution, the Medical Superintendent, Matron, attendants, and Farm-overseer have discharged their respective duties in a highly satisfactory manner.

Report by Alexander Young, M.D., Medical Superintendent.

Auckland, January, 1882.

THE number of inmates resident at the end of the year was only one more than at the beginning, viz., at 1st January, 252; at 31st December, 253. The average number resident during the year was 172 males and 75 females, as against 164 males and 70 females in 1880. The reason of this small increase is not so much due to the diminution in the number of admissions, as to the much larger proportion of discharges and deaths. In 1880 there were 85 admissions, 46 discharges, and 16 deaths, giving an increase for the year of 23; the corresponding numbers in 1881 were 78 admissions, 55 discharges, and 22 deaths, leaving only an increase of 1. The percentage of readmissions on the admissions was 32·20, against 25·00 the previous year. No very satisfactory reason can be given for the small number of admissions this year as compared with last. Only one patient was admitted under the 15th section of the Lunatics Act; all the others, except those transferred from the gaol, were received under the 11th section, that is, they were brought before Justices by the police. In a great many of these cases there did not seem much reason for this course, except perhaps the desire to allow the State to pay the necessary expenses. There is just as much safety against improper admissions under the 15th section, the only difference being that in the former case the medical certificates are sworn to. The certifying medical men are in both instances the real persons who get the patients placed under restraint, and whether they are put on oath or not makes no difference in their legal responsibility.

* Provision is made on the Estimates for this building.