

A large portion of the clothing and bedding was made up by the female patients, and all articles of wearing apparel were repaired by them. It would be an advantage in compiling annual returns if a record were kept of all articles made and repaired, and also a regular statement prepared annually of cost and maintenance of farm, cows, and pigs, which hitherto has not been done so far as I was aware.

The books of the asylum had been carefully kept by my predecessor, Dr. France, and the cases entered were most closely minuted by him, and all items of interest noted in treatment. A great difficulty exists in preparing the average annual cost per head of the patients in this asylum, from the absence of information on the subject of payments made through the Public Trustee, as no payments ever pass through the books of the asylum. All moneys belonging to patients at their admission pass into the Public Trustee's bank account, and there it remains. Payment for maintenance from these moneys ought to be notified monthly to the Medical Superintendent, and so enable him, at the end of the year, to show the exact cost per head per annum of each inmate; if this system were adopted, the average cost would not, in this asylum, appear so high.

The general health of the inmates has been good, no special form of illness has prevailed, and the death-rate has not been high.

No complaints have been made by patients of ill-usage or unkind treatment at the hands of the attendants, who have appeared to me to take an interest in their duties.

No special system of separation of the patients into classes appears to have existed prior to my taking charge, but this has been mainly attributable to difficulties in the arrangement of the buildings, preventing any classification beyond that of quiet, clean, and harmless, troublesome, irritable, and lazy; and the back wards with the dangerous, dirty, and refractory.

NELSON.

Report by Mr. W. H. Mills, Superintendent.

Lunatic Asylum, 9th January, 1882.

THE last visit made by the late Inspector of Asylums was in March, 1880. Monthly visits of inspection were made by Mr. Mackay, Deputy-Inspector, up to the 29th June, 1881, a copy of his remarks being forwarded on each occasion to the Inspector of Asylums' Office. No gentleman has yet been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Mackay going to Wellington, although a difficulty has already arisen from the want of an Inspector, for at times it is desirable to liberate a patient on trial under clause 66, "Lunatics Act, 1868," and recently this could not be done as there was no Inspector, consequently the patient had either to be kept in the asylum or be finally discharged. The latter was thought most desirable, and the patient was liberated under clause 74.

On the 1st January, 1881, there were in this asylum 64 patients, viz., 33 males and 31 females. During the year 16 were admitted, 12 males and 4 females (one of the former being a readmission), and 1 female and 2 males being transfers from the Wellington Asylum; the total number under care was 80, 45 males and 35 females; 4 females and 1 male were discharged recovered; 1 male and 3 females died, leaving at the end of the year 43 males and 28 females, being an increase of 10 males and a decrease of 3 females. The recoveries were in the proportion of 8·33 per cent. to the admissions among males and 100 per cent. among females. The death-rate was 2·63 of the average number resident for males and 10·34 for females. The assigned causes of death were general paralysis, general debility, epileptic convulsions, and phthisis.

The want long felt of a place for refractory and noisy patients is about to be remedied, and commodious bath-rooms and lavatories are going to be added.

The most pressing need of the asylum at present is land for the employment of the inmates. The whole grounds belonging to the asylum comprise eight acres only; this includes the ground on which the building is erected, also yards, airing-grounds, and places for recreation; another acre being occupied by the destitute poor. The Taranaki buildings are erected thereon, but they are in such a dilapidated state that it would be a charity were the inmates removed to more comfortable quarters, and the recommendation of the late Inspector of Asylums (on his first visit in 1878) carried out, viz., to hand the ground over to the asylum.

The water-supply is still very defective, and must remain so until the Corporation bring a fresh main round by the asylum, or the Government bring in a supply from the spring at the back of the asylum. Should a fire occur it would be impossible under present circumstances to put it out, as no water could be obtained.

During the present summer something should be done to have the corridors in the asylum better heated, as the present small gas-stoves are practically useless during cold winter weather.

A great deal of useful work has been performed by the inmates: ornamental fencing erected, painting, making stuffed benches, bedsteads, seats with backs for verandahs, &c.; a female night attendant's house has been built, where rest can be obtained during the day, free from the noise of the patients; piggeries have been put up, where at present seven pigs are kept, and some ten have been killed for use of inmates and staff during the year, two sold and proceeds paid to public account. The female patients are usefully employed making, mending, knitting, and washing for both male and female department.

The garden supplies the inmates and staff with a plentiful supply of vegetables.

The salaries of the male attendants have been raised from £70 to £80 in one case, and from £60 to £70 in the case of four others.