

HOKITIKA.

Report by Mr. B. Clapcott, Deputy-Inspector.

Hokitika, 17th January, 1882.

THE number of patients on the 31st December, 1881, was 55 males and 27 females, including one female absent on trial; making a total of 82, as against 73 for the year ending the 31st December, 1880.

The number of admissions for the first time during the year has been 9 males, 9 females; readmitted, 4 males, 1 female; discharged recovered, 6 males, 4 females; discharged as relieved, 1 male, 1 female; deaths, 2 males.

The general health of the patients has been exceptionally good; this may partly be accounted for by having, up to within the last two months, sufficient space and accommodation for the inmates. At the present time there are seven patients in excess over dormitory accommodation. This could soon be remedied by permission being given to erect another small cottage.

During the last twelve months the official visitors and myself have visited and inspected the asylum twenty-one times, and, without any exception, have had the pleasure of testifying to the cleanliness and general good order and management observable throughout the institution. Although considerable freedom and liberty are afforded to the patients, it is gratifying to note that during the last twelve months no escape has taken place.

One hundred and forty acres of land adjoining the original asylum-grounds have been reserved for requirements of the institution. This I feel sure is a wise provision, not only with the view of furnishing firewood for some years to come, but also providing open-air employment for the patients when engaged in clearing and bringing the land into a state of cultivation.

Report by Mr. H. Gribben, Superintendent.

Hokitika, 28th January, 1882.

THE number of patients remaining in the asylum on the 1st January from the previous year was 51 males and 22 females; total, 73. Admitted during the year for the first time, 9 males and 9 females; readmitted, 4 males and 1 female: making a total of 13 males and 10 females. Discharged recovered, 6 males and 4 females; relieved, 1 male and 1 female; died, 2 males: total discharges and deaths, 9 males and 5 females—14. (The male patient discharged improved was liberated under clause 66 of "The Lunatics Act, 1868.") Remaining in the asylum on the 31st December, 1881, 55 males and 27 females, including 1 female absent on trial; total, 82.

The general health of the patients during the year has been exceptionally good, and I am happy to have to state that there has not been one instance in which it was found necessary to apply restraint, and seclusion has been very seldom resorted to. This I attribute in a great measure to the regular way in which the patients have been kept employed at healthy and useful work. The male patients have been busy in clearing bush, breaking up new ground, cutting firewood, &c. Two pairs of sawyers are kept constantly engaged in cutting timber for building purposes, repairs, additions, fencing, &c., and a very considerable saving to the institution is effected in the quantity of timber cut by these patients. The females were engaged making and repairing clothes, washing, &c. The average daily number of patients resident during the year was 51 males and 23 females; total, 74.

Although there has been considerable liberty accorded to many of the patients there have not been any escapes, or even attempts, during the year. I find that the more liberty given them the less tendency is there to escape.

The cultivation area is gradually increasing from year to year. The five-acre section on which the male cottage is erected has been nearly all cleared, and is now under crop. The asylum has been, as in former years, supplied with milk from the cows kept in the institution. There have also been made 303 lb. of butter; 1,500 lb. of pork were also supplied by the asylum, and, in addition, 9 pigs were sold, which realized £34 10s.

The mare which was being driven by one of the patients was becoming so dangerous by her bolting habits that I found it necessary to apply for authority to dispose of her. The authority being granted, I disposed of her, and purchased a more suitable animal in her place.

Although the potato-crop was not so good as I anticipated, there was sufficient grown to supply the institution from February to September, and sufficient vegetables grown to serve for the whole of the year.

During the first part of the year the contractor for bread supplied such an inferior article that both staff and patients were continually complaining of it, and notwithstanding the repeated notices he received to improve the quality he paid no attention. I submitted samples of the bread from time to time to the Deputy-Inspector, Mr. Clapcott, who agreed with me that it was of an inferior quality, which led to the cancellation of the contract. One of the attendants being a baker, I resolved on building a bakehouse. Having applied for and obtained the necessary authority for its erection, I proceeded at once with the work, which was carried out by the patients under the superintendence of one of the staff. The only expenditure incurred by this change was the cost of iron and bricks, the whole of the timber being supplied by the institution. Since then the bread has been of excellent quality, in addition to which a saving of between £4 and £5 a month is effected. The only drawback to this arrangement is the long and irregular hours which the baker has to work, and moreover it imposes additional duties on the other attendants on those days on which the baking is carried out.

The weekly leave of the attendants is one evening from 6, and one evening from 8 o'clock, but this has been considerably curtailed since the baking commenced, and, as this has caused considerable dissatisfaction owing to the long hours of duty, I think, on taking these facts into consideration, the appointment of an additional attendant is necessary.

The weekly entertainments for the amusement of the patients are kept up as usual, and they are taken out to all local sports and occasionally for long walks in the country.