

whereby those patients who belonged to the dispensary and could not be properly treated in their own houses should have priority as to admission into the hospital. He should like to see the officers of the dispensary seeking assistance from the medical officers of the hospital in consultation, and then, if it was considered that a patient could not be properly treated at home, he or she, as the case might be, should be transferred to the General Hospital. This course would, he was sure, promote the principles of providence; for they would be encouraging the working-classes to provide for themselves, to some extent at their own cost, medical assistance. It was hoped before long to have all the hospitals of London connected with provident dispensaries. Those persons who subscribed a penny or twopence a week to the Provident Dispensary did not have to wait until they had got a letter for the hospital; but, upon the appearance of illness they were able to run at once to the dispensary. He thought the committee were to be congratulated upon the present condition of the hospital.

As Dr. Carpenter was subsequently elected a trustee of the institution, in the room of the late Baron Heath, we may feel assured that the committee have full confidence in the principle which he enunciated, and which he has done so much to recommend. The attitude which has been taken by the Croydon Hospital towards the Provident Dispensary deserves the highest praise, for it is decidedly a step in the right direction.

MAINTENANCE-PAYMENTS AND DONATIONS.

Payments for maintenance continue to show a serious decline, and subscriptions are falling off.

REFUGE OR CHRONIC CASES.

Incurable patients, and those who are old and feeble, impair the efficiency of the hospitals by crowding out sufferers from illness who might derive benefit from treatment.

STIMULANTS.

I beg to draw attention to the great expenditure which occurs for wine, spirits, and other alcoholic liquors in the hospitals of this colony. The amount consumed is, in my opinion, very excessive, and might, without detriment to the patients, be greatly curtailed, as has long since been done in the lunatic asylums with good result; the death-rate in these institutions being extraordinarily low, and the percentage of recoveries high.

Last year I made a quotation from the report of the Inspector of Hospitals of the Province of Ontario; and I will again draw upon his report of 1882 for information on this subject. In that year 6,032 patients were under treatment in the provincial hospitals, while last year 6,056 persons were in-patients in the New Zealand hospitals. Ontario expended about £431 on beer, wine, and spirits; for New Zealand, £2,570 16s. 2d. was required. The rigorous climate of the former country might have been regarded as some excuse for a larger expenditure; and the comparison is rendered the more unfavourable for New Zealand by the fact of the population of Ontario numbering two millions, the hospital patients being therefore, presumably, of a more serious nature.

VISITS OF INSPECTION.

I have, since my last report, paid sixty-seven visits to the various hospitals in this colony, my plan being to see the more important ones at least twice annually, and the others once.

MILEAGE.

The distance travelled with this object (including the inspection of asylums) was 6,650 miles.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE WALLINGTON GRABHAM,

M.D. Lond., M.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

Inspector of Hospitals.

SPECIAL REPORTS ON HOSPITALS.

AKAROA.

I HAVE to-day inspected this hospital and its surroundings. There are now two male patients occupying beds: one of these is suffering from a severe fracture of his arm. Being in good circumstances, he will no doubt defray the charges made for his maintenance. The other inmate is an old man who suffers merely from the debility of old age. He has resided in Akaroa some thirty-eight years, and is much attached to the place; otherwise he would have been transferred to the Old Men's Home at Ashburton. I regret to find that this man has money given him at times, which he spends in drink; becoming, in consequence, troublesome and dirty in habits. The hospital is in good repair, and well kept by the warder and his wife. In January last there were seven patients under treatment, two of these being accommodated in the neighbouring immigration barracks.

18th April, 1884.