

## LEGISLATION, ETC.

The defects in the Lunatics Act of 1882, pointed out in former reports, continue without remedy.

Early in the year 1884 I had occasion to point out to the authorities that patients were very frequently committed upon very faulty orders and medical certificates; and the attention of the Magistrates was drawn to the subject by a circular from the Department of Justice. This step was followed by good results; nevertheless, I have felt it my duty to return, during the year, 99 such orders and certificates for rectification of errors or omissions. It is scarcely necessary to observe that a large amount of correspondence and other work is in this way imposed upon the Lunacy Department, which a little more care would render unnecessary.

The duty of examining such documents should, I think, rest with the Magistrates who commit upon them. The question of legal liability in such matters is one which will surely at some future time be raised by patients who believe that they have been improperly detained in asylums, and it is not for me to suggest upon whose shoulders such liability will rest.

In the Colony of New South Wales, during the year 1883–84, only 6 imperfect certificates were returned by the Inspector-General for amendment.

## DEPUTY INSPECTORS.

To the Deputy Inspectors my best thanks are due for valuable assistance and frequent visits paid to the various asylums during the intervals of my periodical inspections. By the recent death of Mr. Thomas Macfarlane, at Auckland, I feel that I have lost not only an able coadjutor but a valued personal friend, on whom I could always rely in matters of emergency.

At Dunedin Mr. J. B. Bradshaigh-Bradshaw, having been elected a member of the House of Representatives, has been succeeded by Mr. W. P. Street.

## ASYLUMS.

*Auckland.*

The number of patients in this institution on the 1st January, 1884, was 291, viz., 196 males and 95 females. During the year 93 were admitted, 57 males and 36 females, 11 of the males and 8 of the females being readmissions. The total number treated was 384, 253 males and 131 females. Of these, 18 males and 15 females were discharged as “recovered,” 5 males and 2 females as “relieved” or “not improved;” 15 males and 9 females died; leaving, at the end of the year, 215 males and 105 females; total, 320.

The recoveries show a percentage of 35·48 upon the admissions, and the deaths a percentage of 8·13 upon the average number resident.

The auxiliary asylum was opened in the month of May, 1884.

Arrangements for a supply of gas from the Auckland company were completed in the same month, and the use of gasoline discontinued, with great advantage and a material reduction of expenditure.

A large annual saving would result from the utilization of the large volume of excellent water which is constantly running to waste into the creek.

An exchange should be effected, if possible, between the portion of land now leased from the Education Department and some part of an asylum reserve at a distance. This is an important matter, and should present no difficulty.

The asylum was visited by me on the 17th, 21st, and 23rd July, and 4th August, 1884; and again on 20th and 27th February, and 10th March, 1885. I made the following entries in the Inspector's book:—

4th August, 1884.—I have this day completed my inspection of the Whau Asylum, which was commenced on the 17th July and continued on the 21st and 23rd.

Every patient was seen by me, with the exception of four males and two females absent on trial. Four male patients were in bed, but there was no special illness to note. One man only was secluded during my visit: this was G—, the murderer, who was placed in his room, as is usual, during meal-times.

The patients were suitably clothed, and general cleanliness prevailed. The bedding I found in good order. A considerable addition has been made to the number of wire-woven mattresses, which were procured for the purpose of furnishing the auxiliary asylum.

In the wards very little excitement was noticeable, though one or two were very urgent in their demands for release.

Since my last visit some repairs have been done to the plastering of the walls and ceilings. These, however, have not been completed, and the dirty condition of walls and ceilings is both discreditable and unwholesome. On this account, and from the paucity of ornamental articles, the wards look bare and unattractive; in this matter they compare very unfavourably with those of the other colonial asylums. The female wards, intended for workshops, are bare and dismal rooms, not calculated to assist the recovery of those who inhabit them.