

LEGISLATION.

During the last session of Parliament I drew up a number of suggestions for the amendment of the Lunatics Act of 1882, which is, in many respects, a very defective one. These suggestions are with you, no effect having yet been given to them.

Defective "orders of admission" and "medical certificates," though not so numerous as in the previous years, have caused much trouble and some expense to the department.

DEPUTY INSPECTORS.

My best thanks are again due to the Deputy Inspectors for valuable assistance willingly rendered.

No successor has yet been appointed to the late Mr. Thomas Macfarlane, in Auckland, nor has there been for a considerable period any Deputy Inspector for Hokitika. The result has been additional labour thrown upon myself, with inconvenience and delays in the matters of releasing patients on probation and accepting tenders for supplies.

ASYLUMS.

Auckland.

The number of patients in this establishment on the 1st of January, 1885, was 320—namely, 215 males and 105 females. During the year 77 were admitted—53 males and 24 females, 8 of the males and 6 of the females having previously been inmates of the asylum. The total number treated was 407, namely—268 males and 139 females. Of these, 19 males and 17 females were discharged as "recovered;" 2 males and 3 females as "relieved" or "not improved;" 16 males and 3 females died; leaving at the end of the year 231 males and 116 females: total, 347.

A vast deal requires to be done at this establishment in order to render it worthy of its name as an asylum for the insane. A new building for females is the most pressing want. Additional accommodation for males might be provided at the auxiliary asylum by erecting single rooms, and using some of the superfluous day-space for dormitories. The central block requires remodelling, as previously pointed out. The drying-closet in laundry wants reconstruction. Sanitary arrangements require much attention. The water-supply running to waste on the estate would, if utilized, soon repay the cost of the necessary pumping-machinery and storage-tanks. A large annual sum can be saved under this heading. The portion of land rented from the Education Department should be exchanged for a portion of an asylum reserve elsewhere in Auckland. In addition, new farm buildings are required, and also a decent mortuary and a coal-store.

I visited this asylum on the 6th, 9th, 17th, 22nd, 27th, and 31st October, the 3rd, 6th, 10th, 11th, and 13th November, 1885, and also on the 11th March.

Dr. Alexander Young, who had faithfully and zealously discharged his duties as superintendent for some years, surrounded by many difficulties, and armed with very imperfect appliances, died in October, 1885, after an illness of some duration. I was present at the time, and had testimony from all quarters of the great esteem in which he was held both by his patients and his acquaintances. He was succeeded on the 1st January, 1886, by Dr. James Young, who gives every promise of becoming a worthy successor to his brother, having already made himself quite conversant with all the details of his work.

The following are copies of my entries in the Inspector's book:—

7th November, 1885.—My half-yearly inspection of the Whau Asylum commenced on the 6th October last, since which date I have repeatedly visited the establishment, seen every patient, examined all books and documents, and perused a number of letters written by patients, but detained from the post. I have also condemned a quantity of clothing and other articles which had become unserviceable.

An unusual demand has been made upon my time and attention, for the following reasons: Firstly, the appointment of deputy-inspector, held by the late Mr. Thomas Macfarlane, has not yet been filled up. Secondly, on my arrival in Auckland, I found, to my great regret, that Dr. Young was suffering from an advanced form of Bright's disease, which would certainly have a speedy and fatal ending. Immediate arrangements were made for the attendance at the asylum daily of a medical practitioner from Auckland, and I felt it incumbent upon myself to attend to such matters of routine and working detail as could not properly be deemed within his scope. Dr. Young died in my presence on the 22nd October, and I had the opportunity of finding how deeply he was respected and beloved by his staff and by his neighbours. On the occasion of my numerous visits to the asylum I have never once found him absent from his post. For nearly seven years he devoted all his energies to the welfare of his patients, under difficult and disheartening surroundings, which would have damped the ardour of many a man not weighted with an insidious and debilitating disease, and with a very inadequate salary, which had not been increased since he first took office under the Government.