

The requirements of this asylum (beyond repairs of its numerous defects) are gasworks, which can be erected for some £1,200, instead of the £6,000, formerly estimated. Superintendent's house: To compel the Superintendent to live in the damp rooms which he now occupies, and which have no outlook but upon the walls of the buildings, is neither beneficial to his health nor conducive to that cheerfulness which is essential for counteracting the depressing influences of asylum life. The rooms were intended by the architect for the porter. A proper residence, in which a married man might reside and bring up a family, is very essential, for no Superintendent could bring a lady to reside in such premises as are now provided for his use at Seacliff. Cheerful surroundings are the more necessary here, as no society is to be had in the neighbourhood, and frequent visits to Dunedin are rendered impracticable by distance and bad train service. Regarded merely as a matter of ordinary humanity, a proper house is demanded without further delay.

Additional accommodation might be provided for lunatics by utilizing some of the useless space in the attics.

Proper airing-courts, in front of the asylum, should be made, as originally intended. At present many of the patients can see nothing but the sky and the surrounding buildings either from their airing-courts or their rooms within the asylum.

If "habitual drunkards" are to be received here separate accommodation is needed for them.

During the late drought the water in the reservoir became so low that a temporary supply had to be brought some four miles, at a cost of many hundreds of pounds. It would be well if this supply could be permanently secured, as it appears to be of better quality than that running into the reservoir from the asylum estate.

A large sum of money must have been expended in repairing the broken plaster of walls and ceilings, which has been done throughout the building.

It will be seen from my report herewith that semi-liquid mud still lies close beneath the floors of certain rooms intended for patients and attendants at a time when the drought was at its height.

I take this last opportunity of stating that the whole of my previous statements are correct, and borne out by the facts of the case; and, although I have been openly contradicted in Parliament, and have received hints of intended law-proceedings, with demands for apologies, I will again assert that the site of the asylum is ill-chosen, the establishment badly designed and out of date, the buildings defective in construction, and showing everywhere bad workmanship, which should never have been accepted. Repairs are constantly in progress, and have been since the asylum was first occupied. The £34 odd, stated in Parliament to be necessary for such purposes, must surely have been already exceeded. In view of the examples we have in this colony of ill-designed asylums, it would surely be wise to employ in future an English architect, possessing special knowledge of asylum requirements; or, at least, to submit any selected design, and its specifications, to his scrutiny. The plan of the Christchurch establishment (as accepted by Government) was simply a copy of one of the older English asylums, while the buildings at Auckland have more the character of an old English workhouse than of a modern hospital for the insane.

My visits to the Seacliff Asylum were upon the following dates: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 25th January, 1886. The following entry was made by me in the Inspector's book:—

11th January, 1886.—I have been engaged since Friday, the 8th January, in making an inspection of the Seacliff Asylum, and I have seen every patient on the register with the exception of 3 females, who are absent on probation. The register and other books have been examined and signed, and are, without any exception, well kept. The medical certificates and orders for admission are all in statutory form. A large number of patients' letters, detained from the post and submitted to me, I find to be unfit for transmission.

Since my last visit the population of the asylum has been augmented by the natural annual increase of insane patients and by the removal hither of 20 females from Christchurch. The numbers on the register are to-day 292 males, 158 females: total, 450. In addition there are 3 habitual drunkards confined here. The above numbers, compared with 362 a year ago resident in the asylum, show a large increase. 104 males and 5 females are accommodated in the older wooden buildings, which are quite full. The whole asylum may be expected to be fully occupied by the end of the present year, and it will not be practicable to transfer any more patients hither from other parts of the colony.

I am glad to report a remarkable immunity from sickness at the present time. The mortality of the year 1885 was unusually large, but examination of the register shows that preventible disease took no part in increasing the death-rate. To-day there are only one or two old and paralyzed patients confined to bed.

I saw two females in seclusion for maniacal excitement, but no one under any other form of restraint, and remarkable quiet prevailed everywhere.