

a goodly number of comfortable seats. There is ample room for the same conveniences in connection with the corresponding male ward, the desolate appearance of which contrasts most unfavourably with the rest of the premises. All that is required is to remove certain old and useless buildings in the centre of the court, and to make some additions to those on the south side of it. The laying-out and ornamenting of the court could be done by asylum labour.

The asylum is at present being painted, and Dr. Levinge, with his usual eye to taste, is anxious that the necessary alterations should be made at once, so that the whole of the buildings, when the painting is finished, may present not a patchy but a symmetrical appearance. Details of these desirable alterations have, I understand, been submitted to the department, and as the expense will not be great, I hope the department will see its way to give effect to Dr. Levinge's wishes.

7th June, 1886.

J. MACKAY, Deputy Inspector.

CHRISTCHURCH.

Mr. A. LEAN to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Christchurch, 10th June, 1886.

I have the honour, as requested by you, to make the following report on the Sunnyside Asylum for the period from the 1st June, 1885, to the 1st June, 1886.

During that period I have made ten officially-recorded visits, exclusive of others not on record. On nine of these I have seen every patient, and all parts of the premises. I have found the patients on all these occasions well cared for, well nourished, and suitably, and the majority comfortably clothed.

With unimportant exceptions I have found the whole staff efficient, attentive to their duties, and humane and forbearing in the discharge of them. Since the date of my first report, 2nd August, 1879, observation has tended to strengthen my appreciation of the responsibilities, trials, and risks that await on those who have charge of the insane; and it is much to be wished that those of the outside public who feel interested should visit the institution, for which every facility is offered, and by continued visitations assure themselves of the benefits extended to all patients alike.

The official visitors—Messrs. Maude, Kimbell, and Acland, the last named newly appointed—show an active interest in the institution, and are a material assistance in the supervision.

On the 3rd July, 1885, I received notice of an outbreak of erysipelas, and my report of that date deals with the most unsatisfactory state of the water-closet arrangements, as also the surface drainage—matters which had been before reported.

On the 24th August, 1885, the old buildings were evacuated.

On the 15th October, 1885, the erysipelas had abated, not without deaths, and I was enabled to record a most beneficial alteration in the water-closet connections, connections which, as part of a new building, should never have been abominable nuisances as they were.

The provision of water-closets for the female side is an unspeakable benefit and relief to health and decency, and is everything that could be wished. A urinal in "A" male ward has been reported frequently as offensive, and remains so.

I regret that inebriate patients continue to be sent to this asylum. Without positive contact they are yet practically associated with lunatics, and, themselves depressed and sensitive, are subjected to disastrous influences. As long ago as the 22nd December, 1879, I represented this view of the matter, and quoted a case then before me. There is no isolated accommodation fit and available, so that male inebriate patients are received into the asylum, separated as well as circumstances permit, but indifferently so, while females have no alternative but to occupy the same rooms with lunatic patients; so that the weaker sex are the most exposed to harm.

I have a strong opinion that no sane mind should be constantly associated with the insane, and to that effect have represented the case of a patient detained "during pleasure" of the Colonial Secretary, being a committal for murder. It may be true this woman was mad at the time of her crime, and equally true that she is now in her right mind. If now in her right mind it may not be considered prudent to liberate her; but she, as a sane person, should certainly not be incarcerated among lunatic patients, to be as it were educated to lunacy.

I cannot but again record my protest against the fire-prevention appliances now provided. In my reports, 7th April, 1881, paragraphs 19 to 33, and 25th June, 1881, paragraphs 3 to 7, I dealt with this very important matter, and on the 7th January, 1882, I procured and forwarded a report from Mr. Harris, the Superintendent for many years of the Christchurch Fire Brigade, containing practical suggestions thereon. At present the appliances are most defective, more especially, as I have from the beginning of the occupation of the new buildings pointed out, in the provision of inch pipes to feed a 3in. hose. Moreover in the roof used as a dormitory the absence of pressure renders the hose useless.

The Overcrowded state of the Female Wards.—The necessity for alteration in the day-room of "B" ward, represented by me on the 7th February, 1880, with sketch, paragraphs 13 and 14, the surface drainage (2nd August, 1879) upon which I represented the matter to the Road Board are, I see, duly noted by Dr. Macgregor at his first official inspection. Dr. Macgregor's forcible remarks on the cruel inconveniences attached to the existing deficiencies consequent on the omission of the central block fully endorse all that I have so frequently represented in connection with the subject. Without the central block the present buildings are, while providing comfortable lodging, a source of inconvenience and hardship amounting to cruelty, in that the patients at every meal have to be supplied from a kitchen four hundred yards away, and for want of a dining-hall have to poison the day-rooms with the fumes of victuals.