

as it has done for years past. There is a large and never-failing supply of good water, which can readily be stored at a considerable elevation. Brick-earth exists in abundance, and shingle for forming roads is obtainable from the Porirua Stream running through a portion of the estate. Firewood sufficient for several years' use is available. The buildings can be erected so as to have a proper aspect and a good view, and to be, with their airing-courts, quite screened from the public road. The patients might be employed at first in cultivating certain portions and forming roads and paths, as well as in clearing away the bush and stumps of trees; a ready market for all agricultural and garden produce not required at the Wellington Asylum being found in the city. I hold the opinion that immense benefit would result from the addition of such resources to the Wellington Asylum in the way of suitable employment for its lunatics, combined with change of scene and air; and I can only regret that, although the Legislature has more than once voted the necessary finances, the Government has not seen fit to put the works in hand for establishing an auxiliary asylum in so excellent a situation. The £500 a year spent on some five patients and a few remanded persons at Napier would be better devoted to such a purpose as this, for which it would be found ample, as the Porirua establishment would be, in great measure, self-supporting.

In view of the great and urgent demand for additional accommodation for lunatics, it is a matter for regret that Ashburn Hall (private asylum) should still have so many vacant beds, and it may be well for the Government, to consider whether, under the pressing circumstances now existing, Magistrates might not be instructed to commit to this establishment those whose friends are able to pay the reasonable charges here demanded. Habitual drunkards also might be sent to Ashburn Hall, and the illegality of confining them in the same wards with lunatics thereby avoided. These suggestions will, of course, apply only to those portions of the colony readily accessible to Dunedin.

REMANDS PENDING MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

It is very satisfactory to note that the number of remands fell from 63 in the year 1884, to 11 in the year 1885. Napier, as usual, shows a large proportion of this number, seven persons having been admitted into the asylum there under this category.

The public attention which I have persistently drawn to a mode of committal to asylums so liable to abuse as to be a positive danger, and which often involved great hardship, by stigmatizing as lunatics, persons who were merely suspected as such by a Magistrate, and who were not examined at all by medical practitioners, has at length borne fruit; but the matter will require constant watchfulness, as the power given to Magistrates by the Lunatics Act of 1882 is merely in abeyance, and still exists as before.

HABITUAL DRUNKARDS.

There have been eight committals to asylums under the clauses of the Act relating to habitual drunkards. To Seacliff, 1 male and 1 female; to Christchurch, 2 females and 1 male; to Ashburn Hall, 1 male and 1 female; to Nelson, 1 female. Great difficulty occurs in complying with the requirement of the statute—that these persons should be placed in a building, or part of a building, not occupied by lunatics. In fact, no special accommodation exists for them in any of the public asylums; and, at Nelson, association with lunatics could not be avoided. If proper accommodation does not exist in an asylum, the committal of habitual drunkards to that establishment, being certainly illegal, should be prohibited.

It should be noted that habitual drunkards and remanded persons are not included in the numbers given above, showing the population of each asylum; nor are they taken into account in calculating the cost of maintenance of lunatics.

ADMISSIONS.

During the year 1885, 454 patients were admitted into the various asylums. Of these, 294 were males and 160 females; 63 of the whole number had been previously admitted into the same asylum. The number of admissions by no means indicate a corresponding number of new cases of insanity, as it includes many who were simply transferred from one establishment to another. These transfers numbered, during the year 1885, 75.

DISCHARGES.

There were 288 patients discharged during the year; 171 of these are classed as recoveries, 15 as relieved, and 102 as not improved. In the last-named category are included a large number of transfers to other asylums.