

MASTERTON.

My annual inspection of this hospital was made on the 16th February, 1886, when I found two male patients only occupying beds; another will be admitted to-day. Both cases under treatment are of serious character, one having sustained a fracture of the spine, and requiring constant attention, which is cheerfully rendered. A number of additions and improvements have been made since my last report. The entrance-hall and passage have been papered and varnished, the steward's sitting-room and bed-room papered, seven new hair-matresses have been purchased, a good easy-chair presented, and three mechanical bedsteads procured. In the dispensary is a new portable hot-air or vapour bath; and a number of other useful additions are noticeable. An additional piece of ground behind the hospital has been fenced in and cultivated, and a large coal-shed erected. Mr. and Mrs. Bulpitt, the steward and matron, continue in charge, their service now reckoning some seven years' duration. I was much concerned to learn that some probability exists of their resigning their appointments, for I do not hesitate to assert that the utmost difficulty would be found in suitably replacing them. The hospital work is to them a "labour of love;" and the condition of the building, garden, and grounds is maintained in a way which might well serve as a model for other hospitals. To sum up in very few words, I could detect no fault. With the chairman of the Committee, Mr. Boddington, I had a long conversation. He takes much interest in all that concerns the welfare of the hospital, of which he is, not unnaturally, very proud.

16th February, 1886.

NELSON.

On the 8th December, 1885, I paid a visit of inspection to this hospital, and went over the whole of the premises with Dr. Boor, the Resident Medical Officer. I found sixteen male and four female patients under treatment as in-patients: one or two of these belong to the "chronic" class, the rest being proper cases for hospital treatment. The largest number of patients since my last visit at any one time has been twenty-one. The large ward at the back is reserved for infectious cases, and is now empty; it was recently occupied by two sufferers from diphtheria. I have very little to remark as to the hospital generally, which has always presented to me an appearance of homeliness and comfort. The wards are large and well-ventilated, and the bedding is good and scrupulously clean. In the matter of furniture, there is not that appearance of luxury to be seen in other colonial hospitals, and which is often due to private gifts and individual efforts rather than to expenditure of public money. No doubt, under the new Act the subscribers will take more interest in their local institutions than has hitherto been shown. Some minor improvements have lately been carried out, such as the refitting of the men's lavatory. A plan is also under consideration for diverting the drainage of the laundry and urinals from a neighbour's premises (recently brought into occupation), and conveying it into a proper sewer in the high road. It will be necessary, with this object in view, to erect a new laundry in a more elevated position; but the expense need not be large. The present arrangements for giving a hot bath are both primitive and inconvenient, the bath-room being at some distance from the wards, and the furnace in a detached building. There is plenty of room for a bath near the ward lavatory; and I beg to suggest that one of the modern contrivances for heating it by means of gas be adopted. If successful—of which I have no doubt—the same arrangement may be carried out in all of the three wards. I recommend that the hospital be at once connected with the Telephone Exchange in the city: no special arrangements are at all necessary for this purpose. The Nelson Hospital is exceptionally fortunate in retaining the services of a medical officer who possesses the entire confidence of his Committee, his patients, and the public generally.

12th December, 1885.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

THERE are this day under treatment in the hospital ten males and two females, one of the latter, a little girl suffering from severe burns, being nursed by her grandmother. Several of the men belong to the "refuge" class; but, as pointed out in other reports, no establishment exists for their reception in this part of the colony. The steward and matron having left, the hospital is in the care of temporary officers; but all is to-day (Sunday) in very good order and very clean. No complaints of any kind reached me. The two principal wards have been rendered more cheerful by gifts of nicely-framed pictures and a large number of well-bound and readable books, which are placed on shelves so as to be readily accessible to the patients. I would suggest that a portion of the rough and unsightly floors be covered with linoleum, which would save labour in scrubbing and improve the sanitary condition of the wards. Some new bedsteads and bedding are badly wanted, the straw paillasses being old, hard, and musty-smelling. The Committee would find it economical to purchase iron bedsteads fitted with woven-wire mattresses, and without any wooden framework. These, if not obtainable in the colony, are readily procured from England, and, with a two-inch hair mattress, are cheaper than any other form of bedstead and bedding; being, moreover, healthy and practically indestructible. The women's ward is very hot, being exposed to the full force of the sun's rays, and badly requires a verandah. In the kitchen the colonial oven is out of order, and should be replaced by a proper range, which would supply hot water to the baths. The single rooms, forming part of the old asylum, are quite obsolete, and should be pulled down as unsuitable for wards.

21st February, 1886.

OAMARU.

My periodical inspection of this hospital took place to-day. I found nine in-patients under treatment, eight of whom were of the male sex; and all, without exception, were proper hospital cases. That they are well and kindly treated there can be no doubt: I received no complaint from any