

Judge of the Supreme Court. He ordered the release of a patient because there was not provided a ward or division of the asylum in which lunatics are not detained, and in which the man could be kept separate from them. If this is followed up by the other Judges refusing to commit until proper provision is made, I have no doubt public opinion will soon demand a vote for the purpose.

ADMISSIONS.

On the 1st day of January, 1891, the number of insane persons in our asylums was 1,797—males, 1,095; females, 702.

Those admitted during the year for the first time numbered 349; while readmissions numbered 86.

DISCHARGES.

The total number removed by discharge and death during the year was 383—males, 214; females, 169.

The percentage of recoveries on the admissions during the year was 37·24.

TRANSFERS.

Owing to the great overcrowding at Wellington it was necessary to remove 30 females to Sunnyside Asylum.

DEATHS.

The percentage of deaths on the average number resident during the year was 6·71. In New South Wales the rate was 6·52, in Victoria 7·45, and in England 9·81.

BOARDING OUT.

I have made inquiries from time to time in various parts of the colony about the possibility of introducing the system of boarding out insane patients, which has been found to be so successful in Scotland; but I found that there prevails among our people an unreasonable aversion to have anything to do with persons of unsound mind. A similar experience is recorded by the Victorian Inspector, who in his last report says, "These efforts have been in a great measure abortive, the result rather tending to show that the social conditions of the colony would preclude any extensive application of the system under consideration. People of moderate independence apparently shrink from the responsibility involved, and any considerable extension of the system could probably only be achieved at a prohibitory cost."

TRAINING OF ATTENDANTS AND NURSES.

Thoroughly-trained professional nurses have been appointed during the year to be Matrons at two of our largest asylums, with most satisfactory results. Systematic courses of instruction for the attendants have also been introduced at Seacliff, Wellington, and Auckland.

NEW BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

In addition to the central block of a new asylum at Porirua, we have under contract two blocks approaching completion at Sunnyside Asylum. These will at length complete the design of this Asylum, and provide for the requirements of the Canterbury District for several years to come. The operations for a complete system of fire-prevention at this institution have been delayed in a most incomprehensible fashion, notwithstanding the utmost importunity on my part.

The impossibility of finding a suitable foundation for a reservoir on the Seacliff Reserve has compelled the department to bring in a water-supply by means of pipes from springs at Omimi and Warrington. In consequence of the long-continued drought which has prevailed in this district very great hardship has been caused to the patients at Seacliff, and the difficulties of administration were greatly increased by the scanty supply of water. The abundant rainfall, however, of the last few months has removed all immediate difficulty in this respect, and before the summer comes round we shall have a sufficient supply. Among the many improvements carried out by Dr. Truby King in the management of this Asylum one of the most important has been a gravitation system of sewage irrigation, which has so far proved eminently successful. It is contemplated to introduce a similar method of utilising sewage at the new asylum at Porirua, and so far as possible at Auckland, where the difficulty of remedying the nuisance caused by the outfall into the Waitemata has seemed insuperable without enormous cost, and even then with doubtful prospect of success. It is intended for carrying out this scheme to utilise the services of Mr. Cruickshank, the farm-manager at Seacliff, whose experience acquired under Dr. Truby King will be of great value to the department. At Auckland the farm-buildings which have been so urgently needed are now in process of construction. They are being built of concrete, for which the material and labour are being supplied by the patients, under the direction of an expert approved by the Public Works Department.

FINANCIAL RESULTS OF THE YEAR.

The large increase of £4 4s. 10½d. in the annual cost per head in Auckland, to which I called attention last year, and which I explained by an unusually large expenditure on general improvements, has, as I anticipated, been reduced this year by £3 6s. 2¾d. Next year, however, I expect a considerable increase in Auckland, Wellington, and to a lesser extent in Christchurch, owing to the necessity of providing for services hitherto undertaken by the Public Works Department.

A reference to Table XVI. will show that there has been a slight increase in the cost per head, amounting on the whole to the difference between £20 16s. 2½d. for this year, and £20 10s. 3d. for 1890—an increase, *i.e.*, of 5s. 11½d. This is accounted for by the fact that, owing to the greater vigilance exercised of late years in collecting maintenance payments, there are no longer any accumulated arrears to come in. Accordingly, the total receipts for 1891 were 7s. 7½d. less per