

fourteen days, when he had been written off the books under section 158 of the Lunatics Act. Being in a very exhausted condition, he was, however, taken in, but only to succumb the same night from the effects of hunger and exposure.

During the year extensive alterations have been carried out in connection with the steam service under the direction of the Public Works Department, which, I regret to say, have not proved all that could be desired. Numerous leakages, damaging to the walls and ceilings, have occurred, owing to defective expansion joints, and will need to be remedied, for which plans have been recently prepared and submitted for your approval by the Asylum Engineer.

The new laundry has been at length completed and occupied, to the great comfort of the patients and attendants employed at this work, and the relief of the increased and increasing demands upon it. No proper provision, however, has been made for the removal of the steam from the boilers, though I drew attention to this oversight fully two years ago, with the result that the steam condenses on the roof and falls in the form of water on those working below.

The whole of the lower flat of the female division has been tastefully repainted in two, and at places in three, coats of oil-colours during the year, adding greatly to the cheerfulness, and probably also to the sanitation, of the wards, which had so long been unsightly. It is to be regretted, however, that, owing to the action of damp on the walls at the south-western end of the building, much of the work has been greatly damaged and disfigured. In addition to this, much painting has been done by the Asylum painter-attendant and patients both inside and outside the building, including a large portion of the outer woodwork of the female division, which was beginning to perish from exposure, and I hope to continue this another year.

The new airing-courts, though not yet ready for occupation, are far advanced towards completion, and would doubtless have been now occupied but for the unavoidable delay arising in connection with the completion of the new laundry. They will be spacious, cheerful, convenient for observation, and easily drained in winter, for which purpose a concrete drain will be formed at the bottom of the sunken fence enclosing them, along the entire front of the main building. In the meantime the female patients have had greater liberty at daily exercise on the cricket-ground and adjoining parts.

In previous winters the female airing-court has always been flooded and water-logged for a considerable portion of that season, so that it could not be used. This work, as well as the fencing and laying-down of the asphalt paths in the laundry drying-green, has occupied a great deal of the time of the Asylum staff; but, while I venture to say that it has thus been more satisfactorily done, it has effected a considerable saving on the original expenditure contemplated.

The laying-out of the grounds in front of the building has been further extended by the formation of a landscape garden opposite the female wards, and I propose, during the coming winter months, to continue this work, as well as the planting and laying-out of the new airing-courts on the north side of the Asylum. A tennis-court or croquet-ground is also in process of formation in a convenient situation.

The question of the transfer of patients from one asylum of the colony to another has occupied my consideration for a long time, and I have more than once brought it under your notice. I have seen such good results from this change, not alone here but also in England, that I regret we cannot avail ourselves of its salutary influence oftener. Its beneficial effects are well known to asylum superintendents with experience of it, and in this colony, where it might be effected with little or no expense by means of the Government steamers or the State railways, as between here and Seacliff, I am decidedly of opinion it would be worth extended trial. I do not refer to the transfer of patients in large numbers merely as a convenience—to relieve a congested state of one asylum—but to a careful selection of cases which would be likely to benefit thereby. We know the salutary effect of change of air, scene, surroundings, and, in fact, of life, on cases of bodily illness, and why not also on those mentally afflicted, or even more so? Every asylum physician can call to mind cases which, after progressing to a certain stage, came to a standstill for no accountable reason, yet ought to go on to complete recovery; for such cases change would seem to be the very best tonic, but premature discharge from the asylum is not what is needed, and might prove disastrous by inducing a relapse. In the present day, when there is so much being done elsewhere in the direction of hospital and scientific treatment of the patients of asylums, it behoves us here to give the curative aspect of our responsibility a prominent place. Our facilities in this respect are very greatly hampered as compared with the Home asylums and those of other countries by financial difficulties, therefore it is all the more incumbent on us to make the best use of the means at our disposal.

There is yet another class which I think would be largely benefited by transfer and change, while at the same time it would help to reduce our maintenance rate by making them to some extent self-supporting. I refer to a class of chronic patients who cannot be induced to employ themselves, but who, in many instances, have been good asylum workers for years. Asylum superintendents know the difficulty of inducing such patients to resume employment, and the evil influence they have on those around them; yet how often have we all seen such patients start afresh on transfer from one asylum to another, even from one ward or from the direction of one attendant to another, sometimes. Recently, in conversation with Dr. Hassell, he told me that he noticed this in the transfer of patients between Mount View and Porirua. If, then, it is admitted, for I suppose no one will now deny it, that employment is advantageous—nay more, necessary—in the treatment of the insane in asylums, I think I have made out a case for the more frequent transfer of selected cases between the several asylums of the colony.

I have so often addressed you on the overcrowded state of the sleeping-accommodation that it seems almost superfluous to do so again here, but no report on the condition of the Asylum could properly omit the subject, especially as, owing to the increased and ever-increasing demands on it, it has become more urgent. I have recently pointed out to you how provision can be made for this