

and deaths the population in the Asylum has increased by 22, and a further increase of 13 has already taken place up to the end of the second month of this year (1897). Our present position is this: that, while we have sleeping-accommodation for 139 male and 83 female patients, we have actually living in the Asylum 199 male and 122 female patients—a total surplus of 99 patients who are not legally housed. The day-room and other accommodation is also lamentably deficient. Setting aside the inconvenience to administration, the difficulties of supervision, and the dangers to bodily health which the congested state of the Asylum causes, there is no doubt that this crowding together of the patients tends to retard recovery in many cases, and is a source of no little irritation, as our records bear witness. In no ordinary hospital of the colony would such a state of affairs be tolerated.

Turning to the statistics of the year, it will be observed that 126 patients (67 male and 59 female) were committed to the Asylum, and 70 (33 male and 37 female) were discharged. In this enumeration I leave out of account the interchange of patients that took place between the two Asylums—Mount View and Porirua. The proportion of recoveries to admissions was a little over 44 per cent. The proportion of deaths to average number resident was somewhat under 7 per cent. Nearly half (45 per cent.) of the deaths occurred in patients who were resident in the Asylum under twelve months. One male patient died, aged eighty, who had been an inmate for thirty years. The general health of the patients has been good considering the overcrowding, and we have to congratulate ourselves that no accident of any consequence has to be recorded.

The average number of patients usefully employed was 233 (151 male and 82 female)—*i.e.*, about 80 per cent. of the inmates. These figures may, I think, be considered satisfactory, when our large proportion of acute cases and recent admissions are taken into account. Of the male patients employed, about 80 usually worked outside in the gardens, on the grounds, or attending to the stock, about 12 were engaged in the workshops or at their trades, 10 helped in the kitchen, and the remainder had work of various kinds in the wards. Of the female patients employed, about 20 were usually engaged in the Asylum laundry, and the remainder occupied themselves at needlework and household duties in the wards.

During the year considerable progress was made by patients' labour in forming the new approach to the Asylum from Drummond Street. This work, which was commenced during my superintendency here seven years ago, will, I think, be a great improvement when completed.

Shortly after taking charge of the Asylum, in January, 1896, I found that owing to the great consumption of water in the city the water-pressure in the Asylum mains sank to a very low ebb in the daytime, when our water-supply was practically useless for fire-extinguishing purposes. The danger of fire in a large wooden building like Mount View Asylum is obviously very great. I therefore recommended that a reservoir of our own should be constructed on the hill adjoining the Asylum, and this work has been done by our patients' labour. The reservoir is of concrete, is connected with the Asylum water-system by a 4 in. pipe, and holds 35,000 gallons, which is kept in reserve for fire-extinguishing purposes. When turned on, this hill reservoir raises the pressure in the Asylum main to 65 lb. to the square inch, and is thus capable of throwing powerful jets of water from the fire-hoses. Our means of coping with an outbreak of fire may now be considered satisfactory. As a further safeguard against fire, the lighting of the building by electricity instead of using gas as at present is well worthy of consideration.

There has been an unusual number of changes in the staff of sixteen male attendants on ward duty. Most of the vacancies took place in the early part of the year, when the disturbing influence referred to in the last annual report had not subsided. Altogether seven resigned, including the three charge attendants, two were dismissed as unsuitable during their term of probation, and one was transferred to Porirua Asylum. Notwithstanding these changes I am fully satisfied the efficiency of the staff has not deteriorated.

Towards the end of February the matron (Miss Erskine) was transferred to Auckland Asylum, and Miss Boulcott, the senior charge nurse at Porirua, was promoted to fill the vacancy. This appointment has proved satisfactory.

Religious services have been held at the Asylum by ministers of various denominations on Sunday afternoons. Entertainments for the patients took place every fortnight, and thanks are due to various entertainment companies who contributed to these amusements, and to others who gave donations to the Christmas-tree and the recreation fund of both Mount View and Porirua Asylums.

PORIRUA ASYLUM.

The average number of patients resident during the year was 234 (128 male and 106 female). There has been an increase of twelve in the number of inmates by the excess of admissions from Mount View over the removals and deaths. The class of patients are almost without exception of a chronic type; only one was discharged as recovered and one as relieved. The deaths, as in the previous year, only amounted to three—all old people—a remarkably low proportion to the average number resident.

The average number of patients employed was 193 (120 male and 73 female). Usually about 75 of the men were out on the farm. Some of them did very little, and probably, considering the short hours they work, the average work done by ten patients is equivalent to that accomplished by one ordinary farm-labourer; sixteen usually worked in the garden, eight at some trade, seven in the kitchen, and fourteen in the wards. Of the women employed, nineteen or twenty were at laundry-work and the others were engaged at various household duties.

The list of casualties is a short one. The only accident of a serious nature occurred early in the year, when an old man was pushed by another patient and fell on the staircase, sustaining a fracture of the neck of his thigh-bone. Considering the nature of the injury he made a good recovery.

I am much impressed with the advantages of the estate for the purposes of an Asylum. The