

There have been few accidents of a serious nature during the year, the most serious being a fracture of the leg, which made an excellent recovery.

We have been entirely free from any diseases of an epidemic or contagious nature.

A large amount of useful work has been done by the patients, both male and female. The majority of the men have been employed in the garden or in agricultural work, while several pursue their usual trade or calling. The women help in the laundry, sewing-room, and other domestic work.

Two new boilers were installed during the year, and we have now a good supply of hot water through the building; while the new drying-chambers have been a great acquisition to the laundry.

As an additional precaution against fire, a service of water, connected with a reservoir on the hill, has been laid all round the building, and fixed hydrants are provided at convenient points, so that any part of the institution can immediately be operated on by an efficient water-supply. Both the male and female attendants are regularly instructed in fire-drill, and have always made a ready response to false alarms of fire.

The cottage formerly occupied by the Assistant Medical Officer has now been turned into a nurses' home, and the nurses have expressed their appreciation of the rest and quiet thus afforded them in the evenings after they have spent a whole day in the worry and stress of the wards.

The female refractory day-room was too small for the number of patients, and was a source of anxiety both as regards the health and safety of the patients. A start has been made in enlarging it, and I am confident that when it is finished it will add greatly to the comfort and health of the occupants. A similar extension is needed on the male side.

The usual repairs and certain other minor structural improvements have afforded useful occupation to a number of the skilled mechanics who are patients.

No mechanical restraint has been used in controlling patients.

The amusements of the patients have not been overlooked. Books have been added to the library, dances have been held regularly, and indoor games are provided.

Several trustworthy patients are allowed "parole," while walking parties go outside the grounds.

The annual picnic was held at Miramar.

There have been frequent changes among the members of the staff, owing greatly to the increased facility of getting lucrative employment elsewhere. Mr. Wells, formerly night attendant, succeeded Mr. McDonald as clerk, and has proved a capable and efficient officer.

To the officers and staff I have to convey my thanks for their hearty co-operation in carrying out the work of the institution.

I have, &c.,

W. BAXTER GOW, M.D.,

Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector-General of Asylums, Wellington.

SEACLIFF ASYLUM.

SIR,—

31st January, 1901.

I have the honour to submit to you the following report on the Seacliff Asylum for the year 1900:—

At the beginning of the year there were 635 patients in the Asylum. During the year 114 patients were admitted—viz., sixty-two males and fifty-two females. The whole number of patients under care during the year was thus 749, the average number resident at any one time being 613. There remained in the Asylum at the close of the year 627 patients—viz., 403 males, 224 females—and there were two men absent on trial. The number discharged, relieved and recovered was forty-seven, being in the proportion of 41 per cent. on the admissions.

The proportion of chronic hopeless cases committed directly to the institution or transferred from elsewhere continues very high, and it will be observed that 67 per cent. of the total admissions for the year had been insane for more than three months at the time of committal, while 52 per cent. had been insane for twelve months or upwards, or had suffered from previous attacks of insanity. It is obviously impossible under such circumstances that any form of care or treatment can result in a high percentage of discharges. In view of the fact that it is rarely possible to treat the insane satisfactorily in private houses, one cannot help feeling that the friends, relations, or medical advisers who do not avail themselves of the advantages of the early treatment of patients in asylums incur a very grave responsibility. I am strongly of opinion that the number of persons successfully treated in asylums would be much increased if "voluntary patients" were admitted, and if there were a small bedroom in each large hospital where patients could be placed pending committal, instead of their being lodged in gaol, as at present.

During the year thirty-eight patients died, being 5 per cent. of the number present during the year.

Early in the year thirty-six female patients were transferred to the Porirua Asylum. The effect of this and previous transfers is to render the apparent incidence of insanity in the province excessively high among men as compared with women—viz., 403 as compared with 224—whereas in reality at the present time the relative proportions of men and women admitted are about 105 to 100.

The most important work carried out during the year has been an extensive new building for female patients, providing twenty-five single bedrooms, two dormitories, a day-room, lavatories, &c. This building is nearly completed, and will, with the Nurses' Home, which is also under construction, relieve the overcrowding which has existed, and render proper treatment and classification much more feasible. Additions have likewise been made to several of the attendants'