

on being able to use in the new structure, so that a much larger extent of the old walls, which it was believed could carry a second story, had to be taken down. Next, it was for a long time impossible to get the bricks required, and bricklayers also could not be found. I am greatly disappointed to find that orders have been issued that—as I hope only for the present—no further steps are to be taken towards the extensions promised at the kitchen end of the Asylum. If some relief is not provided immediately, it will be a dismal winter for this institution on the male side. The number of patients this day total 579—males, 366; females, 213. Two males are absent on trial, and one female. Six males are confined to bed. No one is so confined on the female side. The Auxiliary Asylum and the farm and the patients are admirably looked after. I examined the dinner and found it very good. The bedding and clothing are excellent, and the condition of the institution, considering the great strain caused by overcrowding, reflects the greatest credit on Dr. Beattie and his staff; for nothing but the most unrelenting vigilance and care could have produced such results. The excess of males is forty. I say nothing about the females, for they will soon be relieved. Mr. Ewington, to whom this Asylum owes so much, has made suggestions about the ventilation of the female dining-hall and the workroom. The bad ventilation is due to structural defects in the windows of the old parts of the building, and would cost so much to remedy, that I cannot recommend that the work should be undertaken now, when matters much more urgent demand our attention.

CHRISTCHURCH ASYLUM.

7th December, 1903.—I have found this asylum for the first time for many years free from overcrowding. The number of male patients is 268, females, 233. The overcrowding which prevailed for many years had many evil consequences; it of course greatly affected the health of the patients and diminished the chance of their recovery; it kept the whole staff in a state of constant anxiety, and the attendants found their service very harassing and their inevitable discomforts very hard to remedy. The number of patients exceeding the legal provision for their accommodation of course affected the cooking arrangements as well as the bathing and the laundry. In the existing state of the labour-market, the changes in the staff for years were frequent. Changes caused by the inevitable worry of the daily duties, and the general rise of wages in other employments were very trying; but we have great cause for thankfulness that we have got over this period so well as we have. Nothing but the care and vigour of the administration could have secured such a result. I hope that the new auxiliary building will at once be extended so as to provide a day-room and kitchen against the winter. The remaining dormitories can stand over for the present. If it should be decided not to pull down the old North House it ought to be thoroughly overhauled, especially as regards the drainage, and then it can accommodate about twelve old people. I found five men and five women in bed for various causes, and all were very carefully treated. I was present at the dinner on two successive days, and the meals were good in quality, plentiful, and well cooked. The stock, for which the Steward, the Matron, and the charge attendants (more immediately) are responsible, is in excellent order and well looked after. To day I found every item I called for correct. The institution as a whole is in a very satisfactory state.

SEACLIFF ASYLUM.

27th November, 1903.—I have carefully inspected this hospital for mental diseases; I have seen all the patients, finding only five males and two females confined to bed. All were being carefully looked after; I saw two dinners distributed and eaten. The food was abundant and well cooked, notwithstanding the immense difficulties caused by inadequate and worn-out cooking apparatus. The ranges have been twenty years in use, and are fairly worn out; it has become a matter of great urgency that new ranges, &c., should be placed in the kitchen. The cook, Miss McMurdo, deserves the thanks of the whole institution for the way in which she has overcome very great difficulties. The old bake-house is in process of enlargement, as a matter of real urgency. The buildings designed by Dr. King, for relieving the overcrowding (amounting to seventy-three over the statutory number) are under consideration by the Minister, as well as the provision for a male convalescent cottage and a male attendants' mess-room, all of which are imperatively necessary. The portion of the female wing which was thought no longer safe has exacerbated the difficulties in that side of the building, and I am glad after examination of the work under the charge of Mr. Marchant, and carried out by Mr. Bailey, that the plan adopted promises success, and the space will soon be ready for occupation. The laundry machinery is entirely worn out, and beyond repair. Dr. King is now obliged to send some of the washing to town, and I need not say what an unsatisfactory state of things this fact reveals. Owing to Mr. Justice Chapman's elevation to the Supreme Court Bench, I feel bound to call attention to the invaluable services he has for so many years rendered to Seacliff. In and out of season his advice and extensive knowledge have been available as Deputy Inspector. He has indeed deserved well at the hands of the Government. The experiment of a fishing-boat whose headquarters are fixed at Puketeraki, is promising to turn out a great success. Last month 8,960 lb. of first-class fish was taken, of which, after reserving an abundant supply for two days' dinner in a week, to the great saving in meat, the surplus was distributed among the following: Christchurch Asylum, 1,675 lb.; Burnham Asylum, 120 lb.; Christchurch Hospital, 80 lb.; Caversham Industrial School, 150 lb.; Dunedin Hospital, 100 lb.; Ashburn Hall, 100 lb. (paid for); Orokonui Home, 60 lb.; Benevolent Institution, Dunedin, 200 lb.; Salvation Army Refuge, 10 lb.; Old Mens' Home, Ashburton, 100 lb.; Samaritan Home, Christchurch, 100 lb.

HOKITIKA ASYLUM.

11th December, 1903.—A very heavy strain was put on this Asylum by the transfer of fifty patients to relieve the overcrowding at Sunnyside. By extraordinary efforts Mr. Gribben and his staff have minimised the great discomforts which had to be faced during and since the change. A new and