

The contemplated addition to the women's side, for which the timber is also on the ground, will prevent the overcrowding from becoming more acute, although further accommodation will still be urgently needed, especially in the direction of increased day-room space.

The thanks of the authorities are due to the Otago Daily Times and Witness Company and to the Evening Star Company for copies of their journals supplied free, and thanks are also due to the private donors of books, periodicals, and other presents.

To my colleagues, Dr. Sydney Allen and Dr. Edward Alexander, who are both retiring from the service, I feel myself quite unable to adequately express my appreciation.

I wish to convey my thanks to the various members of the staff for their cordial assistance in carrying out the work of the institution.

There are several notable changes to record in connection with the male staff. Mr. John Pullar, our last remaining pioneer of the days when the site for the Asylum had to be cut out of the standing bush, retired on account of failing eyesight, with an allowance.

It is impossible to speak of Mr. Pullar's twenty-one years of capable, energetic, and faithful work, without admiration, and such a life is the best answer to the common assumption that prolonged Government service necessarily stops energy and enthusiasm. The same reflection applies to Mr. T. H. Buckley, who is retiring from the management of the farm in order to take up a valuable holding on the Levels Estate. Apart from the energetic carrying-out of his assigned work, Mr. Buckley has throughout fifteen busy years taken the most prominent part in all the social amenities of the institution. Mr. Andrew Sutherland, who has been in the service for eleven years, replaces Mr. Buckley in the farm-management.

I have, &c.,

F. TRUBY KING,

Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector-General of Asylums, Wellington.

PORIRUA ASYLUM.

SIR,—

Porirua, 28th March, 1904.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Porirua Asylum for the year 1903 :—

At the beginning of the year there were 508 inmates, and at the end 581, of whom nine were absent on trial. The average number resident was 521 (273 males and 246 females), and the total number under care, 655. Of the 147 cases admitted, 54 males and 33 females were admitted for the first time, 5 males and 4 females were readmitted, and 50 males were transferred from Mount View, and 1 female from Sunnyside Asylum. Thirty-six patients were discharged recovered, 10 relieved, and 1 not improved. The proportion of recoveries to the number admitted being about 24·5 per cent. Twenty-seven patients died, making a death-rate of 51·8 per thousand on the average number resident. The recovery-rate, which is apparently low, is to some extent vitiated by the large number of transfers, of whom nearly all were chronic and hopeless cases.

Of the 147 admitted, rather more than 100 were incurable, of whom 30 were senile cases, and 11 congenital imbeciles or idiots. Of those admitted, 10 have died, mostly old people, of whom 2 were brought to the Asylum in a moribund state, and died within a few days, while 3 others died within a few weeks. I have on previous occasions adverted to the tendency to shunt into the Asylum hopeless bedridden patients approaching dissolution. Unfortunately, no Superintendent can refuse to take in any patient whose admission-papers are in order. Cannot some amendment of the present law be devised to deal with this question, and prevent the Asylum being used as a dumping-ground for cases not in any way requiring treatment for mental disease?

Overcrowding has never been in evidence at this Asylum. The additional accommodation made from time to time, has for the most part not been for our own wants, but to relieve the congestion elsewhere, especially at Mount View Asylum. Fifty patients were transferred from there in October, for whom accommodation had been provided by the erection of the first pavilion of a new auxiliary asylum here. This pavilion contains two large dormitories of thirty-five beds each, but no day-rooms. As a temporary expedient, I have reduced the number of beds, and screened off the larger part of one of the dormitories for use as a day-room.

The building and occupation of the first part of the new auxiliary was the most important event of the year. Indeed, I cannot recall anything else of special interest. The year has however been one of satisfactory progress. As many patients as possible were induced to undertake some form of useful employment, and in December, I find that sixteen were daily employed in the various workshope at their several trades, under the supervision of the artisan attendants. Upwards of 150 worked outside in the grounds and gardens or on the farm. Our energies were largely directed to the improvement of the grounds about the institution. The number employed would seem to warrant great hope of much useful work accomplished, but it must be remembered that a large proportion of the patients do very little indeed, being really sent out with the working-parties for the benefit they derive from the fresh air and change of scene. Towards the end of the year about 50 women were daily employed in the kitchen and laundry, nearly 40 at needlework, and 70 at other household duties. About 70 male and 90 female patients were unemployed, owing to mental or physical disability.

There was very little sickness in the wards, and no epidemic or serious accident to record.

The staff has worked well, and I have again to record my thanks to my colleague Dr. Barraclough for his valuable assistance, and for the interest he has taken in organising amusements for the patients.

I have, &c.,

GRAY HASSELL, M.D.,

Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector-General of Asylums, Wellington.