

I have gone into these details because Dr. King, whose excellent management of Seacliff is well known, cannot be said to have succeeded here, and it is just to conclude that the difficulties are almost insuperable. Miss Thomson, the Matron, is one of the best matrons in the colony. She stands in the position of being too good for the place, but she was appointed to let the experiment have every chance.

Attendants, &c. : The number in proportion to the patients is large, because the open-door system requires the exercise of great vigilance, and also because the patients do very little helpful work.

At the meeting of the British Medical Association, Dr. King and I obtained approval of the following amendments :—

1. "That it be the duty of the Medical Officer in charge of the Home to apply to a Magistrate for a rescission of the committal order of any patient whom he considers unsuited for treatment in the Home, whether on the ground of there being no reasonable prospect of recovery or other sufficient reason, and that the Magistrate be empowered to act accordingly on such application."

2. "That no one should be recommitted to the Home at Orokonui without a certificate from the Medical Officer in charge to the effect that in his opinion a further period of detention would give a reasonable prospect of recovery."

3. "That provision should be made by law for the proper classification of inebriates, so that those who wish to conquer the failing—the more hopeful and curable patients—may be separated from the undegenerate and practically incurable."

In consequence of the separation from Seacliff, new regulations must be drafted if the Government decide to carry on the experiment.

On my last inspection tour in the South, from which I have just returned, I paid two visits to the Orokonui Home. I had a personal interview with every one of the inmates, and satisfied myself that the one all-pervading feeling among them is that their only chance of liberty, which is what they are constantly longing for, consists in their so bearing themselves towards the constituted authorities as to make the successful management of the institution impossible.

I have, &c.,

D. MacGREGOR, M.A., M.B.,

Inspector-General of Hospitals, &c.

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The SUPERINTENDENT OF THE OROKONUI HOMES FOR INEBRIATES to the INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS, ETC.

SIR,—

Orokonui Home, Waitati, 4th June, 1904.

I have the honour to submit a report on the above Homes, having taken over the medical superintendency of the institution in September, 1903.

The buildings for the accommodation of the inmates, both male and female, are in good repair, and according to the report of the Health Officer there is no overcrowding or cramping. The kitchens in both the male and female departments want enlargement. A laundry and store-room are required for the female department; an improved water-supply and septic tanks are urgently required; also an improved method of lighting, kerosene being used at present.

An office and store have been built recently at a cost of £98.

From the farm and garden we have been able to obtain an adequate supply of forage for the horses and cattle, as well as vegetables sufficient for the use of the institution, which has also been supplied with bacon from the farm and nearly the whole necessary supply of milk. A new and commodious piggery has also recently been built. Many improvements are still necessary upon the farm in the way of fencing, draining, &c., but the chief hindrance to the carrying-out of these improvements has been the unwillingness of the inmates to seriously engage in work. Having had only the farm-manager to look after the farm for most of the summer, and as he had also to do the carting of firewood, it will be understood that he had quite too much to attend to alone. Stables, cow-sheds, and housing for implements, tools, &c., are also urgently required. It is proposed to establish a poultry and duck farm, in which it is hoped some of the patients will take an interest, and that it will be remunerative. The orchard has just been planted with some three hundred fruit-trees. Firewood is still plentiful, but in the near future, unless the statute be so amended as to compel the inmates to work, some other means of providing fuel will have to be resorted to. The contracts for supplies are, and have been, satisfactory.

The institution has been conducted on the same lines as heretofore—*i.e.*, in conformity with the present regulations. With all our efforts, care, and attention, however, a number of the male patients have continued to manifest dissatisfaction and discontent. Until quite lately we had about six of these malcontents, and, to say the least, they have given very serious trouble, furnishing cause for deep regret that we had not the power to deal adequately with them, as punishment of a severe nature they certainly deserved. We have still three of these men in the Home. They absolutely refuse to work; go beyond the prescribed bounds when they find an opportunity; do their utmost to influence unfavourably new-comers to the institution; are insulting to the attendants; and have from time to time written misleading and discouraging reports regarding the institution to the newspapers; and unfortunately journalists seem to act under the delusion that inebriates speak and write the truth. With regard to the large majority of the inmates, apart from those above referred to, they conduct themselves well, and take a certain amount of exercise in the way of doing a little work.

Means for recreation such as billiards, cards, cricket, boating, shooting, &c., have been provided. The inebriate generally, however, seems to take but little interest in amusements or recreation which entail exertion—billiards and cards being those chiefly indulged in.