

On taking charge here I was specially struck with the absence of ventilation and the unsatisfactory condition of the drainage system. The attention of the Public Works Department has been called to this, our most crying need, and I am pleased to state that matters will be made as satisfactory as they can be made, taking into consideration the architectural defects, as soon as possible.

A large amount of work has been expended here of late, especially on the new tanks which have been substituted for the collection of obsolete 600-gallon tanks in the towers, and on the new coppers in the kitchen.

New machinery is urgently required in the laundry, and this will necessitate a reconstruction of the boilerhouse, which should now be made with a view to supplying electric light to take the place of the present illuminant, gas. At the same time provision should be made for heating the single rooms, which are damp for most of the winter, as they are situated on the south side of the building; and also for a central heater for water situated in the boilerhouse under the eye of the engineer, instead of the wasteful system at present in vogue of individual heaters dispersed over the institution.

Two small hospital dormitories built with a northern exposure are needed, as at present the only accommodation for the sick are large dormitories of a cold and cheerless aspect which are never touched by the sun during the winter months.

Our own carpenters and bricklayer, &c., have been constantly employed effecting repairs, and it has not yet been possible to get the length of providing boot-racks, &c., for all the wards, or to think of the decoration of the wards which is so urgently asked for by the Minister in Charge.

We have suffered severely from the almost entire loss of our potato-crop through Irish blight, but we hope this season to hold it in check by means of spraying. When potatoes failed us we substituted rice in the dietary scale, and although I made frequent visits to the dining-hall I heard very few complaints; in fact the patients, when I explained matters to them, agreed that to have potatoes at the price asked was like eating money.

As regards the life here I have to remark that everything has worked smoothly and harmoniously. There has been good work done on the farm, &c., and brightness has been added through frequent entertainments in the recreation-hall and also by the kindness of Mr. Smail, who has provided passes for selected patients for biograph entertainments, theatres, and concerts in the town. A cricket club has been formed and weekly matches played with visiting teams, and amusement has been provided for an average of two hundred patients. Religious services have been well attended, but here I would point out that no provision is made for the spiritual welfare of the members of the Free Churches. The Anglican and Roman Catholic bodies hold services here, and I think that the Free Churches ought to supply the officiating clergyman at the church service at least once a month. Lectures were given during the winter by Dr. Gribben and myself to the nurses and attendants, and here I must thank the whole staff for their kindness in giving up voluntarily the time required for lectures and for the interest taken and good results obtained in their first examination.

The new scale of wages and hours for the staff seems to have met with approval, as I find there is a feeling of rest and contentment throughout, and in consequence there have been very few resignations.

To Dr. Ulrich, who was transferred with me from Wellington and who has now left the service, to Dr. Gribben, my Assistant Medical Officer, and to the whole staff I have to express my sincere thanks for their hearty co-operation in the working of the institution.

I have, &c.,

W. BAXTER GOW,

The Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals, Wellington.

Medical Superintendent.

SEACLIFF MENTAL HOSPITAL.

SIR,—

Mental Hospital, Seacliff, 23rd July, 1906.

I have the honour to forward the statistics of the Hospital, and to submit the following report for the year 1905:—

The number of patients admitted during the year was 142, of whom 15 were chronic epileptics transferred from other institutions. Deducting these there remain 127 admissions, while the discharges for the year under the headings recovered or relieved numbered 60—that is, 47 per cent. on the admissions excluding the transferred epileptics. Out of a total of 836 patients who were under care in the course of the year, 37 died, being less than $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—an unusually low death-rate.

I have devoted much practical attention during the year to questions bearing on prophylaxis in regard to the rising generation. In this connection I may quote from one of my published communications:—

“If women in general were rendered more fit for maternity, if instrumental deliveries were obviated as far as possible, if infants were nourished by their mothers, and boys and girls were given a rational education, the main supplies of population for our asylums, hospitals, benevolent institutions, gaols, and slums would be cut off at the sources. Further, I do not hesitate to say that a very remarkable improvement would take place in the physical, mental, and moral condition of the whole community.”

Taking the average for the past ten years there have been admitted to the Seacliff Mental Hospital (exclusive of congenitals), say, 110 patients per annum. Of these, as far as we can ascertain, there is an average of 4 per annum originally of average or more than average intelligence who have become insane before the age of twenty-one. Of these four I am satisfied that one patient becomes insane through the direct effects of faulty conditions of education (about four-fifths of such cases are girls). About an equal number of cases is associated with marked sexual irregularities. Of course, it is impossible to state what proportion of these (nearly all males) would be saved under a rational education system. I may say, however, that the almost invariable history one gets regarding such lads is that they have