

To avoid any ambiguity due to nomenclature, it is well to point out that a licensed hospital under "The Private Hospitals Act, 1906," is not licensed for the reception and detention of persons of unsound mind.

PROGRESS OF THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THE LATE INSPECTOR-GENERAL.

Dr. MacGregor was appointed on the 1st April, 1886, and died on the 16th December, 1906.

Within that period, Sir, the following gentlemen were your predecessors as Minister in charge of the Department: 1886–87, Hon. (afterwards Sir P. A.) Buckley; 1887–91, Hon. T. W. Hislop; 1891–93, Hon. (afterwards Sir A. J.) Cadman; 1893–96, Hon. W. P. Reeves; 1896–1903, Hon. W. C. Walker, C.M.G.; 1903–1906, Hon. W. Hall-Jones.

The number of officers, attendants, &c., employed on the 1st April, 1886, was 213, at a cost of £18,888. The number of officers, attendants, &c., employed in December, 1906, was 464, at a cost of £44,023. The all-round increase in salaries has been £6 4s. per head.

While the number of patients on the 31st December, 1886, was, male 1,009, female 604, total 1,613, the number of patients on the 31st December, 1906, was, male 1,900, female 1,306, total 3,206.

The cost per patient in 1886 was—gross, £30 11s. 8½d.; net, £27 0s. 9d. The cost per patient in 1906 was—gross, £35 2s. 10d.; net, £26 10s. 6½d. It will be observed that, though the gross cost had increased by £4 11s. 1½d., the net cost was reduced by 10s. 2½d.

The main increase in salary has not been among the higher officials. Ordinary attendants' salaries have been increased from a maximum of £80 to £95; ordinary nurses' salaries have been increased from a maximum of £45 to £55; charge attendants' salaries have been increased from a maximum of £90 to £120; charge nurses' salaries have been increased from a maximum of £50 to £70; and a house allowance, not exceeding £20, has been granted to married attendants. Attendants and nurses have also been provided with uniforms.

The following statement is made on the authority of the Secretary for Labour: The wages of workers have risen 8½ per cent. during the past fifteen years, and the cost of living has gone up 25 to 30 per cent. If in the above calculations all sources of errors have been eliminated, it is manifest that the working-man is very much worse off than he was fifteen years ago.

The case of the attendants and nurses is quite different. They are housed (rent has gone up 5 per cent.), and married men get a house allowance. They are fed, and have no expense for laundry, and are provided with uniform. A working-man's rise under similar circumstances would be something much more than 8½ per cent.

It is necessary to place this issue clearly, because the fact that the salaries of the staff have risen concurrently with an increase in the cost of their emoluments is lost sight of when comparing their status with that of other workers.

The salaries of Head Attendants, Matrons, and artisans have also increased.

With regard to leave, a full day a fortnight has been added, and increased Sunday leave (of one half-Sunday per month or in lieu thereof one week-day) has also been granted.

The institutions in April, 1886, were: Auckland, Christchurch, Seacliff, Hokitika, Napier, Nelson, Wellington, and (under license) Ashburn Hall.

Napier Asylum was closed on the 1st August, 1886.

Porirua was opened as an auxiliary to Mount View in 1887, and was proclaimed a separate asylum on the 9th May, 1895.

Dr. MacGregor used to acknowledge a justifiable pride in the Medical Superintendents of our mental hospitals. He had selected them for what he deemed were special qualifications only requiring scope to be turned to administrative advantage, and he much regretted the resignation of Dr. Levinge. "They have turned out as I thought; and no man could ask for a better lot," was his remark to me when I entered the Department.

The path which he had smoothed was so much more easily trod of recent years that only a vague memory exists of the obstacles he had to encounter and remove in the years gone by.

In conclusion, I desire to express to the Superintendents and staffs of the Mental Hospitals my general satisfaction with the year's work, and to the Deputy Inspectors and Official Visitors my appreciation of their kindly interest in the welfare of the patients.

FRANK HAY.