

REPORT ON THE

Enclosure in No. 11.

Mr. G. G. FITZGERALD to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

Office of the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums for the County of Westland,
7th February, 1872.

SIR,—

I have the honor, in accordance with "The Lunatics Act, 1868," to report as follows on the Lunatic Asylums of the County of Westland, for the year ending 31st January, 1872.

I was under the impression, until I again recently read the Lunatics Act of 1868, that the Inspector's general report had to be furnished half-yearly, and accordingly, on 14th July, 1871, I furnished a full report to you up to the end of June last. I find, on reference to the Act, that the report should be for the year ending January 31st; but under the circumstances it will, I presume, be sufficient for me now to deal with the period between 30th June, 1871, and 31st January of the present year, referring you to my former report for the occurrences of the early part of the year.

The number of lunatics remaining in the Sunnyside Asylum, in the Province of Canterbury, at the cost of the County of Westland, was, on the 31st January, 1872, six—namely, 2 females and 4 males. Their weekly maintenance per head amounts to 22s. 6d.

The number of lunatics confined in the Sea View Lunatic Asylum on the 31st January, 1872, was 30—all males. There were received from 1st July, 1871, to 31st January, 1872, inclusive, 13 patients; discharged, 6; died, none. The average number in the Asylum during the same term was 26. The average cost per head was 19s. 9½d. per week, but this does not include the salary of the Medical Officer, who is also County Surgeon and Medical Officer of the Gaol and Police Station. I have made many visits to the Asylum during the year, and am satisfied that the Medical Officer, the Keeper, and the attendants have done the best, with the means at their disposal, for the health and comfort of those committed to their charge.

The house accommodation of the Asylum is a wing of the County Gaol, but there is no communication between the prisoners and the lunatics, with the exception that one of the former is employed in keeping the premises clean, and in making beds and doing other necessary domestic work. The large recreation ground, which is securely fenced and commands a fine view of the sea and a part of the coast line, is of great use in affording the patients opportunities for exercise; and in addition to this, the Keeper is in the habit of taking a few of the more manageable patients for walks in the neighbourhood of the town. A number of the patients, however, greatly prefer to be employed at work about the Asylum—at gardening, or, when possible, at some trade. I can speak confidently of the close attention Dr. Dermott, the Medical Officer, has bestowed on his duties. The general health of the patients has been remarkably good.

The building and offices at the Asylum on the Hospital Reserve remain in precisely the same state in which I reported them to be on the 30th June, 1871. The accommodation is wretched in the extreme. The roof leaks; the cells are small and badly ventilated; the fencing which is around part of the premises is completely rotten; the accommodation for the attendant is totally inadequate. These matters have from time to time been brought under the notice of the County authorities.

I append a tabulated statement of the cases treated in this Asylum from the 30th June, 1871, to the 31st January, 1872, and annexed thereto are some remarks by Dr. Maunsell, the Medical Officer and Keeper. I am happy to be able to report that the County Government have at length determined on erecting a suitable Asylum for the whole of the lunatics under treatment in the County. The site is to be that of the present Sea View Asylum, and the only objection that can be urged against the locality is its proximity to the Gaol. In other respects, the site is all that can be desired. The work will, I am informed by the County Chairman, be pushed forward as quickly as possible.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

G. G. FITZGERALD,
Inspector of Lunatic Asylums for the County of Westland.