

1875.

NEW ZEALAND.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS OF THE COLONY,

(FURTHER REPORTS ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

WELLINGTON.

ANNUAL REPORT ON LUNATIC ASYLUM.

SIR,—

Wellington, 23rd August, 1875.

As Inspector of the Mount View Lunatic Asylum here, I have the honor to report to you as follows:—

I beg, in the first place, to call your attention to the statements contained in my report of 28th January, 1874, with respect to the buildings, and to add that no alteration has been made in them since that date, although daily experience has proved that the opinion which I then expressed, as to their defects in design and erection, was perfectly just.

As patent instances of such defects, I may mention the following:—

1. No proper means exist for keeping the male and female patients separated.
2. No means exist for classifying the patients, a matter of very great importance to their general comfort, and of essential consequence to the discipline of the establishment.
3. With the exception of two front apartments, with corridors adjoining, which are usually occupied by the quieter and more cleanly patients of each sex, the day accommodation is wretchedly bad, large numbers of patients, including many prone to violence, being necessarily kept in very small rooms, designed merely for out-offices.
4. The dormitories are unavoidably crowded, a matter especially hurtful and inconvenient.
5. The yards, in which those who cannot be trusted in the unenclosed grounds take their exercise, are cold and damp.
6. No accommodation exists for the laundry and other work connected with the clothing of the patients, a great part of which has to be done in the day-room occupied by the quiet females, causing unnecessary inconvenience to the attendants, and interfering much with the limited comfort of the patients.
7. The heating apparatus, though constructed at great cost, is absolutely useless for the purpose.
8. No proper provision has been made for ventilation.
9. No means of communication from one part of the buildings to another, by signal, exists, the consequence of which is that single attendants are unable to summon assistance when attacked by violent patients, and often suffer a good deal of injury for want of such assistance.

I merely cite these as amongst the more obvious instances of defects in construction and arrangement, whilst the fact that the buildings were originally intended to accommodate fifty patients only, and now contain sixty-three, with a necessarily increased attendance, makes these and other defects more apparent.

The institution is still under the charge of Mr. H. F. Seager as Keeper, and of Mrs. Seager as Matron, who are both most diligent in the discharge of their duties.

The attendants are reported to be generally careful and attentive.

Apart from the special disease, the general health of the patients is good; and every attention is paid (so far as the nature of the buildings permits) to their comfort and convenience, the rational patients making no complaint whatsoever of the treatment they receive.

There are no cases of permanent restraint.

The total number of patients admitted to the Wellington Lunatic Asylum from 1st January, 1854, to 30th June, 1875, has been 116, of whom 60 still remain, 56 having been either discharged or died; but I have no table showing the proportion of discharges to deaths.

Since the 30th June, 1875, 3 male patients have been admitted, making the total number at present in the Asylum 63.

Of the 63 now in the Asylum, 35 are males and 28 females.