

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.

Of the males, 31 are considered incurable, 2 as questionably curable, and 2 as doubtfully insane. Of the two doubtfully insane, one is a convict transferred from prison at Taranaki to the Lunatic Asylum here, and believed to be a malingerer, and the other is Captain McGrath, whose wife is a female patient.

Of the females, 25 are considered incurable, and 3 as questionably curable.

Of the total number of 63, 54 are from the Province of Wellington, 2 from Marlborough, 1 from Napier, and 6 from Taranaki; total, 63.

Between the 31st December, 1873, and 30th June, 1875, the deaths have been 5 males and 2 females; total, 7.

The phases of disease are principally—1 epilepsy, 2 chronic and intermittent mania, 3 dementia; 4 congenital idiocy, of which there are two cases.

As regards out-door work, a considerable extent of land is under cultivation, and large quantities of vegetables are raised for the use of the institution.

At my suggestion, cows have been provided, by which a considerable saving has been effected, and the milk supplied for the use of the patients is of better quality than could otherwise be obtained.

I suggested that a pair of horses and a roomy open carriage should be supplied for the purpose of affording recreation to the patients, but this suggestion has not yet been complied with.

I believe that a large saving in the ordinary expenditure of the institution might be effected by procuring clothing, &c., from London direct, not merely by reason of difference in price, but also in the quality of the articles.

The orders for admission have been generally regular; but I would call especial attention to the necessity of amending the law, by requiring that each order for admission should be accompanied by as complete a history of the case as possible. Under the present system, patients are thrown into the Asylum without any such history, and the officers are left to discover the particular phase of disease in each case, a course which materially increases the difficulty of treatment.

A careful examination of the records of the institution satisfies me that the great majority of the patients admitted are incurable, and therefore that, in the construction and arrangement of buildings for the keeping and maintenance of the insane, attention should chiefly be directed to the means of classifying the patients with a view to securing to them as much bodily comfort as is consistent with their several conditions.

I wish to bear testimony to the care and attention given to the patients by Dr. France, the Medical Officer of the Asylum, their bodily health being indeed the best index of that care and attention.

I append to this report some tables prepared for me by the Keeper, which may be found useful for statistical purposes.

I do not give any detailed account of the number of visits I have paid or of the miles I have travelled since my last report, believing that what I have stated above embodies all that is important in connection with my inspections.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

WM. THOS. LOCKE TRAVERS.

TABLE showing the Religious Persuasions, Former Occupations, and Phases of Disease, of the Patients in Mount View Lunatic Asylum, from 1st June, 1874, to 30th June, 1875.

MALES.

Number on Roll.	Ages.	Religious Persuasions.	Former Occupation.	Phase of Disease.
1	36	...	Seaman	Idiocy.
2	43	Roman Catholic	Teamster	Dementia.
3	35	...	None	Congenital idiocy (epileptic).
4	53	Roman Catholic	Soldier	Dementia.
5	35	Church of England	Schoolmaster	do.
6	48	do.	Soldier	do.
7	45	Presbyterian	Labourer	do. (paralyzed).
8	33	Church of England	Merchant	do.
9	28	do.	Labourer	do.
10	38	Lutheran	Cabinetmaker	do.
11	53	Wesleyan	Gardener	do.
12	56	Protestant	Soldier	do.
13	80 (?)	Presbyterian	Gardener	Imbecility.
14	47 (?)	Roman Catholic	Shepherd	Mania.
15	12	Congenital idiocy.
16	37	Church of England	Labourer	Dementia.
17	36	Wesleyan	Butcher	do. (epileptic).
18	26	Roman Catholic	Bootmaker	do.
19	45	do.	Seaman	do.
20	26	Presbyterian	Jeweller	do.
21	29	do.	Horse dealer	do.
22	60	Church of England	Farmer	do.
23	29	Lutheran	Weaver	do. (epileptic).
24	40	Wesleyan	Brickmaker	Inebriate.
25	54	do.	Farmer	Religious mania.
26	27	Roman Catholic	do.	Dementia.
27	20	Church of England	Teacher	Mania (suicidal).
28	28	Presbyterian	Carpenter	do. (intermittent hereditary).
29	20	Church of England	Painter	Epileptic.
30	42	Wesleyan	Labourer	Dementia.
31	26	Presbyterian	Farmer	do.
32	45	do.	Labourer	Mania.
33	44	Church of England	Captain, 65th Regiment	Dementia.
34	40	Protestant	Labourer	do.
35	20	Presbyterian	do.	do.
36	60	Church of England	Commercial Clerk	do.
37	26	do.	Soldier	Mania (intermittent).
38	26	Protestant	Labourer	Dementia.
39	34	do.	do.	Mania (intermittent).
40	36	do.	Police Constable	do. (epileptic).
41	60	Presbyterian	Farmer	Religious melancholia.

FEMALES.

1	70	Roman Catholic	None, widow	Mania (intermittent).
2	44	Church of England	do. do.	do. (recurrent).
3	53	do.	do. do.	Dementia.
4	46	do.	do. do.	do.
5	44	Roman Catholic	do. do.	Mania.
6	38	Church of England	Domestic servant	do. (hereditary).
7	53	Roman Catholic	None, widow	Dementia.
8	44	Church of England	do. married	do. (hereditary).
9	43	do.	do. do.	do.
10	27	Roman Catholic	do. do.	do.
11	40	Church of England	do. widow	do.
12	40	Roman Catholic	Domestic servant	do.
13	40	Presbyterian	do.	do.
14	40	Church of England	do.	do.
15	40	do.	None, married	do.
16	42	Wesleyan	do. do.	Inebriate.
17	54	Independent	do. do.	Mania.
18	30	Roman Catholic	do. do.	do.
19	26	Wesleyan	do. do.	do. (epileptic).
20	48	Church of England	do. widow	Dementia.
21	60	do.	do. do.	Mania.
22	25	Wesleyan	do. married	do.
23	29	Church of England	do. widow	Dementia.
24	68	do.	do. do.	do.
25	20	Lutheran	Domestic servant	do.
26	30	Roman Catholic	do.	Mania (recurrent).
27	7	Congenital idiocy.
28	62	Church of England	None, married	Dementia.
29	29	do.	do.	do. (epileptic).
30	65	do.	do. widow	do.
31	54	do.	do. married	Mania.
32	23	Roman Catholic	Domestic servant	Dementia.
33	63	do.	None, married	do.
34	30	Church of England	do. do.	do.

ANALYSIS.

MALES.		FEMALES.	
<i>Occupations—</i>		<i>Occupations—</i>	
Labourers	12	Teacher	1
Teamster	1	Domestic servants (single)	7
Soldiers	5	None (married women)	12
Carpenter	1	„ (single)	2
Teachers	2	„ (widows)	12
Gardeners	2		— 34
Butcher	1		
Shoemaker	1		
Farmers	4		
Cabinetmaker	1		
Jeweller	1		
Weaver	1		
Brickmaker	1		
Commercial Clerk	1		
Horse dealer	1		
Sailors	2		
Police constable	1		
None (idiots)	2		
„ (cripple)	1		
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<i>Religious Persuasions—</i>		<i>Religious Persuasions—</i>	
Roman Catholics	6	Church of England	17
Church of England	12	Roman Catholics	9
Presbyterian	9	Independent	1
Wesleyan	5	Presbyterian	1
Lutherans	2	Wesleyans	4
Other denominations	4	Lutheran	1
None (idiots)	3	No persuasion (idiot)	1
	— 41		— 34
<i>Phases of Disease—</i>		<i>Phases of Disease—</i>	
Mania, hereditary	1	Mania	11
„ religious	1	Dementia	21
„ intermittent	3	Inebriate	1
„ suicidal	1	Congenital idiot	1
„ epileptic	1		— 34
„ chronic	1		
	— 8		
Idiocy, congenital	2		
„ from injury to head	1		
	— 3		
Dementia	27		
Imbecility (from old age)	1		
Inebriate	1		
Religious melancholia	1		
	— 30		
	— 41		

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBUXX, Government Printer, Wellington.—1875.