

16. The number of patients was as follows:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.	Increase.
1872.—June	75	34	109	...
1873.—January	80	37	117	8
1874.—"	94	46	140	23
1875.—"	108	60	168	28
1875.—December 31	112	68	180	12

This is the absolute increase, after deducting for deaths and discharges. The discharges average now from 60 to 70 per cent. on admissions.

As the total increase is now about 20 to 24 yearly, and will be greater in each succeeding year, and as there is no room for more male patients, the necessity for at once commencing to erect the new permanent wards for males is obviously urgent. It will be noted also, from the above table, that twice as much accommodation must be provided for males as for females.

17. In March, 1875, I noticed three admissions, since my visit made a month previously, of patients recently arrived from England, all of whom I had reason to presume were not of sound mind when they left. One of them, at all events, the medical officer entered on the register as suffering from congenital dementia. It is not unreasonable to presume that this person was fraudulently palmed off on the agents at home to become a permanent burden on the colony. A cursory examination of the register led me to note the following cases. I give no names, only the register number of each patient:—

No. 549, Male, admitted 4th March, 1875.—General paralysis. Was ill in Germany in the same manner. Landed at Timaru from the ship "Lorenzen" about six months ago.

No. 550, Fem., admitted 9th March, 1875.—Congenital dementia. Came out in the "Lady Jocelyn," and was either landed direct or sent on to Timaru.

No. 551, F., admitted March, 1875.—Acute mania. Came to Asylum from the Hospital. Sent to the Hospital direct from the ship "Hereford."

No. 392, F., admitted 20th December, 1872.—Congenital.

No. 403, F., 4th March, 1873.—Came direct from the ship "Himalaya."

No. 432, M., 16th August, 1874.—A Dane or Swede. Congenital.

No. 433, F., admitted 16th August, 1874.—Congenital.

No. 459, F.—This patient's friends will receive her if Government will send her home to England.

No. 599, F., admitted 13th December, 1875.—Arrived in the "Waitaki," 30th October, 1875.

No. 600, F., 14th December, 1875.—Arrived in the "Merope," 22nd September, 1875.

There arrived also in the "Merope" a harmless lunatic, who was about to be sent back to England.

18. A separate ward in which to isolate fever cases is greatly needed at Sunnyside. In March, 1875, a patient was sent up from the Fever Hospital at Christchurch. Being a female, she could fortunately be placed in the new wards, and was kept so far successfully apart that only one other of the older patients was infected. But a very grave risk was incurred. A male patient, with fever, must have been placed in some one of the dormitories, and the fever would in all probability have run through the whole of the male patients. It is very unlikely that there would be no deaths in such a case.

19. I would again beg to refer to my report of last year, on the desirability of detaching "inebriates" entirely from the Lunatic Asylum. All leading authorities on lunacy seem to be of one opinion on this question.

20. I noted that some patients had been discharged on receipt of a telegram from the person who signed the order for admission. "The Lunatics Act, 1868," clause 71, requires that such person shall give the order "by writing under his hand." That writing ought, I think, to be in the Keeper's possession and produced to the Inspector. There is always ample time to obtain such written document. There is rarely any urgency whatever in a case of discharge. Lunatic patients do not get well at a day's notice. The Medical Officer's practice is to move patients into the convalescent ward for at least a month before he will sign a recommendation for their discharge. There is no guarantee for the authenticity of a telegram. And as population increases, very serious abuses might spring up, especially where there was property to be got hold of, by facilitating discharges under orders by telegram.

21. On the 7th December, in examining the transfer papers of male patient No. 593, from Mount View Asylum at Wellington, to Sunnyside, they were not sufficient legally to warrant his detention. Under clause 19, I directed that the defective order should be amended within twenty-one days. This has never been done. Clauses 68 and 71 are explicit as to the documents which shall warrant such a transfer. There are wanting, to protect the Keeper at Sunnyside from any action at law for wrongful detention of patient 593:—A. "The previous consent in writing of the Colonial Secretary," (or of his delegate);—B. The Resident Magistrate (Wellington), "Order in writing under his hand." The Act distinctly requires that these orders shall be "in duplicate," one for the Keeper who removes, the other for the Keeper who receives the patient. There are also wanting:—C. Copies certified officially by the Keeper of the Wellington Asylum, of the original orders and certificates upon which the patient was received into Mount View Asylum. The patient was committed on 19th October, 1876, by the Resident Magistrate, Wellington.

This is the first case of transfer I have known of at Sunnyside. I submit that the law should be carried out precisely by the persons concerned; not because there is reason to suppose that there has been any evil intent in confining or removing the patient, but because no bad or careless precedent should be allowed by Keepers or Inspectors. For, as population increases, the abuses and evils in connection with Lunatic Asylums at Home, which were exposed not so many years ago, may be expected to creep in here, if the law, which is intended to prevent them, is carelessly administered where it is most precise and explicit.

22. Having mentioned what shortcomings had attracted my notice during the year, it is my duty to bring before you the following testimony of a high authority as to the management of Sunnyside