

1876.

NEW ZEALAND.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS OF NEW ZEALAND.

(FURTHER REPORT.)

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

MR. TRAVERS to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Wellington, 19th June, 1876.

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

I beg to refer to my former reports with respect to the buildings, and to add, that, with the exception about to be referred to, no alteration has been made in them, although the number of patients has very considerably increased.

The exception I refer to is the addition on the male side of five cells for the use of the violent and dirty patients, and an attendant's room in connection therewith, which has proved very useful.

I beg to repeat the statements contained in my last report with reference to certain special inconveniences in the buildings, adding, however, that somewhat better provision has been made for keeping the male and female patients separated, and the wards and cells have been supplied with proper locks.

Since my last report the then keeper, Mr. Seager, has died; and I may be permitted to express my regret at the institution having lost the services of a zealous, painstaking, and careful officer. His widow continues to act as matron, and I beg to bear testimony to the cleanly and orderly conduct of the establishment under her control.

She reports the attendants as giving satisfaction, but suggests that vacancies amongst the female attendants should be filled by persons not less than 28 to 30 years of age. She finds that young girls have less authority with the patients, besides being less considerate in their conduct towards them.

The general health of the inmates is good, and every care is taken to minister to their comfort.

Beyond the complaints naturally to be expected from the patients, I have not found anything which required special inquiry.

There are no cases of permanent restraint.

The number of patients in the Asylum on the 30th of June, 1875, was 60. The number at present is 74. The admissions since 1st June, 1875, have been—Males, 36; females, 14. The discharges and deaths within the same period have been—Males, 19; females, 10.

In addition to the patients actually in the Asylum, there are 6—viz., Males, 3; and females, 3.

The admission papers are generally regular; but I would again call attention to the necessity of altering the law in the direction mentioned in my last report.

Some of the discharges have been informal, but I am not aware that any inconvenience has resulted from this fact.

In consequence of the great increase in the number of patients, there is an urgent necessity for the erection of a proper drying apparatus in connection with the laundry. This would add very materially to the comfort of the patients, and to the convenience of the attendants.

The out-door work during the past year has been considerable, and the gardens have yielded considerable supplies of vegetables. The grounds, however, require laying-out, draining, and planting, which could be satisfactorily effected at an annual outlay of about £300 for a few years.

I beg again to urge the expediency of having a resident medical officer, more especially in view of the rapid increase in the number of patients.

I have, &c.,

WM. THOS. LOCKE TRAVERS,
Inspector.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.