

There were two complaints made, one by a patient that has been in the asylum for upwards of ten years. His name is A. T. A. He spoke most rationally and reasoned most closely. He declared to me that he was not insane, although (he said) he had been in a lunatic asylum long enough to make him mad. This unfortunate appealed to my honor and duty as Inspector to do justice to him, and to procure him his liberty. After consulting Dr. Neill I have come to the conclusion, from what he says, and from observation, that this patient, A., is not insane, and ought to be discharged.* It might be asked what this man, *having no friends*, is to do if he be discharged. My reply to such a question would be, "With that I have nothing whatever to do." He is a strong, healthy-looking person, and ought to be able, from his appearance, to earn his living outside of an asylum. I am of opinion that he is not mad, and I feel that it is my duty to say so.

The other complaint was made by B. W., who was sent to the asylum as a lunatic with only a letter from the Resident Magistrate of Dunedin. He was confined in a lunatic asylum without a medical certificate, and confined there several days with lunatics as his companions. Dr. Neill told me that he was not insane, and that he would be liberated on the following day, Monday. He would be discharged not as cured, for there was nothing to cure. Two medical men that were called in would not certify to his insanity. To say the least of it this man's case is a very harsh and cruel one. The stigma of insanity will follow him out of the asylum into the world, and I record his case for the information of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary.†

The asylum is ill supplied with water. The supply is obtained from the Dunedin City Corporation works—from the Silverstream supply; but it is only obtainable at night; during the day the supply is cut off, and during that time the whole of this big structure of wood is at the mercy of a fire. Nothing could save it if a fire took place in day-time. The hose kept at the asylum is useless; it is worn out.‡ I have placed the foregoing on record so that the Government might be informed of the condition and management of the Dunedin Lunatic Asylum.

Dunedin, 14th March, 1882

Called at the asylum to-day, and was told by Dr. Neill that B. W. was discharged on Monday, the 13th instant.

Dunedin, 13th March, 1882.

On Friday, the 10th instant, accompanied by Dr. Neill, I made my first visit of inspection of the Seacliff Lunatic Asylum.

There were in the asylum 128 males and 5 females, in all 133, under the care of Mr. McDonald, the officer in charge. The building where these 133 patients are kept is a temporary one made of wood. The place is not sufficiently large to accommodate the whole of the inmates, and a few have to sleep on the floors. I visited the place just after tea-time, when all the patients were within the building, and therefore was able to see them all within a short space of time. I went through the entire building, saw every part of it, and every patient. No patient was in seclusion, none complained of illness, and all seemed cheerful and well. The building throughout every part was scrupulously clean, and the arrangements appeared very satisfactory.

I was shown the water-supply; it is procured from the roof of the building during wet weather, and is stored in twelve iron tanks, each containing 400 gallons. This supply, Dr. Neill informed me, was ample for the number of patients now in the building, that is to say for domestic purposes; and I was also informed that there was no other source of supply that could be relied upon with certainty.

If a fire occurred there would be a poor chance of putting it out, because the only means available for extinguishing fires are by the hand and hand-buckets. Dr. Neill and the officer in charge must feel very anxious about this matter, and it is to myself a matter of much concern, for I am afraid that the building would be totally destroyed. The inmates would probably all escape, as there are many ways of getting out of the building.

The sanitary system is not satisfactory. The dirt from closets and other places is carried away into a cesspool, the overflow of which runs over the surface of the ground adjoining, and probably into or near the new buildings below it or their immediate vicinity. I most urgently recommend that this matter be attended to without delay.

There is a licensed publichouse at the railway station at Seacliff. This house is situated no distance from the asylum, and may be the cause of trouble, and interfere with the good government of the asylum; and I must record my regret that a license was granted so near the asylum for the sale of spirituous liquors.

I understand that it is the intention of the Government to procure a permanent water-supply to the new buildings; and I also understand that Mr. Blair, the Government Engineer, is of opinion that there is no difficulty in procuring a sufficient supply at a moderate cost. Further, I am told that the contractor will have his contract for a part of the building finished in contract time, say, in six months; and I beg to recommend that no time be lost in putting this work in hand. An abundant supply of water of wholesome quality is an absolute necessity, and the sooner that supply is obtained the better. It would be all the better to err on the side of being too soon in the matter of a water-supply than too late.

Dunedin, 20th June, 1882.

I INSPECTED the Dunedin Asylum on the 18th instant. It being Sunday, all the patients were indoors, and I saw them all, and conversed with many. No complaints were made.

The number of patients in the Dunedin and Seacliff Asylums was 333, viz., 223 males and 110 females; or, in other words, at Dunedin, 95 males and 105 females; Seacliff, 128 males and 5 females.

* Since this was written A. T. A. has been discharged.

† This man was under remand, and ought to have been accompanied by a warrant or order, on a charge of lunacy; the 5th section of "The Lunatics Act, 1868," requires persons under remand to be sent to an asylum.

‡ Immediately on receipt of this report instructions were sent by telegram to Dr. Neill to procure new hose.