

The system appears to be favourably regarded in Victoria, where, however, it has not yet received any trial.

ADMISSIONS.

During the year 1884, 238 males and 153 females, total 391 patients, were admitted into the colonial asylums; 81 of these cases were readmissions.

The alleged causes of the insanity call for no remark.

DISCHARGES.

Two hundred and twenty-two patients received their discharge; 166 of these had recovered, 26 were relieved, and 30 were not improved. The proportion of recoveries to admissions was 42·45 per cent, or almost exactly the same good result as in the previous year.

A large number of patients were permitted to rejoin their friends, on leave, for longer or shorter periods.

DEATHS.

Ninty-two deaths occurred during the year. With two exceptions all were from ordinary causes. A patient who had escaped from the Sunnyside Asylum some weeks previously was found dead in the Heathcote Stream, close by. He was not suicidally inclined, and the Coroner's jury found that he had died in a fit.

A death from scalding at the Wellington Asylum was alluded to in last year's report.

No less than 11 deaths at Seacliff are attributed to chest-diseases, and I cannot but think that in the cold and damp state of the new buildings is to be found the cause of so large a mortality.

The death-rate, calculated upon the total number treated in all the asylums, was 5·20 per cent, and upon the average number resident, 6·53.

The proportion of deaths to admissions was 23·52 per cent.

CASUALTIES.

The faulty construction of a window-frame at Seacliff enabled a suicidal patient to throw himself from the third storey of the building. The injuries sustained were slight, and he has since recovered his sanity and returned to England.

At Nelson a patient escaped in September last, and, having eluded all attempts to recapture him within the period of fourteen days allowed by the Act, was discharged from the Register of Lunatics. He shortly afterwards attempted to murder a man by shooting him with a gun which he had stolen.

The recent murder of an attendant by a patient regarded as harmless, and employed in agriculture at the Auckland Asylum, was a deplorable event, but apparently could not have been prevented by any ordinary precautions.

COST OF MAINTENANCE.

The amount collected during the year for maintenance of patients by the Asylum Superintendents was £4,735 6s. 10d.

This must, I think, be regarded as a very satisfactory return, when the legal and other difficulties surrounding the matter are taken into consideration. I am satisfied that no effort has been spared to show as good a result as possible.

Produce or articles sold by asylums realized £344 14s. 6d.

(Where asylum reserves are leased, the rentals are not credited to the Lunacy vote.)

The average cost of each patient per annum throughout the colony shows a small increase when compared with the figures of the previous year. It will be seen, however, by the annexed tables that this increase is not uniform at all the asylums, some of which show a considerable diminution of the annual expenses. At Dunedin (Seacliff) large expenditure has been inseparable from the removal to a new establishment; and it is to be feared that railway freights upon fuel, provisions, and necessaries, and other expenses dependent on the distance from town of the asylum, will render its working more costly than that of others more favourably situated.

The revised scale of attendants' wages, which came into use on the 1st January, 1884, has also in some measure contributed to larger expenditure at all the asylums.

The great increase of cost per patient which the Napier Asylum exhibits is more apparent than real, being largely due to the remanded patients, who are not included in the calculation. It is also attributable to the large decrease in the number of lunatics resident; no corresponding diminution of the staff of paid officers being practicable.