

artesian well, which has hitherto supplied the institution, is giving out a decreased supply, and it will be necessary to sink to the deeper stratum. The engine which pumps this supply to the tank-towers is unequal to the demands made upon it, and a new boiler and Worthington pump have been ordered from England, and are being supplied to a detail specification of the particular requirements of the Asylum. They are designed not only to pump all artesian water for domestic purposes, but also to draw a fire-supply from the River Heathcote and pump it, under pressure, into 4in. mains encircling the buildings and dependencies, so that jets can at all times be thrown completely over the roofs. Pending the installation of this system, general smaller fire-prevention appliances are being supplied and fixed throughout the wards. In the absence of a high-pressure water-supply for Christchurch and suburbs, the danger in an outlying institution like Sunnyside of an outbreak of fire obtaining mastery has always been very considerable; the whole question has therefore received much careful thought during the year, and it is hoped the proposed installation will prevent the recurrence of any such disaster as the recent destruction of the female wing.

Hokitika.—An additional reservoir has been constructed to supplement the water-supply.

Seacliff.—The deep-level underground drainage undertaken with a view to repairing the severely damaged portions of the buildings, and the great isolating cut round northern end, undertaken with the same view as the underground drainage, have been stopped, it having been decided that it was unnecessary to go on with those operations. In June last, therefore, work was commenced upon the demolition of the whole of the north ambulatory except the basement. Upon this, restored and strengthened, has been erected, as far as possible out of the materials obtained in the demolition, a new ambulatory, forming one large day-room with attic-dormitory above. The work was done by day-labour and piecwork, the conditions not admitting contract. In this construction the north wing and end were left entirely disconnected and free to move if the old action took place. This new portion was occupied by the patients about the new year. During its erection, the abandoned north wing was strongly and carefully underpinned with concrete almost all round, and repaired and renovated inside; its skeleton attics lined and converted into dormitories; a temporary covered way thrown from the occupied portion of the main building; and temporary partitions erected cutting off the severely damaged portion of the wing itself as dis severed from the ambulatory. These operations enabled the north wing to be occupied again with safety, and with increased accommodation.

After the completion of the new ambulatory, the severely damaged portion at west end of the north wing itself was taken in hand, and also demolished, as it would have been most costly to try and repair it, and nothing but comparatively useless accommodation would have been gained by the expenditure. This is now being rebuilt, and is well on to completion. A new end-wall has been built to the north wing proper, establishing a clear severance from the restored ambulatory and restored west end of north wing, so that the massive wing building is perfectly free, and has a clear field to move if so inclined without the possibility of affecting the restoration work. It is confidently believed that, although the north wing may move, no motion will take place under the restored portions, and that the old trouble here will not come up again, the whole of the works undertaken having been based on a definite and carefully-thought out theory. It is also believed that if the north wing itself moves it will now do so without damage to itself, while it certainly cannot damage the rest of the building, to which it was formerly attached, but from which it is now entirely dis severed. The design of the new work, as lightness and bond were the objects aimed at, necessarily departs from that of the rest of the building; but, although looking somewhat incongruous alongside the more massive lines of the original portions, the restorations do not in any way injure the general appearance, and are very satisfactory to the authorities.

To deal thus comprehensively with this very difficult and complex question has demanded all the ingenuity, energies, and skill of the department and its officers, and it is hoped that a satisfactory, if not, indeed, the best, way out of the troubles has been attained.

Eight additional single rooms in the airing-court for refractory patients have been completed, adding greatly to the convenience of the authorities.

The sanitary conditions and arrangements at Seacliff are almost as defective as at Avondale, and are very far short indeed of what they ought to be in an asylum. It is proposed to hold, in the spring, an inquiry here of the same exhaustive nature as at Avondale. The cost of a proper revision of the sanitary conditions of Seacliff will probably amount to £1,500.

Smaller Works.—Certain smaller works have been executed out of loan, particulars of which are given in the schedule attached.

Expenditure.—The amount voted last year for public buildings out of loan was £48,351, of which £35,617 was expended, with liabilities at the 31st March, 1890, of £10,088. Details of this expenditure are shown in the accompanying return, and in the schedule of contracts.

Out of Consolidated Fund.

Government House, Wellington.—Immediately upon Sir William Jervois's departure, contracts were let for external and internal overhaul, as customary for the reception of a new Governor. The interval available before the arrival of Lord Onslow's family was only a few weeks; but within that time the whole of the exterior and roof of the mansion, as well as of all its dependencies, were painted, and the interior renovated throughout in every part. The immediate sanitary arrangements of the mansion were also completely revised, modernised, and tested; but there was not time to apply this process to the grounds or the dependencies, except, as far as opportunities allowed, to the stable. Shortly after Lord Onslow's arrival his son and aide-de-camp were attacked by typhoid fever, then practically epidemic in Wellington, and their illness was generally attributed to insanitary condition of Government House, and considerable discussion took place on the matter. That the sanitary arrangements of the mansion itself were not responsible was and has been conclusively proved over and over again. Every single detail of the whole system, while