

SESS. II.—1891.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# LUNATIC ASYLUMS OF THE COLONY

(REPORT ON) FOR 1890.

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

The INSPECTOR of ASYLUMS to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

1st April, 1891.

I have the honour to lay before you the following report on the lunatic asylums of the colony for the year 1890:—

The number of registered insane persons on the 31st December, 1890, was 1,797, showing an increase over the preceding year of only 36 persons, being 21 males and 15 females. These are distributed as follows:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.	Previous Year.
Auckland ... ..	257	116	373	389
Christchurch ... ..	232	155	387	368
Seacliff ... ..	282	213	495	496
Hokitika ... ..	69	33	102	105
Nelson ... ..	58	46	104	98
Wellington ... ..	178	121	299	272
Ashburn Hall (private asylum) ...	19	18	37	33

The proportion of the insane to the population is—

New Zealand (exclusive of Maoris) ...	2.85 per 1,000 = 1 in 351
New Zealand (inclusive of Maoris) ...	2.67 " = 1 in 374

At the end of 1888 the proportion in the other colonies was—

Victoria, 1888... ..	1 in 308
New South Wales, 1888 ... ..	1 in 377
South Australia, 1888 ... ..	1 in 427
England, 1888 ... ..	1 in 344

These figures must be viewed in the light of the fact that in New Zealand alone of all the colonies the care of the aged poor and paupers generally is by law thrown on the local bodies, who have, by local taxation, to find at least half the cost of their maintenance. There is thus produced a strong tendency to relieve local rates at the cost of the general revenue. After long continued and urgent representations of the magnitude of this evil, I have at length succeeded in getting a contract let for the central block of a new asylum for chronic cases at Porirua. This Asylum, when completed, will accommodate over 500 patients for a cost of £35,000.

Of course the building is as plainly constructed and fitted as possible, for it is quite clear that the colony cannot continue to provide such expensive buildings as Seacliff. The new Asylum will enable me to relieve the other institutions from the incurables, the accumulation of many years, and make it possible to provide suitable accommodation and treatment for the more recent and curable cases.

Our criminal lunatics, inebriates, and idiots we are still obliged to admit among our ordinary inmates, and I am afraid there is no near prospect of special accommodation for them.

## ADMISSIONS.

On the first day of January, 1890, the number of insane persons in our asylums was 1,761—males, 1,074; females, 687.

Those admitted for the first time during the year numbered 312—males, 186; females, 126. The readmissions were 78—males, 44; females, 34.