

the accommodation, and after being dressed and taken into an adjoining corridor, preparatory to removal downstairs with others, in the momentary absence of the attendant she suddenly rushed back to the dormitory, and precipitated herself through a large pane of glass in one of the windows on to the asphalt below, receiving a fracture of the skull, which caused her immediate death. At the usual Coroner's inquest, the jury added a rider to the effect that the windows were unsuitable for a building of this nature. Doubtless this is to a large extent true, as they are a suggestive and direct temptation to patients who are suicidally disposed; but, on the other hand, they greatly relieve the cheerless, gloomy, prison-like appearance of such a large building, and in this respect are quite in keeping with the modern ideas of making the surroundings and fittings of such establishments as cheerful as possible. Unfortunately, suicides will occur in asylums despite all precautions.

Another misadventure, by which a man met his death, occurred during my absence on leave, a patient falling or throwing himself under an approaching dray while occupied with others repairing a road. In this case the Coroner's jury acquitted all concerned of blame.

During the year the usual tradesmen attendants, and other male operatives, have been employed with patients at their respective trades, and have accomplished much useful and valuable work. In this way two engineers, two carpenters, one plasterer and bricklayer, one painter, one baker, and one bootmaker, have been kept constantly at work; the latter, with the assistance of patients, having effected all the repairs and made all the boots required for the institution.

It would be very advantageous to their treatment if some healthy outdoor occupation, such as suggested in my two previous reports, could be found for our women patients; at present their only source of employment consists in sewing, laundry work, or other domestic duties.

The condition of the ornamental grounds about the asylum continues a source of admiration to patients' friends and others who visit the institution.

My best thanks are due to my fellow officers for their cordial assistance in the discharge of my duties.

I have, &c.,

EDWD. G. LEVINGE, M.B.,
Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector of Asylums, Wellington.

SEACLIFF ASYLUM.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit to you the following report on the Seacliff Asylum for the year 1898:—

At the beginning of the year there were 601 patients in the Asylum. During the year 123 patients were admitted, being eight more than the previous year. The whole number of inmates during the year was 724, and the average number resident at any one time was 604. There remained in the Asylum at the close of the year 636 patients—namely, 385 males and 251 females. The number discharged relieved and recovered was sixty-two, being in the proportion of rather more than 50 per cent. on the admissions. During the year twenty-five patients died, being just under 5 per cent. on the average number resident. The mortality from respiratory affections continues unduly high, more than half of the deaths being due to pneumonia, consumption, and pleurisy.

Various works have been pushed on during the year, the most important being a cottage for the treatment of the more sensitive and curable female patients, and one wing of the new auxiliary building for chronic male patients at Simla. These structures will afford facilities in the direction of classifying and decentralising, and promise to be a great benefit to the patients while effecting a considerable saving. The cost of the Simla building will be about £20 per patient, as compared with over £200 per patient in the main building. As the former supplies more space and light per individual, better air, and more cheerful quarters, and does not suggest the idea of confinement, we find already, as we have previously found with the more home-like detached buildings, that it is much preferred to the main asylum. The Simla building is of wood, and risks from fire are slightly greater; but the danger to the patients is less than in the main asylum, because it is all on the ground-floor, and none of the windows will be barred. With the exception of the erection of chimneys, the building has been put up so far, and will, we hope, be completed by the end of the year, without assistance from any outside labour, thus affording a useful and interesting outlet for the energies of some of the more capable patients. Dealing with labour for the most part unskilled, Mr. Farrant, who has had charge of the work, has succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectations. At present there are thirty patients housed at Simla, the billiard-room being used as kitchen and dining-room pending the erection of the latter. There is great need of increased accommodation, for female patients, particularly in the matter of single bedrooms, and I hope that a separate nurse's home will be constructed during the year, as this would set free an equivalent number of bedrooms in the main building, while affording inexpensive yet much pleasanter quarters for the nurses.

The marked reduction in expenditure per patient shown by the returns is somewhat misleading, being due largely to the fact that we happen to have obtained more refunds during the year from the Public Works Department for permanent constructions than hitherto. In spite of this, it will be noticed how large a sum spent in repairs and improvements is still charged to our annual expenditure under the head of "Necessaries, Incidental, and Miscellaneous," which in other institutions would not be defrayed by the Asylums Department. The maintenance and repair of the main building alone is a constant heavy charge, owing not merely to its large size and costly type, but even more to initial defects of workmanship and construction. Fourteen years ago Seacliff Asylum was described by the then Inspector-General, in his official report, as "badly designed and out of date, the buildings defective in construction, and showing everywhere bad workmanship which should never have been accepted." During the last ten years every effort has been made to over-