

Although there are many patients employed out-of-doors, a large proportion do very little indeed. Some of these are old Asylum cases who were at one time able to do what is considered a fair amount of work, but now, through advancing age and infirmities, do little or nothing, and are sent into the fields more for the benefit of the change of scene and fresh air than for what they can do. Others physically more fit, but mentally too demented or failing in the power of application, have little capacity to work. I have hope that when the new single-room block now being constructed on the male side of the Asylum is finished, and we are enabled to take in cases on committal, instead of chronic cases transferred from other asylums as hitherto, more rapid progress will be made in developing the farm and the grounds around the institution.

For some years the Rev. Mr. Dawson and other clergymen of the Wesleyan denomination have held religious services at the Asylum two or three times a month, and on behalf of the patients I have to thank them for undertaking this work at considerable trouble and inconvenience to themselves. Towards the end of the year the Rev. Mr. Chapman, of Johnsonville, kindly offered to hold an English Church service at the Asylum alternately with the Wesleyan clergymen, so that now the patients have the benefit of a church service every Sunday. Such of the Roman Catholic patients as are able go to church in the village.

It was with much satisfaction that I learned in the earlier part of the year the decision of the department to separate the two asylums that were under my superintendency, and to place me in charge of Porirua Asylum alone. I had long felt that the Wellington and Porirua Asylums were too far apart to be managed together satisfactorily.

I have, &c.,

GRAY HASSELL, M.D.,

Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector-General of Asylums, Wellington.

#### SEACLIFF ASYLUM.

SIR,—

I beg to submit the following report on the Seacliff Asylum for the year 1899:—

During the year sixty-two male and fifty-two female patients have been admitted; of these, ninety-five were admitted for the first time, and nineteen were readmissions.

The whole number under treatment during the year was 749, and the average number resident was 635. There remained in the Asylum at the end of the year 387 males and 248 females—in all, 635 patients. The number discharged, relieved, and recovered was sixty-seven, the proportion of the discharges to the admissions being 59 per cent., or 9 per cent. more than the previous year. On the other hand, the death-rate was unusually high, being nearly 7 per cent. of the average number resident. This is accounted for mainly by the death of a large number of old patients from senile decay and other affections of old age, the average age of the majority of the patients who died being over sixty years. Among the younger adults seven died from general paralysis. The proportion of deaths from phthisis and pneumonia shows a marked diminution.

The new detached building at Simla has been fully occupied during the year, and, while relieving the overcrowding of the male patients, has proved also a great benefit in aiding classification, and in affording almost complete liberty to the well-behaved chronic patients located there. When a billiard-table has been provided Simla will be in many respects the pleasantest of our quarters for men. Arrangements are now being made for further classification of the more troublesome patients. The Nurses' Home and buildings providing increased accommodation for female patients, which we hope to overtake during the coming year, will prove a great boon.

Several persons suffering from incipient mental disease have voluntarily made application for admission to the Asylum, and I think it is highly desirable that the law should admit of the reception of such cases. Among the more sensible and sensitive newly admitted patients the fact of being taken possession of as if they were criminals, and placed in prison prior to being brought to the Asylum, continues a standing grievance. The delay in sending persons suffering from mental disease to our asylums is very unsatisfactory, and one feels the advantage of any step which would tend to induce the relations to apply for early systematic treatment, which it is recognised can be rarely properly carried out in private houses. The majority of patients admitted during the year had been insane for periods of six months and upwards when they were sent to the Asylum.

The development of the estate continues, and we hope at an early date to be entirely independent of outside aid in the provision of butter and meat, as we are now in regard to milk, eggs, poultry, vegetables, fruit, and firewood. Over three hundred dozen pure-bred eggs for sitting were sold during the year. The annual yield of fruit is rapidly increasing, and now amounts to about 15 tons.

Throughout the year an average of about two hundred and fifty male patients have been employed at the farm, garden, and workshops.

There have been several accidents during the year, one of which ended fatally, a patient who tried to hang himself dying of apoplexy. Two men sustained fractures of limbs, and one lost an eye through self-inflicted injuries.

The usual amusements and recreations have been provided throughout the year, and a number of cricket-matches have been played with outside teams.

The thanks of the authorities are due to the *Otago Witness* Company for copies of their journal supplied free.

To my colleague, Dr. Falconer, and to the officers and staff I have to convey my thanks for their willing and hearty co-operation in carrying out the work of the institution.

I have, &c.,

F. TRUBY KING,

Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector-General of Asylums, Wellington.