

ENTRIES OF VISITS TO THE DIFFERENT ASYLUMS.

AUCKLAND ASYLUM.

17th August, 1899.—During the last three days I have made a careful examination of this Asylum. Owing to a feeling of anxiety about the difficulties surrounding Dr. Beattie, and the last reports of Mr. Cooper and Mr. Ewington, I came as soon as possible to make a personal inquiry into the alleged rough treatment of patients on the part of certain female attendants. I confronted these attendants with their accusers, and took all the evidence on oath, giving the accused every opportunity to defend themselves. After careful consideration I decided that the charge of slapping a patient was so far sustained as to make it impossible to retain the charge-attendant implicated in her present position. I gave her an offer to be transferred to Wellington as an ordinary attendant, but she requested to be allowed to resign. I have not yet seen my way to accept her resignation. (Resignation accepted, 19th August.) Another charge-attendant was charged by an ex-patient recently discharged with many acts of unkindness, but, knowing the difficulty of distinguishing between true memory of facts and belief in delusions which the patient freely admitted she was labouring under till quite recently, I decided to transfer this attendant to Seacliff, but she preferred to resign, and in the circumstances I gave a month's pay in lieu of notice. Mr. Leys, the head attendant, signified his wish to retire on compensation on the ground of long service and advancing years, and I undertook to recommend his claims to the Minister. I found a great improvement in the auxiliary asylum as a direct consequence of the removal of certain attendants at my last visit. Mr. Hall, promoted from Seacliff, promises to make a good clerk and storekeeper. I found everything in good order.

1st April, 1900.—To-day and yesterday I have been engaged in an examination of this Asylum. I find the whole staff working harmoniously. The administration is careful and effective in every department. There is a notable improvement in the auxiliary asylum. Mr. Muir promises to be a careful and skilful manager. It is a pleasure to see how healthy and well cared for the patients look. The food is of the best quality all through the institution, well cooked and served. The beds and bedding are in first-rate order. I made a careful inquiry into certain allegations made by two male patients, C. and M., and found that they were largely delusions, based on a slight substratum of distorted facts. Neither of these men is fit for discharge, being under the dominion of delusions of persecution. M. F.'s case is another of the same.

CHRISTCHURCH ASYLUM.

25th September, 1899.—This Asylum is in admirable order in all its departments. Every detail is looked after by Dr. Levinge in the most thorough-going manner. No one can examine the institution without being impressed with the fact that the eye of the master is everywhere. Dr. Crosby, the assistant, has during four years been most devoted and efficient in his duty. The food, clothing, and bedding are thoroughly looked after. A new departure has been ventured in having glassware instead of the usual crockery at dinner. I shall watch carefully whether we can continue to afford it. I saw all the infirm patients who were confined to bed, and examined the hopeful and convalescent cases, as well as all the recent admissions.

20th January, 1900.—I have seen all the patients, examined all who were confined to bed under medical treatment, inspected the food and clothing of the patients, visited every portion of the building and annexes, and satisfied myself that the Asylum is in excellent working-order. I have informed myself of the arrangements for the accommodation and comfort of the attendants, and inquired into the requirements of the Asylum for the coming year. I do not approve of increasing any further the accommodation of the main building of the Sunnyside Asylum. If any further room is required here it ought to be provided in special separate auxiliary buildings of as inexpensive a type as possible. The needs of the Canterbury District should be met when the time comes by the erection of a new asylum somewhere in South Canterbury, just as the requirements of Otago and Southland should be provided for by a new institution somewhere near Gore. The circumstances of New Zealand, as well as the interests of the patients, require, in my opinion, that our asylums should be planned for not more than six hundred patients. Some slight inconveniences and discomforts which some of the attendants suffer from have been from time to time considered by Dr. Levinge and myself, and will be remedied as soon as possible. With regard to some of these discomforts, they arise from the structural defects of the buildings, and must be put up with. I find that the tendency is making itself felt to introduce the eight-hours system into our asylums. On the score of expense alone, this, I think, is impossible. The only reasonable way to remedy the undoubted drawbacks of the service is by the granting of as liberal an allowance of half-days and holidays as possible. This has been done to the utmost of our ability, and, so far as I can discover, our practice in the department in this respect is as generous as in any part of the English-speaking world. I believe we are pioneers of the future in this reform. I am sure that in the present state of the colony it would be impossible to provide either the accommodation or the salaries required. Ever since the great labour upheaval of 1890-91, the tendency has been to consider the comforts of attendants in a far greater degree than the improvement of the necessary accommodation and treatment of patients, who have no votes, and cannot make themselves felt through the Press. Considering the amount of money at our disposal, I am sure the people of Canterbury ought to be proud of the work Dr. Levinge and his staff have done at Sunnyside.

SEACLIFF ASYLUM.

6th September, 1899.—I found the Asylum working well, except for the griveous overcrowding on the female side. Simla is now all but ready for occupation, and this will give great relief on