

that could be desired ; but the North Canterbury Board makes no direct provision for the class of women that cannot be admitted to the Jubilee Home. The cost per head for maintenance at the Ashburton Home is 8s. 7½d. a week ; at the Jubilee Home 9s. 3d. a week.

The Ohio Road Home, Wellington, was visited on 12th December, 1901, and 31st January and 30th June, 1902. It contains 47 men and 23 women. The management of the Home is thoroughly satisfactory. The food is abundant and of good quality, and the same may be said of the clothing. By reference to the books kept by Mr. Purvis it is seen that each inmate has what is necessary for health and comfort. My last visit was during the tea-hour, and the general atmosphere of comfort and content was pleasant to the sight. No one was in bed. The Home is clean and well kept throughout, and Mr. and Mrs. Purvis manage it admirably. Cost of maintenance per head, 6s. 6d. a week.

The Southland Charitable Aid Board has two institutions under its control, one in Invercargill and one five or six miles out of the town. The former has greatly improved under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Cole. On 29th April there were 43 old men, 10 old women, 6 boys, and 9 girls as inmates. The Department has always strongly objected to the inclusion of children in any institution of this character. I understand, however, that as soon as the building at Lorne Farm is completed all children will be transferred there, and have regular training, schooling, and careful supervision. At Lorne Farm, on 29th April, Mr. and Mrs. Cusworth had 19 old men, 8 boys, and 3 girls under their charge. This promises to be one of the best charitable-aid institutions in the country. The farm is some 57 acres in extent, and last year the sale of garden and farm produce amounted to £117. Only old men who are willing to do a little work reside at the farm ; the infirm remain at the institution in town. The outdoor relief under the Southland Charitable Aid Board has been reduced since the appointment of Mr. Reginald Day as Secretary. In 1901 it was £2,201 ; in 1902, £1,985.

The Taranaki Charitable Aid Board has built a Home for Old Men in a fine situation above the Hospital. On 22nd June there were 23 men and 2 women in this institution. The dinner was satisfactory, and the place in good order. The closets on the male side were insanitary, and something should be done to remedy the state of things as soon as possible.

The Jubilee Home, Wanganui, was visited on 3rd August and 20th June. On the latter date there were 27 men and 2 women inmates. Some of the members of the Board give careful supervision to this institution. A wardsman has been engaged to help the Matron. The food and clothing were satisfactory, and the dormitories and rooms in good order.

As to the Napier Old Men's Home (visited 28th October), I can only repeat what was said in last year's report : " It is a painful experience to visit it." The woodwork is infested with bugs, and the place should be burned down.

The Old Men's Homes at Timaru (18 men, 2 women) and Nelson (33 men, 5 women) are working satisfactorily. In the Old Men's Home, Tararu, on 16th February, were 31 men and 8 women. Improvements have been made since last visit. There is a new dairy, isolation ward, and laundry. The whole place was clean and in good order, and the grounds round the building well tended.

A difficulty occurs in all these refuges for the old and destitute in dealing with disorderly and drunken characters. Their behaviour disturbs the peace of the other inmates, and frequently they will not conform to the rules of the institution. They cannot be punished except by being turned out of the Home for bad behaviour. If as a last extremity this is done, the man comes under the notice of the police as vagrant and destitute, and sooner or later he has to be readmitted, to the annoyance of all in the Home.

As was mentioned in last year's report, there is urgent need for the establishment of a central receiving hospital or infirmary (one in each Island), " where the incurable, helpless, and bed-ridden men and women could be drafted, and placed under the care of nurses, and not left to the ignorant and oftentime cruel tendance of a fellow-inmate." The patients' maintenance in this central hospital could be a charge on their respective Charitable Aid or Hospital Boards. Such an institution would also relieve the hospitals from chronic cases and our asylums from the old persons admitted who are merely suffering from senile decay.

The following charitable institutions have also been visited during the year : Women's Refuge (Dunedin) for maternity cases is a financially successful laundry requiring little or no assistance from the Charitable Aid Board. In the Samaritan Home (Christchurch) on 6th January there were 21 men, 15 women, 7 girls and 6 babies : this home is useful for the vagrant class of old women when they can be persuaded to stay : Miss Early is a kind and energetic matron, and encourages the inmates to employ themselves in various kinds of work. The Linwood Refuge, for unmarried mothers with their first child, continues to be well managed. St. Mary's Home at Richmond, Christchurch, is doing good work under Sister Rose. St. Andrew's Orphanage at Motueka (29 boys, 5 girls) was visited 12th June : the building is being enlarged, and when this is completed more children can be admitted ; at present the boys' dormitories are overcrowded : Mr. and Mrs. Haycock and the resident teacher, Miss Allport, evidently have their hearts in the work, and their charges look healthy, sturdy, happy, well fed and well clad : the boys learn all the rudiments of farm-work under Mr. Haycock before being placed out, and two at a time of the elder girls are thoroughly taught household and kitchen work by Mrs. Haycock : this is a very satisfactory institution. The Women's Home, Auckland, still occupies unsuitable quarters in May Cottage, Parnell : the girls are sent to the Costley Home for confinement, and the infants boarded out : a considerable legacy was left to this charity, the girls earn more than their maintenance in laundry work, and Government gives a direct grant ; if some change for the better is not speedily made, I should recommend that the Government discontinue their annual grant. The Convalescent Home, Wellington, continues to be admirably and economically managed by its capable Matron, Mrs. Ritter. The Home for the Aged Needy (37 inmates) is a comfortable refuge for old folk, under the kindly care of Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie. The Alexandra Home contained 13 unmarried girls and 9 babies on the day of visit : improvements have been made during the last two