

1873.

NEW ZEALAND.

## TREATMENT OF LUNATICS IN NAPIER ASYLUM,

(CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING).

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

No. 1.

His Honor J. D. ORMOND to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Wellington, 2nd October, 1873.

I have the honor to enclose letters from Mr. Sealy, Inspector of Lunatic Asylum, Napier, and Mr. Miller, Keeper of the Asylum, commenting upon statements made by the Hon. Captain Fraser, in the Legislative Council, upon the treatment of lunatics in the Napier Asylum. As these statements have been made public, and appear to be entirely refuted by the information contained in Messrs. Sealy and Miller's letters, I have to request those letters may be laid upon the table of the Houses of Assembly, so that they may appear with the unfounded statements which have been made by Captain Fraser.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

I have, &c.,  
J. D. ORMOND,  
Superintendent.

## Enclosure 1.

Mr. MILLER to the INSPECTOR OF ASYLUMS, Napier.

SIR,—

H.M. Gaol, Napier, 18th September, 1873.

No doubt you have seen the remarks made by the Hon. Captain Fraser, in the Legislative Council. He says three of the men, for want of curative treatment, had become idiotic and incurable. The first of these three is Henry Murt, who came to this Province a lunatic, in the steamer "Star of the South," from Dunedin, in the year 1865, and was examined by E. W. Alexander, medical officer of the Dunedin Asylum, about three years ago, who stated that he was incurable, from being injured on the head. The second is Thomas Masterton, who became a lunatic in the Province of Canterbury, and was confined in the Asylum there for some years; he was then sent up to Auckland, where he was taken up and confined in the Asylum, and in September, 1870, he was sent down here. The third is William Murray, who has been an idiot since his infancy. The fourth is Archibald Gardiner, who came here from Dunedin, about the year 1863, where he was, as he is still, subject to violent fits of insanity for about three days; when in these fits, it is necessary, to prevent him from injuring himself, to confine him in a cell, and Captain Fraser said it was the only way to manage such lunatics, and his being in the cell at that particular time was not a question of cheapness, for he was well attended to.

With regard to the female patients, Alice Allan has been insane for a number of years, and taken care of by her mother, but her mother being unable to manage her any longer, she was admitted to this Asylum on the 25th December, 1871, and several medical men have pronounced her quite incurable. Amy Ayres had just been admitted when Captain Fraser visited the Asylum; when admitted, she was very violent, but she is much better. The third was Mrs. Stafford, who was admitted on the 17th December last. I explained the circumstances connected with this patient to Captain Fraser, and it did not appear to leave a sad impression on his mind, for he said they had such cases, and instanced a case of a minister's wife who had been released from the Dunedin Asylum, I am certain he said eight different times, and returned in the same condition as Mrs. Stafford was in. And as for the female attendance, Captain Fraser was informed that a female slept in the Asylum at night, and attended the patients through the day; there has been a female attending and sleeping in the place since the month of March, and at the time Mrs. Stafford was confined I employed a regular nurse to attend, besides the

woman generally employed, and my own family is always attending upon the female patients. I was instructed by His Honor the Superintendent to employ assistance that was required, and pay them out of the contingencies' account; and I may state, as I did to Captain Fraser, that the Provincial surgeon is very attentive to this department, and I deny that any patient has become idiotic for the want of proper medical treatment or other attendance. Captain Fraser expressed himself highly satisfied with both the Gaol and Asylum, and asked me to allow him to make an entry in the Visiting Book to that effect.

The following is a true copy; also a copy of Dr. Alexander's entry in the Visiting Book:—

[Copy.]

"4th July, 1873.—Visited the Gaol; found it perfectly clean, and everything in as satisfactory state.

" (Signed)

T. FRASER,  
"Visiting Justice, Otago."

"Saw all the lunatics, who appear to be very well heeded.

" (Signed)

T. FRASER,  
"Inspector, Lunatic Asylum, Otago."

"18th August, 1869.—Visited the Gaol, and inspected the insane. The place in good order, and clean. The insane well fed, and carefully attended to.

" (Signed)

E. W. ALEXANDER,  
"Medical Officer, Dunedin Asylum."

You will see by this statement that the worst cases have been in Dunedin and other Asylums, and found to be incurable, and I believe sent to this Province to get rid of them.

I have, &c.,

W. MILLER,  
Keeper of the Asylum.

To H. B. Sealy, Esq., Inspector of Asylum, Napier.

## Enclosure 2.

Mr. H. B. SEALY to His Honor J. D. ORMOND.

SIR,—

Resident Magistrate's Court, Napier, 22nd September, 1873.

My attention having been called to a statement reported in *Hansard*, as having been made by the Hon. Captain Fraser, in the Legislative Council, and knowing that the statement contained very gross inaccuracies, and a charge of the gravest character against all connected with the management of the Lunatic Asylum at Napier, I felt it my duty to request the Master, Mr. William Miller, to furnish me with a written reply to the charges referred to. I was very much surprised on reading Captain Fraser's statements, and I am bound to express my belief that they are almost entirely unfounded. I have been the Inspector of the Asylum for about eighteen months, and have visited it from time to time without any previous notice to the Master, who in fact has been absent on more than one occasion of my visits. It has always appeared to me that the lunatics were kindly and carefully attended, as far as the circumstances permitted. No doubt in the large Asylums of Canterbury and Dunedin (both of which I inspected in March last), there are means of mental and physical employment, and also appliances for restraint in the case of violent patients, which we do not possess in the small Asylum in Napier. It may also be regarded as a disadvantage that the Asylum should be in any way connected with the gaol. There is but one patient, however, to whom a removal would I think be desirable: I refer to Archibald Gardiner, who, as Mr. Miller's report states, came here from Dunedin in 1863. He has long lucid intervals, with occasional violent fits. He has several times been discharged, but on returning to his home at Wairoa, has again become violent, and been recommitted. This man has twice lately, during his lucid intervals, made appeals to me for his discharge. On inquiry, however, finding that he had been several times discharged, and that he is sometimes dangerously violent, I came to the conclusion that I would not sanction his discharge; but on your Honor's return I would urge his removal to one of the larger Asylums, where he would have employment and amusement, and his confinement would be rendered much more tolerable than it can be here where his companions are generally those in a worse state of insanity. It does not appear that Gardiner (who was in a cell at time of the Hon. Captain Fraser's visit) is worse than at the time of his arrival, some ten years ago. I request you to make such use of this letter as you may think proper, with a view to the refutation of statements so unjust to all concerned.

I have, &c.,

H. B. SEALY, R.M.,  
Inspector of Lunatic Asylum, Napier.

His Honor J. D. Ormond, M.H.R.,  
General Government Agent, &c., Napier.