

which can hardly fail to interfere to some extent with the discharge of her duties; and it is learned with much regret that the female head attendant, a very active and efficient officer, is suffering in health in consequence of over-work, and has been advised that she ought to resign.

There is an entertainment for the amusement of the patients regularly every week, which lasts about two hours. It generally consists chiefly of dancing, but its nature is varied when opportunity occurs. The number of visitors is kept within judicious limits. At the last one, which was held this week, an exhibition of dissolving views was given by a friend of the superintendent. Fifty of the men and twenty-three of the women were present, and seven visitors. A good many of the patients find in-door amusements in books, draughts, billiards, &c.; but it is impossible that recreation can be attended to as it ought in an asylum of this kind. Hitherto there have been no out-door amusements, but a good bowling-green has now been made, and will soon be ready for playing on. The various registers are carefully written up to date.

In concluding this report, I desire to take the opportunity of again calling attention to the fact that it is necessary, without delay, both to make an addition to this temporary asylum sufficient to relieve the dangerous and unjustifiable extent to which it is crowded, and at the same time to commence the erection of a new asylum for three hundred patients on a suitable site of at least one hundred acres. I understand that the Colonial Architect has been instructed to prepare plans for an addition to this asylum to accommodate fifty male patients. This would relieve the male department, and, if no time were lost in pushing on the building of the new asylum, might suffice for the men till that were ready. But the female department is over-crowded, and it is out of the question to suppose that it will be possible to avoid making an addition of some kind to it as a temporary provision till the new asylum, the plans of which are not even prepared, is erected. It appears to me that the wisest thing to do would be to build an addition for fifty women also. There need be no fear that this would be too much. If not fully occupied by patients from this district, it could be only too easily filled up by patients from some of the other crowded asylums. If the existing building had its roof renewed, and were kept in good repair, it, together with the proposed new wings, might, on being vacated by the patients, be converted into some other charitable institution, such as an orphanage or old man's refuge.

The Asylum was visited again this day (6th December), and the superintendent has been recommended to use the recreation-hall as a dormitory for males, and the day-room of the front female ward for females, and in this way do entirely away with the existing arrangement of allowing two patients to sleep in the same room. This will, no doubt, be extremely inconvenient, and cause much extra trouble; but it is evident that an accident must occur sooner or later if the present arrangement is continued, and that the superintendent would be blamed if it could be shown that another less dangerous, however objectionable in itself, might have been adopted."

The Asylum has been repeatedly inspected since the above was written, and always, so far as permitted by obstacles over which the Superintendent had no control, found in a highly satisfactory condition.

It is a great pleasure to be able to record that a new block of buildings for 50 male patients has been put up, and is now ready for occupation; and that the roof of the old building is about to be completely renewed, galvanized iron being substituted for the worn-out shingles. The new wing referred to will not only entirely do away with all crowding on the male side of the house, but also allow of a portion of the female side, hitherto occupied by the men, being again taken possession of by the women, and so relieve overcrowding on their side also.

INCREASED ACCOMMODATION.

Since this time last year additional accommodation for male patients has been provided by the erection of a new wing for 50 at the Wellington Asylum, a detached house for 12 at Hokitika, and a cottage and farm-buildings at Seacliffe, in Otago, which afford excellent quarters for a party of 74 working patients. There is thus, at this date, asylum accommodation—of one kind or another: good, bad, and indifferent—for 494 males, 281 females—total, 775; and, the number of patients being 656 males, 329 females—total, 985, there is an excess of 162 males, 48 females—total, 210, over the total amount of asylum accommodation in the colony. Much of the above accommodation, however, is of such a nature that it has to be entirely discounted in estimating what additional buildings it is necessary to provide. This is the case with the whole of the present Dunedin Asylum, which originally was never intended to be other than a temporary one, and occupies a site reserved for another purpose; and which, owing to the plan on which it is constructed, its utterly insufficient quantity of land (10 acres), and the extreme publicity of its situation, is altogether an exceedingly unsuitable place for the care and detention of lunatics. The building at present occupied by the male patients at Sunnyside, Christchurch, was also only intended to be temporary, and is fast decaying. The whole of the "back ward" of the Wellington Asylum is quite unfitted for its purpose. The Napier Asylum is merely a separate building within the gaol grounds, and the site on which it stands will shortly be required for an extension of the gaol. The New Plymouth Asylum consists only of a few cells attached to the hospital. The old hospital at Auckland, which forms the temporary quarters of the female patients there, is in no respect suited for them, and is urgently required for another class of persons. Setting aside these unsuitable buildings, the total amount of satisfactory accommodation, and its insufficiency, are shown as follows:—

					Males.	Females.	Total.
At Christchurch	...	...	...	...	—	80	80
Hokitika	...	...	...	...	43	9	52
Nelson	...	...	...	...	30	30	60
Dunedin (at Seacliff)	...	...	...	...	74	—	74
Wellington (temporary)	...	...	...	...	70	20	90
Auckland (at Whau)	...	...	...	...	50	—	50
Total	...	...	...	...	267	139	406