

£3,975 13s. 2d., or £1,294 14s. more than it was the previous year, and, this being deducted from the above sum, leaves £31,384 13s. 3d. as the actual expenditure by the Government, which is £1,201 12s. 1½d. less than it was in 1878, although there was an increase of 101 in the average number of patients resident, and of 106 in the total number under treatment. The cost of maintenance per head in the various asylums is shown in Table XVII. The average was £33 9s. 10d., or, deducting repayments, £29 10s. 6½d., being less than that of the previous year by £3 10s. 11d. Although the cost per head did not differ so much as in former years at the several asylums, it still did so to a very great extent. Allowing for the repayments, it was—at Auckland, £26 8s. 10½d.; at Christchurch, £27 11s. 6½d.; at Dunedin, £27 12s. 6½d.; at Nelson, £31 19s. 0½d.; at Napier, £33 11s. 0½d.; at Wellington, £34 11s. 1½d.; and at Hokitika, £40 5s. 8d. Except at Dunedin, where there was an increase of £1 13s. 10½d., there was, as compared with the preceding year, a reduction at every asylum, which ranged from £3 6s. 3d. at Hokitika to £9 0s. 9½d. at Wellington. There are many reasons why there is such a difference in the cost of maintenance at the various asylums, and to a certain extent these are explained by Table XVII., which brings out the difference under separate items of expenditure. One chief cause is the difference in the number of inmates, which greatly affects the cost per head for salaries, wages, fuel, light, &c., as, within certain limits, the staff of servants, quantity of fuel, &c., which are sufficient for a given number of patients, are sufficient for a greater. Another leading cause is the difference in the wages given, which for male attendants range from £60 at Nelson and Auckland to £120 at Hokitika. Others are to be found in such things as the following: The plan of the building, which affects the number of servants required to maintain supervision; the price of provisions, which differs considerably—meat, for example, being 4d. a pound at Wellington, and 3d. at Dunedin; the price of bedding and clothing, which is also less at Dunedin Asylum than at others, and which is very high at Hokitika; the quantity of boots and shoes used, which is much greater, for example, at Hokitika, where almost all the male patients are employed at out-of-door labour, even in bad weather, than at Dunedin, where crowds of them saunter about the airing-courts doing nothing, in clothes which would stand little exposure without leading to more; the price of fuel, and of many items under the heading of “Necessaries and Incidental,” which varies greatly; and the quantity of these things required, which may be greater one year than another; the standards of comfort aimed at; the administrative ability and thrift of the Superintendent, which exercise much influence on expenditure which it is difficult to trace in detail; and the quantity and quality of land attached to the asylum, which, for example, at Christchurch, enable the patients to grow their own potatoes, while at Wellington these are bought at 4s. 6d. per cwt. There is not, however, so great a difference in the cost of maintenance in the several asylums as there was at the time they came into the hands of the General Government, there having been an increase of expenditure in certain items in some asylums, and a decrease at others in the same or different items. Thus there has been, at Auckland, an increase of 10s. 5½d. a head for bedding and clothing, and of £1 3s. 4d. for salaries and wages (owing chiefly to an increase in the number of servants); whereas there has been, at Wellington, a decrease of £10 15s. 6½d. for salaries and wages, and of £2 17s. 5½d. for provisions; and, at Christchurch, of £4 0s. 7½d. for salaries and wages, and of £6 11s. 2½d. for provisions; while the unnecessary consumption of alcoholic liquors has been so generally diminished that the total amount paid for this item was less by £1,009 17s. 4d. last year than in 1876, notwithstanding an increase of 275 in the number of patients.

The disparity in the wages of the attendants, to which the difference in the rates of maintenance is so largely due, existed to a still greater extent when the management of the asylums came into the hands of the General Government, and doubtless resulted from the difference in the prevailing rates of wages in the several provinces. At that time the wages of the attendants were as follows:—

|                 |     | Men. |    |    | Women. |    |    |
|-----------------|-----|------|----|----|--------|----|----|
|                 |     | £    | s. | d. | £      | s. | d. |
| Auckland Asylum | ... | 60   | 0  | 0  | 42     | 0  | 0  |
| Nelson          | ... | 60   | 0  | 0  | 30     | 0  | 0  |
| Dunedin         | ... | 100  | 0  | 0  | 50     | 0  | 0  |
| Christchurch    | ... | *127 | 15 | 0  | 73     | 0  | 0  |
| Wellington      | ... | 147  | 0  | 0  | 50     | 0  | 0  |
| Hokitika        | ... | *173 | 7  | 6  | 65     | 0  | 0  |

The wages of the male attendants were reduced—at Wellington to £100, and at Hokitika to £120 (rations being given). At Christchurch the wages of female attendants were reduced to £63, and no alteration was made with regard to the men; but instructions were given that for the future new male attendants were to be engaged at £109 10s., instead of £127 15s. At Auckland the wages of seven of the men were raised to £70, and five of them got an increase of £5 per annum to act as musicians, which was a part of the duties of the higher-paid attendants at some of the other asylums. At Nelson the wages of the female attendants were raised to £40.

Besides the inequalities which still exist in the rates of wages, there is another reason why the outlay in this item varies so greatly, and that is that, on account of the unusual difficulties in the way of supervision which are experienced in some asylums owing to their faulty construction and overcrowded condition, a much larger proportion of attendants is required than at others. So great is the difference in the relative numbers of attendants to patients at Auckland and Dunedin, for instance, that, despite the enormous inequality in the rates of wages, the cost per head for salaries and wages is almost the same at both institutions—it is, in fact, less at Dunedin than at Auckland.

#### INSPECTION.

It is not possible for one General Inspector to maintain such a system of inspection over the asylums of the colony as is really necessary, and I had the honor some time ago to recommend that Deputy-Inspectors and Official Visitors, as provided for by the Lunatics Act, should be appointed for each asylum. This recommendation was partly carried out. Mr. Thomas Macfarlane was appointed

\* The men at these wages not found in rations.