

*Auckland Asylum.*—There were 196 patients on 1st January—132 males and 64 females. During the year 79 were admitted—47 males and 32 females, 11 of the males and 7 females being readmissions; and the total number under care was 275—179 males and 96 females. Of these, there were discharged as recovered 13 males and 20 females, as relieved 1 male; 9 males and 3 females died; and there remained at the end of the year 156 males and 73 females—in all, 229, being an increase of 33. The recoveries were in the ratio of 41·77 per cent. to the admissions. The death rate was 5·76 of the average number resident. The causes of death were meningitis in 2 cases, chronic brain disease in 2, exhaustion from mania in 1, chronic chorea in 1, consumption in 2, bronchitis in 1, erysipelas in 1, and senile decay in 2.

In September last a farm of 139 acres of good land adjoining the small piece belonging to the Asylum, and regarding which negotiations had been going on for some time, was purchased for the sum of £4,200; but it was not till towards the end of the year that actual possession was obtained. There can be no doubt that this land will prove an immense benefit to the institution by promoting economy, and outdoor employment and exercise, which have hitherto been exceedingly limited.

The new wing of the Asylum, which, by contract, was to have been completed in May, will be soon ready for occupation, and the female patients will then be removed from their temporary quarters in the old hospital.

In addition to this new wing it is absolutely necessary for the efficient and economical working of the establishment that there should be a good laundry. Hitherto the washing has been done at the gaol, but that is a most unsatisfactory arrangement. It is, in fact, impossible that all the daily laundry work of a large lunatic asylum can be performed at a distance of several miles from it, even if there were adequate appliances, which apparently there are not at the gaol. The Medical Superintendent has also urged the necessity of erecting a dining-hall for the women, the present one being hardly large enough for the men, and quite incapable of accommodating both sexes at the same time. Instructions were given to the architect in charge of the new building to prepare plans for a laundry and female dining-room for approval. These have been received and referred to me, but, before definitely reporting upon them, I shall require to go over them with the architect and the Medical Superintendent on the ground. It will probably be better to have the laundry at some little distance from the main building, than forming a part of it, as designed. It seems doubtful whether the inconveniences resulting from the present dining-hall being too small for the use of both sexes at the same time—a defect which, unfortunately, exists also at other asylums in the colony—are sufficient to require the erection of an additional one at present.

A matter of greater importance is the laying-on of gas to the Asylum, without which means of lighting there will always be such fear of accidents as to interfere with the comfort and good treatment of the patients. When this matter was taken up two years ago by the Government it appeared that the Gas Company would be willing to supply gas at 10s. per 1,000 feet if the Government would pay £310 of the £810 which was calculated to be the cost of a main to the asylum, or to supply the gas at 12s. per 1,000 feet, and lay the main at their own cost. This offer was afterwards withdrawn, but probably much the same terms could now be got.

I have delayed for some time sending in my report, in the hope that before it would be necessary to do so I should be able to include in it as usual an account of this Asylum from personal inspection; but I find, with extreme regret, that this is now impossible. Towards the end of the year, when prepared to start for Auckland, I was detained in Wellington by official instructions; and since, shortly after my last return from the Middle Island, I have been unable through illness to travel. Frequent communications from Mr. Thomas Macfarlane, the Deputy-Inspector, recording the results of his inspections, and other sources of information, make it evident that the institution continues steadily to improve under the energetic management of Dr. Young, the Resident Medical Superintendent.

*Napier Asylum.*—There were 17 men and 6 women in this Asylum on 1st January. During the year 3 men and 2 women were admitted for the first time, and 1 of each sex was readmitted, making a total of 30 under care—21 men and 9 women. Of these, 6 men and 3 women were discharged as recovered, and 2 men died—1 of dysentery and 1 of atrophy—leaving 19 at the end of the year.

*New Plymouth Hospital.*—On 1st of January there were 3 patients in the cells allotted to the insane at this Hospital, and euphemistically called an Asylum. During the year 3 more were admitted; 1 was discharged as recovered, 2 died—1 of apoplexy and 1 of atrophy—and the other 3 were transferred to the Nelson Asylum in June, since which time the place has remained empty. It will be better, in future, whenever possible, to remove all cases of insanity occurring in Taranaki to Nelson or Wellington, until it becomes necessary to provide a small local asylum in which they can be properly treated.

I have, &c,

FRED. W. A. SKAE,

Inspector of Lunatic Asylums.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.