

only. Twenty-seven additional lunatics are now under detention there, making a total of 347. The cubic space available for each person in the dormitories averages about 350ft. The funds necessary for enlarging the establishment were, as usual, voted last session by the Legislature, yet nothing whatever has been done in the matter. The rooms occupied by a number of the female lunatics are a disgrace to the colony, and should either be swept away or devoted to their original purpose—that of workshops. Five of the single rooms resemble fowl-houses in all respects but the roosts. The only window in each of them is an aperture made by knocking out a brick from the back wall. “Shakedown” are in use in corridors and day-rooms. The probable effects of an epidemic of erysipelas or other infectious disorder under such unfavourable surroundings are terrible to contemplate.

It is surprising to me that the citizens of Auckland should allow their local asylum to be so far behind all the others in the colony in matters of primary importance for the successful treatment of the insane. Should works for the enlargement of the establishment be put in hand immediately, they cannot be completed for a considerable period; and, meanwhile, where are the 30 additional lunatics, who may be expected to be brought here during the next twelve months, to be housed? This difficulty will not be for me to solve, but I am not the less concerned at leaving such a legacy to my successor.

At Sunnyside Asylum, Christchurch, the number of patients accommodated has been reduced from 318 to 318, through the abandonment of certain old buildings unfit for further use until remodelled. The available accommodation at this asylum is entirely filled. After many and great delays an addition of some twenty single rooms is about to be made to the new buildings. This will be the only instalment of the central block which I have been able to persuade the authorities to carry out, although the plans for the whole were authorized some three years ago, and the funds voted by the Legislature.

Seacliff Asylum, including the wooden buildings called the temporary asylum, can only accommodate the patients likely to be committed to it during the present year. It would be impracticable to make any further transfers of patients thither.

Hokitika Asylum contains the full number for which it is intended.

Napier, supposed to be closed as an asylum, has 5 lunatics within its walls.

Nelson Asylum is quite full. The small additions now being made to its dormitories will only relieve overcrowding, and will not warrant the addition of any more patients.

At Wellington a few empty beds are available, but these will soon be occupied.

Ashburn Hall (licensed house) can yet accommodate a good many additional lunatics.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INCREASED ACCOMMODATION.

A detached building for female patients should be immediately erected at Auckland, to be followed by the remodelling of the central block, and the erection of a wing for males.

The old buildings at Sunnyside, Christchurch, should be put in thorough repair; the single rooms and objectionable portions of the back premises swept away, and the whole converted into an auxiliary asylum, for working male patients and others of the harmless class. The buildings are very suitable for this use, and a good deal of superior accommodation might be here provided at small cost. This rearrangement would necessitate the immediate erection of the kitchen and store portion of the central block.

At Seacliff certain portions, now uninhabitable from damp and other causes, should be put into proper sanitary condition. The erection of a house for the Medical Superintendent would also release certain rooms, which could be occupied by additional patients.

Napier Asylum should be peremptorily closed. Its employment as a receptacle for remanded persons I regard as an abuse rather than a benefit. Lunatics might be sent to Wellington by steamer, and, later on, to Porirua by railway.

The addition of a good day-room to the back of the Wellington Asylum and certain other small alterations would enable twenty additional female patients to be received here. These could be employed to advantage. The male division does not admit of enlargement with any prospect of good results, as it would be difficult to find the men suitable occupation.

At Porirua, however, the Government owns an estate which possesses great advantages as a site for an asylum, and on which a colony of working male lunatics might be established, in connection with the Wellington Asylum, at a cost of a few hundred pounds only. The site is certainly superior to any of those now occupied by asylums in the colony; and, being situated on a line of railway it will be readily reached both from the Napier and the Taranaki Districts. The soil is good, and at present carries a large number of sheep and cattle,