

up as dormitories. These arrangements, although the best under the circumstances, had the disadvantage of diminishing the day-accommodation on both the male and female sides of the institution, and this accommodation was already limited enough.

The average number of patients resident during the year was—males, 246; females, 142. The number has shown no tendency to increase.

The overcrowding of male patients on the male side of the Asylum is deplorable. In every dormitory the men have had much less cubic space allotted to them than is prescribed by law—many slept in day-rooms and passages. The want of a sufficient number of single bedrooms for restless, noisy, or dangerous patients was also much felt. Some of these had to be associated in dormitories with the quiet and well behaved. Notwithstanding the overcrowding, the general health of the inmates has been wonderfully good throughout the year.

As regards the admissions, it will be noted that a large proportion (25 per cent.) of the male patients came from the gumfields. A gumdigger's means of livelihood is precarious, his standard of living is low, and often he is a man who has proved himself a failure in other walks of life. These, I think, are some of the considerations which account for the large proportion who become insane from year to year.

The Asylum obituary-list for 1895 is unusually large. Of the twenty-three male patients who died, the majority were chronic cases, and past the prime of life. Five were between 50 and 60, six between 60 and 70, three between 70 and 80, and one over 80 years of age. It is remarkable that one of these senile cases had been an inmate for thirty-two years. Six men died of general paralysis of the insane, their ages ranging between 36 and 52. Of the seven female patients who died, all were chronic cases of insanity. Five of them had been upwards of twelve years in the Asylum; one had been an inmate for twenty-three years.

The number of patients discharged recovered during the year was thirty-six—twenty-two males and fourteen females. This makes the percentage of recoveries somewhat lower than in 1894, but in that year the percentage was exceptionally high.

As one of the best means of improving the mental state of the patients, every effort has been made to induce as many as possible to employ themselves usefully. Unfortunately for the females, the variety of their occupation is somewhat limited. Some of the men were employed at their trades. A large number worked in the garden and on the farm, not only in maintaining the property and cultivating produce for consumption, but much has been done by them in the way of improvements. The orchard has been enlarged, and upwards of five hundred new fruit-trees planted. Unusually fine piggeries have been erected on a suitable site. Some progress has been made in reclaiming rocky ground, which forms so large a proportion of the Asylum property. The sewage irrigation scheme has also been practically completed. This work serves its purpose admirably, and very materially adds to the productive capacity of both the vegetable-garden and the farm.

Unfortunately during the year actinomycosis made its appearance in the herd of dairy cows. As soon as the disease was recognised the affected animals were isolated and destroyed.

An entertainment for the patients—usually a dance—has been held every alternate Thursday evening, and all patients fit to join have been encouraged to attend. Occasionally a concert or other entertainment was kindly given by friends from Auckland.

Religious services have been held at the Asylum every Sunday afternoon, and were well attended by the patients. Thanks are due to Mr. Shalders, the Rev. Mr. Larkins, and other ministers and laymen who officiated.

There have been very few changes in the staff of officials. I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging the aid I received from Dr. Beattie, the Assistant Medical Officer. I found him a valuable colleague.

I have, &c.,

GRAY HASSELL, M.D.,
Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector of Asylums.

CHRISTCHURCH ASYLUM.

SIR,—

I have the honour to forward my first annual report on this Asylum for the year 1895, and gladly avail myself of this opportunity to record my grateful appreciation of the generous treatment accorded me by the Government in the matter of extended leave of absence, which enabled me to resume my duty in the early part of last year with renewed health and energy.

I wish also to acknowledge the zeal and loyalty with which their duties were carried out by my fellow officers and the staff generally under Dr. Gray Hassell, who acted as temporary Medical Superintendent during my absence, and owing to whose ability and care the efficient and economic working of the institution was fully maintained.

On resuming my duties, I found that good progress had been made with the erection of the new laundry, and it was hoped that a few months would suffice for its completion and fitting up. I regret, however, to say that this has proved delusive, for at present, nearly fifteen months afterwards, and about two years since it was started, there is no very definite prospect as to when it will be ready for work. This lamentable state of things is due to the piecemeal progress with which the work of completion and furnishing had been carried out, which cannot fail to make the whole more costly, while the delay has and is causing great embarrassment in the working of the Asylum. The fittings, instead of being selected with some fixed idea of the requirements, and ordered in advance, have been supplied in dribblets, and some of them (the most important and necessary of all) have only comparatively recently been ordered from America, so that I fear the winter, already on us, will be well advanced, if not passed, before the new laundry is ready for occupation. The present makeshift accommodation, which has gone from bad to worse, has for several years been altogether too small for the requirements of such an institution, and I regard with