

Steam Service.—The great success of the high-pressure boiler which was installed eighteen months ago in supplying steam to the main building and drying-shed prompted us to also lay the steam-pipe to the Ward Colony; and, further, there was manufactured on the premises a steam-cooker for the kitchen, which has proved a thorough success.

Laundry.—For the laundry, a centrifugal curb extractor and a washing-machine, together with a motor to be worked from the high-pressure boiler, were ordered early in the year, and will shortly be placed in position. This will supply a long-felt want, as some of the hardest work is done in the laundry, and is the least conveniently equipped part of the institution.

Patients' Workshop.—Those patients at the Plunket Colony who were fit for the work assisted in the erection of a workshop for themselves, and have during the past year turned out some really good and useful work. Their time at work is necessarily broken—always they are willing to do some work, but it is not always they are fit. Of the carpentering work achieved was the making of twelve or more beehives, neatly put together from old kerosene-cases on the plan approved by the Government Apiarist. Twelve nest-boxes were constructed, from the idea emanating from Mr. Harold Edmonds, the patient who is in charge of the poultry-farm. These boxes form separate shelters, and will be dotted about the run in the same manner as beehives, thus insuring a less risk of nest-boxes becoming infected with vermin, and providing a secluded place for the sitting-hen. These boxes are painted white, and, like the hives, were constructed from old kerosene-cases.

The other works comprised making doors for the strawberry garden and for the workshop, enlarging the Plunket medicine cupboard, making gates, and putting new bottoms on chairs, &c.

Sun-shelter.—As a much-needed shelter from the sun an octagon has been built, where the Plunket patients may rest, there being no natural shelter near. This building adds greatly to the appearance of the Plunket Colony.

Water Reserve.—This was fenced off from the paddock for the horses, and “working bees” were organized for the patients, the reserve bordering the road being planted with flowers and shrubs, greatly beautifying the place—useful work and beneficial to those taking part in it.

KARERE TREE-PLANTING CAMP.

From the earliest days of the Sanatorium it was evident that ex-patients were greatly handicapped by their inability to procure work of a kind suitable to their strength and under such favourable conditions as to enable them to retain the benefit which they had derived from sanatorium treatment. Some few were sufficiently well to enable them to return to their old employment with every confidence of being able to retain their health, but in the majority of cases either the nature of the work was unsuitable or the effects of the disease has reduced their capacity for work to such a degree as to render it necessary for them to endeavour to procure some lighter and more suitable form of employment. Many cases have come under our observation where patients were discharged comparatively well, but being unable to obtain such employment, the consequent anxiety of mind and inability to provide themselves with proper food and conditions of life resulted in a return of the disease.

We have long recognised that some effort should be made to procure suitable work for ex-patients. Through the courtesy and kindness of Mr. Matthews in saying that he would assist us in an experiment by allowing ex-patients to do tree-planting by piece-labour, the experimental tree-planting camp at Whakarewarewa by the Public Health Department was established.

Karere Camp—the “forerunner” as we hope it is to be of larger camps in the future—is situated at Waipa, eight miles from Rotorua. It originally consisted of two tents, 20 ft. by 12 ft., with boarded floors, for the accommodation of eight men, and one dining-tent, and the necessary accommodation for the sister in charge.*

The camp was opened on the 24th May, 1908, Sister Urquhart being placed in charge. I might state here that our best thanks are due to the officers of the Forestry Department directly in charge of the tree-planting, Mr. Goudie and Mr. Buchanan, for the valuable aid they have so freely given.

The work during the winter months consisted of planting young trees over cleared and pitted hillsides; and the men, although quite inexperienced, performed the work well, and, I believe, to the satisfaction of those in charge of the operations. The initial experiment being so encouraging, it was decided to enlarge the camp, which now consists of five large tents, one roofed dining-shelter containing cooking-range, copper and bath, four single tents, and a shed for coal, buggy, &c. Accommodation is thus provided for nineteen men, one sister, one nurse, and a cook. At the end of the tree-planting season it was decided to give the men a portion of land to clear of fern and scrub, and pit the ground ready for the planting in the following season. This work proved to be much more severe and not so favourable to some of the men, owing to the greater exertion required and the amount of dust raised in clearing the fern. Some were unable to stand this work, but others showed that they were well enough to do fairly heavy labour under somewhat trying conditions.

On the whole, the tree-planting experiment has been successful, and, I think, goes to prove that the finding of employment for ex-patients is highly desirable, as, apart from the question of humanity, men so employed are enabled to produce work of some value to the State who otherwise would, in the majority of cases, become a burden on the various Charitable Aid Boards of the Dominion. The fear of infection has become so general that it is almost impossible for a man to obtain outside employment if he allows it to become known that he has been an inmate of a sanatorium. Although the need of employment for female patients is not so urgent as that for men, still, I think something should be done in that direction also.

* See photographs at beginning of report.