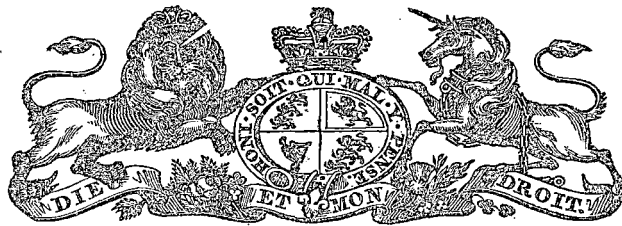


(No. 7.)



1865.

T A S M A N I A.

HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, NEW NORFOLK.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS FOR 1864.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 18 July, 1865.



Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk, 31st December, 1864.

THE Commissioners of the Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk, in presenting their Annual Report which is intended to embrace especially their proceedings during the year 1864, desire to review the changes which have been introduced into the Institution confided to their management in the course of the last few years.

The Hospital was placed in charge of Commissioners in October, 1855, when they found its condition very far behind that of similar institutions in the Mother Country. The internal accommodations of the several buildings were small, badly constructed, ill ventilated, dark and dismal, while the day rooms, so called, afforded very inadequate convenience for the purposes intended. The yards and grounds were subdivided by high walls, and the spaces allotted for exercise and outdoor recreation were of the most limited character. In the Female Division of the Hospital a paddock of three acres lying contiguous to it was forbidden ground to the Patients, who were crowded to the number of 100 in two small yards of less than a quarter of an acre each. In the Male Division a garden of the same extent adjacent to it was walled in and interdicted to their use; the quiet and convalescent Patients being confined to the limited space in front of the Hospital, the unquiet to two small enclosed yards, together not more than half an acre in extent, and these closed in and deprived of all cheerfulness by the surrounding sleeping rooms, dark cells, &c. There was absolutely no provision for the separate accommodation and treatment of Patients from the better classes of society; and in the Male Division persons of respectable station, the unhappy subjects of mental disease, perhaps only temporary and partial in character, found themselves herded with Convicts of the most degraded class, and were thus irritated and injured by contact with men from whose habitual coarse propensities of speech, gesture, and behaviour lunacy had withdrawn every decent restraint. In the Female Division the same indiscriminate association prevailed, aggravated by the too notorious antecedent career of the larger number of the Patients, and the acuter sensibility of the sex in the case of those who had led a virtuous life.

Amusements of any kind as a feature in a curative system of treating the Insane appeared never to have been thought of, or at any rate the means carrying it out were wholly unprovided. Even the ministrations of Religion, universally acknowledged when dispensed with judgment to be powerful in soothing the mind of the afflicted, were made use of only in a formal manner, being limited to one or two days in the week. And while there was an utter want of cheering or mollifying influences inside the Hospital Walls, the Patients were never taken outside them, unless it might be in the exceptional cases of men belonging to a working party going out to some kind of labour.

The principle of the treatment of the Patients generally was one of coercion, which in the case of the excited or refractory was carried out by the familiar resort to the strait waistcoat.

Generally the state of things which has been described has given place to a different one. The old dark and dismal cells have been mostly pulled down, and cheerful airy sleeping-places built on their site. Large, well-lighted and ventilated day rooms and corridors have been erected. Verandahs have been added to both Male and Female Divisions, in the former 150 feet, and in the latter 200 feet long. Walls have been pulled down to throw open the whole of the grounds in each division respectively to the Patients, and these have been tastefully laid out in flower gardens, walks, grass-plots, &c., which are kept green, fresh, and cheerful to the eye. The wall dividing the two back yards has been removed throwing them into one.

A commodious cottage has been erected for the better class of Male Patients, containing six good sleeping apartments, besides ample sitting room accommodation with a spacious verandah.

Amusements progressively increasing in their variety have been introduced; at first dancing parties, to which a limited number of the quieter Patients only were admitted, which have been since extended without any ill consequences to more than half the Patients in the Institution. Music followed, a good organ having been obtained from England, to which has recently been added a

portable one. The visits of professional persons to New Norfolk have been taken advantage of whenever it could be consistently done, by having performances within the Hospital Walls; and summer walks and pic-nics have helped to dispel the melancholy to which the Insane are prone when kept in one unvarying routine of life, and in the perpetual recollection of their captive condition, and which operates most prejudicially to their physical and mental recovery.

Books, pictures, domesticated birds, and other animals that can be conveniently cared for, are introduced into the Establishment with a view of calling out the latent faculties and kindlier feelings of the Patients; and in those instances in which a musical taste exists, if it can be inexpensively gratified, provision is made for its indulgence. A bagatelle board is placed in the wide passage of the building devoted to the paying Patients and proves a source of relaxation to them, while drafts and dominoes are available generally.

Divine Service is attended by nearly all the Patients; and it is gratifying to state that it is participated in by very many in a manner which evinces their sense of its solem import, and by the remainder with a degree of propriety which is remarkable.

The general effect of the changes which have been introduced in the management of the Hospital has been most encouraging to the Commissioners, and such as to induce them to relax no exertion to conform the Institution, as closely as circumstances and the means within their reach will enable them to do, to the example of kindred institutions in Europe in which improvement has been carried farthest. They have found that a humanising system of treatment has tended to prove day by day that methods which did not harmonise with such a system are as unnecessary as they are harsh. General quietude and contentment prevail; and even in the refractory wards acts of violence are exceptional, whereas they were at one time of almost daily occurrence, and the necessity for restraint or seclusion has diminished to insignificance. Personal restraint is unknown unless in the case of Patients of violently destructive propensities, for whom a jacket is used with loose but continuous sleeves, which simply restrains the hand to a certain degree of motion without confining the arm. Violent and excited Patients every Officer is instructed to soothe and reason with, while there is a hope of influencing them in that way; and only in the last resort is the seclusion of the refractory Patient in a separate apartment had recourse to. In 1859 the first reliable record of restraint was kept by the Superintendent, and the Table No. 1 shows the comparative numbers for that year and for the year 1864.

A system of night nursing and attendance upon the dirty and refractory Patients has been adopted, and attended with beneficial results, the necessity for extra ablutions in the morning being of rare occurrence.

But the Commissioners are far from desiring to represent the state of the Institution as realizing all that they should wish it to be. They have before urgently represented to the Executive Government the necessity of a similar provision to that which has been made for the better class of males being also provided for the corresponding class of females. Unfortunately the cases are not uncommon in the best conditions of life, in this any more than in other countries, of temporary or permanent insanity among women; and at present there are no private Asylums in the Colony to which they can be sent, nor is it probable that for many years such will exist. They are, therefore, either kept at home,—a daily source of pain, and an incentive sometimes to disease in constitutions prone to it, and themselves the victims of ignorant, capricious, and mischievous treatment,—or they are sent to the Hospital at New Norfolk to be mingled indiscriminately with other Patients whose very different antecedents and associations fret and humiliate them, and this precisely most in those lucid intervals which otherwise would afford an opening to skill and kindness to operate with a restorative effect. It is the duty of the Commissioners to renew their representations on this subject to the Executive: the demand which they make may be postponed, but it cannot be averted; and they therefore press it once more as one which it is incumbent on the humanity of the Legislature to meet promptly, and not in its power to escape eventually. This subject was brought under the notice of the Executive Government so long since as in 1859, in the following terms:—

“In the meantime comfortable rooms have been provided for the male unfortunates of this class, and are now ready for occupation; and the Commissioners sincerely trust that the delay (certainly not of their creating) in the erection of a like building on the female side will be of short continuance.”

With the very inadequate funds placed at their disposal, the Commissioners have in the past year removed the ill-ventilated cells in the Female Division, and erected in their place airy and cheerful though, unavoidably, small rooms; and they have also fenced in and levelled a piece of ground attached to the Day Room of the Refractory Division, erecting thereon a mound from which a pleasant view of the township and surrounding country can be obtained. The Commissioners understood that a sufficient sum had been set apart for the erection of a new Kitchen and the conversion of the present one into Bath Rooms, also for the removal of the latrines in the front division. But they subsequently learned with regret that the sum available was not sufficient for these and for other improvements adverted to in their Report for 1863, and they therefore urgently press that they may not be overlooked in the ensuing session of Parliament. The Hospital will be defective in primary

requirements while it remains without good Bath Rooms, and the apparatus for hot and cold water as well as shower baths, and while proper accommodation is wanting for the Keepers and Attendants, especially in the Female Division, and also for the large supply of stores which it is necessary to keep on the spot for an Establishment which is upwards of twenty miles inland.

The Commissioners append to this Report a Return (No. 2) of admissions and discharges of (recovered) Patients and of deaths for the three years ending 31st December, 1861, and also for the corresponding number of years ending in 1864, with the average number of Patients in the Hospital in the respective periods; also a return (No. 3) for the past year separately. It will be seen from these Returns that the deaths have proportionally diminished, and that the discharges exhibit a higher average.

The Superintendent reports the conduct of the Officers of the Establishment during the year as highly satisfactory; and the Commissioners can only repeat former acknowledgments of their entire satisfaction with the zeal, intelligence, and acquired skill of the Surgeon-Superintendent, Mr. Huston. Deeply sensible of the importance of that gentleman's services, they felt it to be their duty to interpose, when it was contemplated by the Government to remove him to a charge of a less painfully anxious nature, and rendered further inviting by a larger income than that which he at present enjoys, and to remonstrate against the contemplated step. The intention of the Government having been abandoned, the Commissioners deemed it was due to Mr. Huston that his merits should not be a bar to his promotion, and they accordingly recommended to the Government an increase by way of personal allowance to his salary, which they trust will be approved by Parliament.

The Commissioners have met regularly once a month and inspected the various Divisions of the Hospital, and individually frequent visits have been made by some of their number at undefined periods.

In the course of the year the miscellaneous visitors have amounted to 284; but the Commissioners, as a rule, have prohibited the admission of the large number of people who generally arrive by the excursion trips of the steamer from Hobart Town, as they brought inside the Asylum Walls injudicious persons whose demeanour and conduct irritated the Patients.

The number of Patients treated in 1864 was 254, of which 174 were chargeable on Colonial Funds, 53 on Imperial Funds, and 27 were paying and partially paying Patients by fees varying from £12 to £91 5s. per annum.

The average cost of each Patient was 1s. 11d. per diem.

The total cost of the Establishment, exclusive of buildings, repairs, &c., was about £7760; the paying Patients contributing about £750, and the Imperial Government about £1710, to this amount.

Labour was supplied to the Contractor for the alterations and repairs to the amount of £26 17s; and £22 14s. 6d. has been received for private work (washing, needlework, &c.) performed in the Hospital.

R. OFFICER, *President*.
 W. S. SHARLAND.
 F. M. INNES.
 J. TURNBULL.
 W. A. B. JAMIESON.
 JNO. A. MOORE.
 W. TARLETON.
 HENRY BUTLER.

No. 1.

RETURN of the Number of Patients placed under Restraint, and the aggregate Number of Hours, during the Years 1859 and 1864, in the Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk.

DATE.	NUMBER OF PATIENTS TREATED DURING THE YEAR.	SECLUSION.		STRAIT WAIST-COAT.		
		No. of Patients.	No. of Hours.	No. of Patients.	No. of Hours.	
1859.....	252	60	6029	26	7738	The strait waistcoat of 1864 was of different construction to that of 1859, as noticed in the Report, being simply continuous sleeves.
1864.....	254	68	4161	3*	4076	

* In 1864 one of the 3 had to be placed in continuous sleeves every night for nearly the whole year, to prevent the exercise of her destructive propensity.

G. F. HUSTON, *Superintendent and Medical Officer.*

No. 2.

RETURN of Admissions, Discharges, and Deaths for the Three Years 1859, 1860, and 1861; also for 1862, 1863, and 1864.

1859, 1860, and 1861.									1862, 1863, and 1864.								
ADMISSIONS.			DISCHARGES.			DEATHS.			ADMISSIONS.			DISCHARGES.			DEATHS.		
Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.
83	54	137	22	11	33	32	27	59	59	44	103	28	20	48	28	21	49

G. F. HUSTON, *Superintendent and Medical Officer.*

No. 3.

RETURN of Admissions, Discharges, and Deaths in the Hospital for the Insane at New Norfolk, showing the Per-centage of Discharges and of Deaths during the Year 1864.

	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	DISCHARGES. — RECOVERED.			DEATHS.			RATE PER CENT. OF RECOVERIES.		RATE PER CENT. OF DEATHS.	
				Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	On Admissions.	On Total treated.	On Admissions.	On Total treated.
Remaining 31st December, 1863 ...	115	102	217										
Admitted during the year 1864	18	19	37	11	7	18	9	4	13	48·24	7·22	35·5	5·30
TOTAL.....	133	121	254										
Remaining 31st December, 1864 ..	113	110	223										

G. F. HUSTON, *Superintendent and Medical Officer.*

RETURN of Articles of Clothing, &c. made and repaired by the Patients in the Hospital for the Insane at New Norfolk, from 1st January to 31st December, 1864.

	MADE.		REPAIRED.	
	<i>By Males.</i>	<i>By Females.</i>	<i>By Males.</i>	<i>By Females.</i>
Aprons, women's .....	..	154	..	..
Boots, men's, pairs	1	..	395	..
Boots, females, pairs .....	..	..	29	..
Blinds, window .....	..	6	..	..
Cases, pillow .....	..	60	22	31
Caps, women's .....	..	129	..	..
Covers for air-beds	6	..	..	..
Covers for air-pillows	8	..	..	..
Coats, great, watch .....	..	..	1	..
Coats, men's .....	..	..	56	..
Dresses, print .....	..	8	..	..
Dresses, ticking .....	..	11	..	5
Drawers, flannel .....	..	..	..	117
Dresses, tweed .....	..	50	..	..
Frocks, linen .....	..	..	51	..
Hoods, calico, women's .....	..	100	..	..
Jackets, blue cloth, men's	37	..	148	..
Jackets, serge, women's .....	..	32	..	8
Jackets, flannel, women's .....	..	..	..	..
Jackets, cotton, women's .....	..	124	..	..
Jackets, canvas	1	..	15	..
Palliasses .....	..	..	29	..
Petticoats, serge, women's .....	..	135	..	26
Petticoats, flannel, women's .....	..	33	..	..
Pinafores .....	..	..	..	22
Rugs, Osnaburg	3	..	1	..
Sheets .....	..	..	5	31
Shirts, men's .....	..	441	1	408
Shoes, men's, pairs .....	..	..	40	..
Shoes, women's, pairs .....	..	..	65	..
Shifts, women's .....	..	177	..	..
Slippers, men's, pairs	4	..	4	..
Stockings, women's, pairs .....	..	..	..	..
Stockings, knitted, men's, pairs .....	..	..	..	342
Socks, men's, pairs .....	..	..	..	..
Trowsers, fustian	104	..	314	..
Trowsers, tweed	51	..	116	..
Trowsers, linen .....	..	..	2	..
Trowsers .....	..	..	49	..
Waistcoats, flannel, men's .....	..	87	..	58
Waistcoats, blue and tweed, cloth, men's	2	..	161	..
Waistcoats, fustian	2	..	..	..
Waistcoats .....	..	..	20	..

G. F. HUSTON, *Superintendent and Medical Officer.*