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1878.

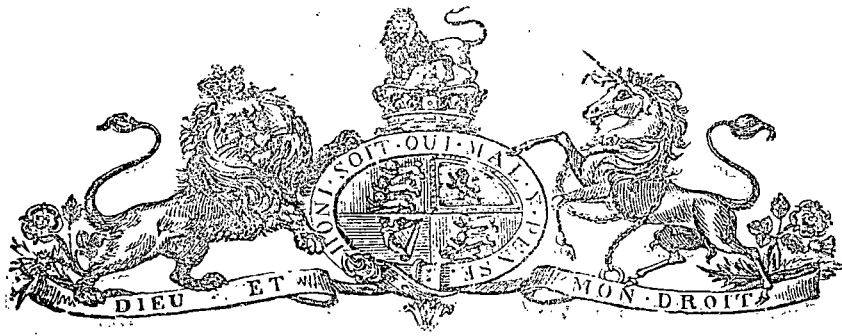
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

GENERAL HOSPITAL, HOBART TOWN:

REPORT FOR 1877.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
July 16, 1878.



GENERAL HOSPITAL, HOBART TOWN.

ANNUAL REPORT for 1877.

3, Elizabeth-street, Hobart Town, 19th February, 1878.

SIR,

In laying before you the Report of the General Hospital for the year 1877, I have the honor to state that in December, 1876, a Royal Commission was issued to "enquire into the condition and management of the General Hospital, Hobart Town." The result of this Commission was the appointment of a Board of Management consisting of 18 members, (12 unofficial and 6 *ex officio*), by whom the affairs of the Institution have been since administered.

1. The Establishment at the present time embraces the following staff, (in addition to 5 Honorary Medical Officers) :—

MALES.

	£	s.	d.
1 House Surgeon, salary	350	0	0 per annum.
1 Assistant Surgeon, ditto	200	0	0 ditto
1 Secretary, ditto	250	0	0 ditto.
1 Dispenser, ditto	104	0	0 ditto.
1 Assistant Dispenser, ditto	0	7	0 per week.
1 Cook, ditto	52	0	0 per annum.
1 Assistant Cook, ditto	0	5	0 per week.
2 Wardsmen, (each), ditto	1	1	0 ditto.
1 Porter, ditto	50	0	0 per annum.
1 Night Porter, ditto	50	0	0 ditto.
1 Barber, ditto	0	17	6 per week.
1 Tailor, ditto	30	0	0 per annum.
1 Messenger, ditto	0	7	0 per week.
1 Cleaner, ditto	24	0	0 per annum.

FEMALES.

	£	s.	d.
1 Lady Superintendent, salary	200	0	0 per annum.
5 Head Nurses, (each), ditto	50	0	0 per annum.
11 Nurses, (each), ditto	30	0	0 ditto.
1 Laundress, ditto	30	0	0 ditto.
2 Servants, (each), ditto	20	0	0 ditto.
2 Cleaners, (each), ditto	20	0	0 ditto.

It appears from the above that there are 37 paid members of the Hospital staff, and that (on an average) each Officer receives annually £220 16s. 0d., each Nurse, £36 5s. 0d., each Servant, £32 10s. 9d.

These money payments are supplemented, in almost every instance, by free lodging, fuel, and light.

I am glad to be able to report that the business of the Hospital has been carried on satisfactorily and well by the above-named staff: far more so, indeed, than could have been hoped for, considering that nearly all the members have been appointed since the formation of the Board, and consequently were, for a time, new to each other and new to the work of the Institution.

2. The number of patients of all classes were as follows :—

In-patients	1442
Out-patients	8104
	<u>9546</u>

showing in both divisions a large increase on the previous year, when the numbers were,—in-patients, 1225, out-patients, 6945; making a total of 8170.

Annexed is a tabular statement of the in-patients :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
In Hospital, January 1, 1877.....	81	27	108
Admitted during the year	872	462	1334
	<u>953</u>	<u>489</u>	<u>1442</u>
Total under treatment.....			
	Males.	Females.	Total.
Discharged	784	423	1207
Died	105	44	149
	<u>889</u>	<u>467</u>	<u>1356</u>
In Hospital, January 1, 1878.....	64	22	86
	<u>64</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>86</u>

The following table exhibits the ages of the individuals who occupied beds in the Hospital during the year 1877 :—

	Males.	Females.	Totals.
Under 10 years of age.....	51	26	77
From 10 to 15 years of age	54	33	87
„ 15 to 25 ditto	210	169	379
„ 25 to 35 ditto	67	40	107
„ 35 to 45 ditto	70	61	131
„ 45 to 55 ditto	147	67	214
„ 55 to 65 ditto	201	60	261
„ 65 and upwards.....	153	33	186
	<u>953</u>	<u>489</u>	<u>1442</u>

On an average 106·66 patients were in the Hospital each day, against 102 in 1876. Each patient remained 27 days; in 1876, 30·42 days. Hence, while the number of patients in 1877 was larger than in 1876, the stay of each individual was shorter. The total number of diets issued to patients amounted to 38,934* ; in the previous year they were 37,266.

3. During the year 149 patients died, or 1 in every 9·67. In 1876 the number of deaths was 116, or 1 in 10·56. This increased death rate is due to the unusually large number of grave diseases admitted. For instance, cases of disease of the respiratory system rose from 64 in 1876 to 107 in 1877; and of these no less than 45 were cases of pneumonia, as against 15 from the same cause in the previous year. Scarlet fever—one of the three most fatal diseases in English statistics—was also specially prevalent in this part of the Colony; the mortality from this cause amounting to 10, whereas in 1876 there were but 2. In the following table the death cases are classed according to the ages of the deceased :—

Under 10 years of age, both sexes.....	20
From 10 to 15 ditto, ditto.....	5
15 to 25 ditto, ditto	29
25 to 35 ditto, ditto.....	8
35 to 45 ditto, ditto	8
45 to 55 ditto, ditto	18
55 to 65 ditto, ditto	32
65 and upwards.....	29
Total.....	<u>149</u>

From this and the preceding table of ages of patients, it will be seen that while the decade of 15 to 25 supplied by far the largest number of inmates, it was exceeded as regards mortality, though not perhaps very markedly, by the decade of 55 to 65.

* Attendants' diets came to 11,966, against 10,515 in 1876.

The various diseases treated, with the number of patients attacked by each form of disease, have been tabulated, and are appended to this Report (Appendix A).

4. The bulk of the patients is of course made up of the destitute or non-paying class. A few, however, in a better social position are glad to avail themselves of its advantages by payment of fees, the amount of which is fixed by the Board of Management. During 1877 there were 69 such inmates, who paid for their support the sum of £168 15s. 5d.

I beg to suggest that whenever new buildings are added to the present Hospital (a much to be desired object, which cannot long be postponed), a small ward of separate rooms be specially provided for "paying or self-supporting patients." This practice is common in Germany (and I believe also in France), where such a ward is largely patronised by persons who, though raised above the pauper class, are from various causes unable to command the comforts and luxuries of a wealthy home. It is also much used by the better class of domestic servants, both male and female, who have often no home to go to when they fall sick, and whom their employers are not unfrequently willing to maintain at the Hospital. I can myself speak of its practical benefit in regard to a servant of my own. As far as I can remember this private ward is considered to be quite self-supporting. Much useful information on this subject is contained in a pamphlet "On Paying Wards in Public Hospitals, by John Blair, M.D., F.R.C.S., Surgeon to the Alfred Hospital: Melbourne, 1877." A copy of this work can be seen in the Public Library, Hobart Town.

5. The number of prescriptions issued amounted to 18,150 against 9594 in the preceding year.

While regretting that the Dispensary relief should have reached so high a figure, it is satisfactory to be able to state that the numbers are fast diminishing; the first few weeks of the present year showing a decrease in the number of out-door patients from 237 to 95: indeed, steps have been taken which will, it is hoped, effectually curtail the too great facilities previously existing of procuring letters of admission, and will confine them to those for whose benefit alone they are intended.

6. The condition of the buildings and the accommodation provided for the patients, though much improved, are still greatly behind the requirements of the age.

The number of wards and of beds in each building, together with the number of cubic feet of air, will be found in Appendix B.

As regards the main building, it would be well if means were taken to facilitate the admission of light, and to allow a freer circulation of air to the back wards, which are rendered much darker and closer than they should be, especially in the winter season, by the wide verandahs attached to them.

A long-standing nuisance, that of the lavatories and closets being in the same compartment, is in course of being removed by the erection of two towers, in which new closets will be placed, entirely separate from the lavatories. Steps are being at the same time taken for a proper distribution of hot water throughout the building by means of a boiler and the necessary pipes.

During the formation of these additional buildings, it was discovered that the means of carrying off the sewage was in a most deplorable condition. A whole network of subterranean drains was laid bare, few of which were serviceable. This defect is also being partially remedied.

The old Hospital, now used for infectious and lock-ward cases, is as bad as can be, and appears to combine every fault which an institution of this nature ought *not* to have. Perfect isolation, so necessary in a building set apart for cases of fever and diphtheria, is a simple impossibility. The flooring is bad; doors and windows are imperfect; and the admission of more light and air is greatly needed. Much patching and remodelling have been resorted to; but no patching can render the building fit for the purpose to which it is applied.

In the same category must be placed the Female Lock Ward, which, in the amount of its imperfections, rivals the old Hospital, of which it is an annexe.

I need scarcely remark that the erection of new buildings in place of those just referred to is a want which calls for early attention.

The cells provided for patients under observation for lunacy are totally unfit for the purpose. No wardens are provided to take care of the inmates, who, whether their character be mild or violent, must either be confined to the cells a few feet square, with a minimum of light and ventilation, or be allowed to mingle with the other patients, no separate recreation-ground being set apart for them; indeed, the space allowed for the recreation of the general patients is far too limited and too much enclosed.

7. That the paid officers of the Establishment should, for obvious reasons, reside within its walls, is an almost self-evident proposition. This, however, cannot be accomplished in the Hobart Town General Hospital in its present condition. The Dispenser lives in an adjoining street. The Lady Superintendent and the Nurses are located in a building in the same street with the Hospital, but on the opposite side of the road, which they have to cross in all weathers and at all hours of the day and night in order to get to their work. The House Surgeon, Assistant House Surgeon, and Secretary occupy quarters within the walls of the Hospital; but they are by no means of such a character as these gentlemen are entitled to expect.

The acquisition of the strip of land adjoining Argyle-street leads to the hope that the want of suitable lodgings for the working staff of the institution may be shortly supplied.

A mess-room or dining-hall for the convalescent patients and attendants (which might also be utilised as a chapel for Divine Service), an operation-room, and a Secretary's store-room better adapted for the purpose than the present one, are greatly needed.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. W. SPICER,

Chairman Board of Management.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

APPENDIX A.
DISEASES AND DEATHS, 1877.

	IN-PATIENTS.		OUT-PATIENTS.		TOTALS.		DEATHS.	
	Cases.	CLASS TOTAL.	Cases.	CLASS TOTAL.	Cases.	CLASS TOTAL.	Cases.	CLASS TOTAL.
CLASS I.—ZYMOTIC.	—	473	—	1600	—	2073	—	33
Order 1. Miasmatic.....	308	—	1111	—	1419	—	30	
2. Enthetic.....	91	—	80	—	171	—	2	
3. Diætic.....	72	—	4	—	76	—	1	
4. Parasitic.....	2	—	405	—	207	—	—	
CLASS II.—CONSTITUTIONAL.	—	145	—	244	—	389	—	31
Order 1. Diathetic.....	84	—	190	—	274	—	13	
2. Tubercular.....	61	—	54	—	115	—	18	
CLASS III.—LOCAL.	—	366	—	2709	—	3075	—	71
Order 1. Of Nervous System.....	74	—	273	—	347	—	13	
2. Of Organs of Circulation.....	26	—	75	—	101	—	8	
3. Of Respiratory System.....	107	—	707	—	814	—	29	
4. Of Digestive Organs.....	40	—	809	—	849	—	7	
5. Of Urinary Organs.....	36	—	125	—	161	—	12	
6. Of Organs of Generation.....	14	—	190	—	204	—	2	
7. Of Locomotive System.....	27	—	45	—	72	—	—	
8. Of Integumentary System.....	42	—	485	—	527	—	—	
CLASS IV.—DEVELOPMENTAL.	—	66	—	234	—	300	—	5
Order 1. Of Children.....	3	—	14	—	17	—	1	
2. Of Adults.....	20	—	3	—	23	—	—	
3. Of Old People.....	22	—	3	—	25	—	1	
4. Of Nutrition.....	21	—	214	—	235	—	3	
CLASS V.—VIOLENCE.	—	234	—	545	—	779	—	9
Order 1. Accidents or Negligence.....	232	—	545	—	777	—	9	
2. Homicide.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
3. Suicide.....	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
4. Execution.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
TOTAL.....	—	1284	—	5332	—	6616	—	149
Other Diseases.....	—	158	—	2772	—	2930	—	
GRAND TOTAL.....	—	1442	—	8104	—	9546	—	149

APPENDIX B.

	<i>Number of Wards.</i>	<i>Number of Beds.</i>	<i>Number of Cubic Feet.</i>	<i>Average Cubic Feet per Bed.</i>
Main Building*	9	100	115,221	1152
Old Hospital	7	26	43,994	1692
Female Lock Ward	1	7	6945	992
TOTAL	17	133	166,160	1249

* One of the Main Building Wards is very much smaller than the rest: indeed it is not properly a Ward at all, but a converted Operation-room. The cubical contents, &c., as compared with those of the other eight wards, are as follows:—

	<i>Number of Wards.</i>	<i>Number of Beds.</i>	<i>Number of Cubic Feet.</i>	<i>Average Cubic Feet per Bed.</i>
Main Building.....	1	4	3121	780
Ditto	8	96	112,100	1167
TOTAL (as above)....	9	100	115,221	

I understand that an average of 1500 to 2000 cubic feet per bed is considered to be a fitting allowance in the present day.

APPENDIX C.

COST of the General Hospital, Hobart Town, for the year 1877.

Salaries	£	s.	d.
Allowances	2008	0	10
Provisions and Medical Comforts.....	114	6	0
Fuel and Light	2549	18	10
Medicines and Surgical Instruments	522	4	8
Clothing, Bedding, and Stores, including straw.....	591	17	10
Stationery.....	621	15	9
Funeral expenses.....	35	8	6
Washing.....	156	14	0
Repairs to Buildings.....	98	12	10
Repairs to Stoves	571	14	4
Cleansing, removal of night soil, ashes, &c.....	16	8	0
Gratuity to Mr. H. E. Smith, as Honorary Secretary.....	52	0	0
Petty expenses.....	10	10	0
	40	17	2
Gross Expenditure.....	£7390	8	9
	£	s.	d.
For medicines, &c supplied to other establishments.....	137	14	8
Fees received from self-supporting patients.....	168	15	5
Cash received from other sources.....	40	10	4
		347	0 5
Net Expenditure.....	£7043	8	4

Number of diets issued to patients, 38,934.
Average cost per diem per patient, nearly 3s. 7½d.

F. VENTRY, *Secretary.*