

(No. 68.)



1888.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

C A S C A D E A S Y L U M :

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL VISITORS,
SURGEON-SUPERINTENDENT, AND THE GOVERNMENT.

Return to an Order. (Dr. Crowther.)

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, June 8, 1888 ; and ordered by the
House of Assembly to be printed, June 13, 1888.



CASCADES HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

State of Hospital for the Insane, Cascades, on 29th September, 1887.

1. Area and character of Grounds.—About six and a half acres (arable), a portion used as a recreation ground.
2. Extent, capacity, and suitability of Buildings.—Suitable in all respects for the number of inmates.
3. Ventilation, sunlight, &c.—Good, but direct sunlight is somewhat impeded in the afternoons by a high hill at rear of the buildings.
4. Internal arrangements generally.—As perfect as conveniences will permit.
5. Furniture and Utensils.—All that are necessary.
6. Clothing and Bedding.—Good and sufficient.
7. Food, quantity and quality.—Enough, and equal to samples which we examined.
8. Food, how cooked and served.—Satisfactorily, and served under regulations and proper supervision.
9. Baths and Bathing.—Suitable and well utilised.
10. Closets, Lavatories, &c.—Commensurate with the necessities.
11. Kitchen.—Would be benefited by repair to floor.
12. Dormitories, cubic space and ventilation.—Five, with a space of 48,866 cubic feet, and ventilation good.
13. Cells.—Twenty-three, with a space of 12,650 cubic feet, and ventilation very defective.
14. Water Supply.—Ample.
15. Sewerage and Drainage.—Good.
16. Yards and Airing Grounds.—Well kept.
17. Number of Inmates, Male.—59.
18. Classification of Patients.—In two large and airy yards by day, and sleeping rooms and cells by night.
19. How many of each capable of employment.—About 24.
20. How employed generally.—Gardening and other suitable work both in and about the Establishment.
21. Number under restraint during the month.—None.
22. Means of restraint resorted to.—Camisole when necessary.
23. Number in seclusion during the month.—None.
24. Special reasons for restraint and seclusion.—None.
25. Recoveries during the month.—None.
26. Deaths during the month.—One.
27. Occupation and amusement.—Dominoes, draughts, and skittles; also by books and cards.
28. Schooling and Teaching.—*Nil*.
29. Divine Service.—Once a week by Ministers of the Church of England and the Church of Rome, without any apparent effect.
30. Complaints of Patients how treated.—There were none.
31. Cost per head.—£38 13s. 9d. for the past year.
32. Fees received for Maintenance of Patients during the month.—*Nil*.
33. Library, Reading-rooms, &c.—*Nil*.
34. Admissions and Discharges.—None.
35. Staff of Attendants, Male.—Eleven.
36. How designated.—One head attendant, 2 under, and 8 attendants.
37. General Management.—Satisfactory.
38. Condition of Patients (physical).—Several more or less infirm from age, the remainder well conditioned.
39. Examination of Books and Orders.—Books examined and signed; there were no orders.

40. Other Matters.—We observe that Patient J. P. De Bomford appears to have greater privileges than the other inmates, and we request that no exception be made in his case.

Inspected, in accordance with the provisions of "The Insane Persons Hospital Act Amendment Act," 49 Vict. No. 35, and found as represented in this Report.

THOS. C. SMART,
F. W. MITCHELL, } *Official Visitors.*
THOMAS GRAY.

THE Chief Secretary wishes to be informed what are the privileges allowed to Mr. De Bomford to which the Official Visitors refer.

The Surgeon-Superintendent, Hospital for Insane, Cascades.

B. TRAVERS SOLLY.
4 Oct. '87.

Hospital for Insane, Cascades, 7th October, 1887.

SIR,

REPLYING to your enquiry as to "what are the privileges allowed to Mr. De Bomford to which the Official Visitors refer," I have the honor to submit the following particulars.

I may, at the outset, state that I am aware the entry was made with a view to strengthen my hands in the direction indicated, but, as I take leave to differ from that view, I am glad of the opportunity of so expressing myself.

In the first place, the question arises, what are the functions and responsibilities of the Official Visitors? That they are empowered to enquire into the general administration of the Institution I do not deny, but that they are responsible for the safe custody of the inmates, I do not admit.

This, then, is the ostensible ground for objecting to the privileges granted to Patient DeBomford; but as those privileges were allowed on the score of *mental alleviation*, without endangering his safe keeping, I must object to the "request that no exception be made in his case."

The extent of liberty consists chiefly in allowing him to pass from one yard to a workshop in another, and to go occasionally outside the buildings without being in immediate charge of an attendant.

It is not, perhaps, in the man's favour that one of the Official Visitors became acquainted with his antecedents whilst an inmate of the New Norfolk Institution. But whatever those antecedents, I have yet to learn that insubordination or attempt at escape were amongst them.

The patient has now been upwards of 2½ years in the Cascades, and it was only after I had satisfied myself of his particular idiosyncrasy that I felt justified in allowing him more license than the other patients.

Under the circumstances, therefore, I must be excused for taking the responsibility of the case upon myself; and as I have had upwards of 12 years experience in treating the Insane, I flatter myself, from my daily communication with those under my charge at this Institution, that I am in a far better position to judge of their proclivities than even an expert who simply made periodical visits to it.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.

J. COVERDALE, M.D.

Chief Secretary's Office, Hobart, 10th October, 1887.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th instant, having reference to the special privileges allowed to Mr. De Bomford, confined during the Queen's pleasure in the Hospital for Insane.

I desire to assure you that I have full confidence in your judgment as to the peculiar proclivities of the inmates under your charge, and would not seek to interfere in the exercise of your discretion; but I think you will, upon consideration, realise that to sanction any one confined in the Hospital, especially a criminal lunatic, going outside the buildings without being in immediate charge of an attendant, is to grant an indulgence totally incompatible with the order for his detention, and one that the Government would not be justified in allowing, as being manifestly illegal.

I have, &c.

P. O. FYSH.

The Surgeon-Superintendent Hospital for Insane, Cascades.

Hospital for Insane, Cascades, 22nd October, 1887.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 10th instant in re the patient named in margin (J. P. De Bomford), and I feel constrained, after due reflection, to add to the remarks I made on a previous occasion in respect to the said patient.

I at once bow to the decision "that the Government would not be justified in allowing, as being manifestly illegal," the man to go outside the buildings without being in immediate charge of an attendant, and I have given instructions accordingly.

I would, however, be permitted to observe that the case is *sui generis*,—"a Triton among minnows," so to speak,—a man with more intelligence, more education, and more to be trusted, within prescribed limits, than any of the other inmates of the institution; and hence the privileges complained of.

I am, of course, fully cognisant of the very great crime chargeable against De Bomford; but as "crime presupposes reason," and as the verdict of a jury has pronounced him to be devoid of that essential element of responsibility, I must ask to be excused if I still maintain the opinion that, in the treatment of a lunatic, my action was not altogether incompatible with the order for his detention.

I need scarcely dwell upon the unsuitable character of the buildings and their surroundings at the Cascades for the purposes to which they are devoted, and, therefore, in allowing a certain amount of freedom within the boundaries, I cannot consider I was risking the safe-keeping of that particular patient. At any rate, the liberty has existed for the past two years, during which time there has been no indication on the part of the man to take any improper advantage of it.

In concluding, I desire to record my appreciation at the expression of confidence in my judgment of the peculiar proclivities of the inmates under my charge, and to observe that it was only under a full conviction founded upon that judgment that any exception was made in the case under review.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

J. COVERDALE, M.D.

THE Correspondence with reference to the privileges accorded to Mr. De Bomford is forwarded for the perusal of the Official Visitors.

B. TRAVERS SOLLY.

The Hon. T. C. SMART, Macquarie-street.

28 Oct. '87.

THE reason why the Official Visitors drew the attention of the Government a second time to the privileges allowed the Patient De Bomford was that no intimation had been received either from the Government direct or through the Medical Superintendent that any action had been taken in the matter.

The Correspondence now forwarded to the Official Visitors shows that their suggestion had been acted on by the issue of specific instructions to the Medical Superintendent relative to the Patient De Bomford.

THOS. C. SMART, *Chairman Official Visitors.*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

31 Oct. 1887.

Hobart, 21st February, 1888.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to inform you that, at a meeting yesterday of the Official Visitors to the Hospital for the Insane, Cascades, it was resolved to address you on the subject of the present treatment of the Patient De Bomford, who, notwithstanding the repeated representations made by the Official Visitors as to the undue liberty and privileges allowed this patient beyond what are required for the actual necessities of his case, is still allowed such privileges and liberty of action which, in the opinion of the Official Visitors, are subversive of the strict discipline of the Institution. They therefore would be glad to know if you would kindly grant them an interview on the subject at any time convenient to yourself, when the matter could be fully discussed and your views personally made known to them.

I have, &c.

C. E. BARNARD, M.D.,
Chairman Official Visitors.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

THE Chief Secretary requests the Surgeon-Superintendent to state, for his information, *full* particulars as to the liberty and privileges allowed the Patient De Bomford beyond those enjoyed by every other patient not under special restraint. What rooms does he occupy? How and where are his meals served? Is he ever allowed to go outside the Hospital? If so, under what circumstances?

B. TRAVERS SOLLY.
24th Feb. 1888.

The Surgeon-Superintendent, Hospital for Insane, Cascades.

Hospital for Insane, Cascades, 25th February, 1888.

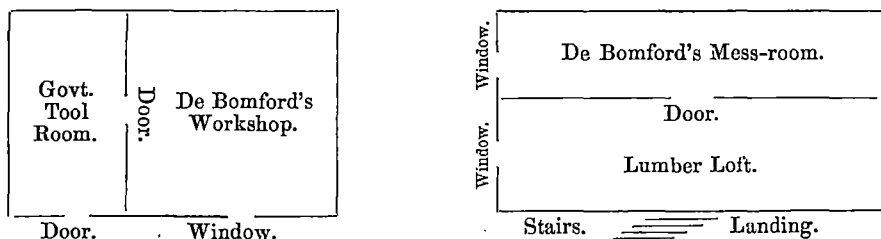
SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit the following particulars in response to the enquiry regarding certain privileges, &c. allowed to Patient De Bomford.

1. The privileges.—He is allowed to pass from the lower yard to a workshop in the upper without being in immediate charge of an attendant, although it is correct to say he is very rarely out of sight of some official of the establishment.

2. The rooms he occupies.—He sleeps in a cell $11\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long by $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide: works in a room 12 ft. long by 11 wide; and has his meals in an upper apartment (a sort of lumber loft), 16 ft. long by $12\frac{1}{2}$ wide.

I am aware the Official Visitors believe that he occupies a larger number of rooms, and therefore I think it well to let the diagrams below show how an erroneous impression has arisen,—the ante-rooms, in both instances, being utilized for the Government.



3. How, and where meals served.—By himself, in the apartment indicated.

4. If ever allowed outside the hospital, &c.—Never allowed outside, except with other patients in the recreation ground or garden, and then always in charge of one or more attendants.

Such are the simple facts of the case, and I cannot but express surprise “that, in the opinion of the Official Visitors, they are subversive of the strict discipline of the institution.”

It is scarcely to be contended that the discipline of an Insane Asylum is to be placed on all fours with that of a Gaol; nor, I apprehend, will it be affirmed that classification (so far as it can be carried out) is to be deprecated even with criminal lunatics. That being the case, where are the objections of the Official Visitors? Under the 6th Section 49 Vict. No. 35, they are empowered to inquire “as to whether there has been adopted any system of coercion, or non-coercion, and if so, *the result thereof?*” and if therefore the non-coercive treatment of the man De Bomford has had no prejudicial effect, I must say I fail to see the justification of the “repeated representations” made against him.

In justice to the man, I may add that he has never abused the privileges granted him, excepting perhaps by giving currency to groundless charges and statements—the evidence of a mind diseased.

And, finally, as I glory in the “*suaviter in modo*” principle in the treatment of the insane, rather than in the “*fortiter in re,*” I confidently look for support from the Government in the management of the trust confided to my charge.

I have, &c.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

J. COVERDALE, M.D.