

1855-6.

VICTORIA.

YARRA BEND LUNATIC ASYLUM.

Return to Address,

MR. MOLLISON—22ND JANUARY, 1856.

LAIID upon THE COUNCIL TABLE by THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS, by command of HIS EXCELLENCY THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT, and ordered by THE COUNCIL to be printed, 23rd January, 1856.

18th September, 1854.
(Received 19th September, 1854.)

SIR,

I have the honor to forward to you, for His Excellency's inspection, the enclosed Report on the subject of the Lunatic Asylum.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

J. F. PALMER.

The Honorable the Colonial Secretary,
&c., &c., &c.

REPORT.

THE Board have visited the Lunatic Asylum, inspected its locality and internal arrangements, and examined into its fitness for the purpose it is intended to fulfil.

The Board are of opinion—

1. That the locality is bad—the situation being low, having no prospect about it, and deprived by adjoining hills of the benefit of the sea breeze in the warm season of the year.

2. That the building is insufficient for the number of lunatics confined, and deficient in many of the arrangements and conveniences of an asylum.

3. The establishment is kept clean, the bedding clean and good, and the victualling of a proper description, the attendants orderly and attentive.

4. There is, however, an absence of any comprehensive plan for the amusement and instruction of the lunatics, who are either kept too much in doors, or within a dusty yard enclosed by a high wall, without recreation or occupation of any kind. There is a piano, which is not used; but there is a great want of books, writing materials, popular games, &c.

The Board therefore beg to suggest—

(1.) That the present asylum and its grounds (a section of six hundred and forty acres) might be sold or applied to some other purpose, and that a new asylum be built on such a site as may be determined on.

(2.) That a building calculated to hold three hundred patients be constructed of stone or brick, with slate or metallic roof, and be as far as possible secure from accidents by fire.

(3.) That the building be divided into eight distinct wards, one of which shall be pay wards for each sex, to be separate from the rest, and to be supplied with a superior scale of comforts.

(4.) That each ward should have in it a parlour, a corridor, single lodging rooms for patients, an associated dormitory communicating with a chamber for two attendants, a clothes-room, a bathroom, a water-closet, a dining-room, a dumb waiter, and a speaking tube leading into the kitchen.

(5.) That no chamber for a single patient should be less than eight feet by ten feet, and twelve feet high, and that a window of some kind should be in each.

(6.) That the floors of patients' apartments be of wood.

(7.) That the staircases be of iron, or stone, ample in size and number, and easy of ascent to afford egress in case of fire.

(8.) That the asylum consist of a main central building with wings.

(9.) That the main central building contain officers' receiving rooms, and apartments for the superintendent and his family.

C.—No. 13.

Each chamber
for a single
patient 8 feet x
10 feet : 12 feet
high.

(10.) That the wings be so arranged, that if rooms are placed on both sides of a corridor, the corridors could be furnished at both ends with moveable glazed sashes for light and air.

(11.) That the building be lighted by gas.

(12.) That the laundry be detached from the building.

(13.) That the drainage be underground and secure from offensive emanations.

(14.) That the building be warmed and ventilated by passing fresh air over pipes containing steam, or hot water, placed in the basement of the building.

(15.) That the boilers for generating steam be connected with an engine for pumping water, driving the washing apparatus, and other machinery.

10,000 gallons of
water.

(16.) That ten thousand gallons of water be daily raised to reservoirs that will supply the highest part of the building.

(17.) That the water-closets be made of indestructible materials, be simple in arrangements, and have a strong downward ventilation connected with them.

(18.) That the floors of the bath rooms, water-closets, and basement stories be made of materials that will not absorb moisture.

(19.) That the grounds be surrounded by a fence, and the places for the violent by a substantial bulwark so placed as not to be unpleasantly visible from the buildings.

(20.) That an infirmary be attached to the asylum for sick lunatics.

(21.) That workshops be established in connection with the asylum.

(22.) That a medical man, thoroughly conversant with the most modern improvements in the arrangements and management of lunatic asylums be brought out from England, and paid an adequate salary to superintend the erection of the new asylum, and afterwards to conduct it.

(23.) That several persons who are thoroughly conversant with the management of the insane in England be brought out to act as assistants, matrons, &c., in the new establishment.

(Signed)

J. F. PALMER,
REDMOND BARRY,
W. McCREA.