

1900.
—
VICTORIA.

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE.

R E P O R T

OF THE

INSPECTOR OF LUNATIC ASYLUMS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER,

1 8 9 9.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO ACT 54 VICT. No. 1113, SECTION 79.

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REPORT.

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE,

Inspector's Office,

Melbourne, 23rd June, 1900.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on the condition of the Lunatic Asylums of Victoria for the year ending 31st December, 1899.

I am very pleased to be able to report that there has been no large increase in the number of registered lunatics in Victoria during the twelve months under review. The total number of lunatics on the books of the Asylums on the 31st December, 1899, was 4,398, as against 4,394 on the corresponding date in 1898, showing an actual increase of only four patients.

In the hospital wards for the temporary reception of lunatics one patient remained at the end of the year as against three on 31st December, 1898.

An important change occurred, however, during the year in the distribution of the patients, as whereas at the end of 1898 the patients under care in the Asylums numbered 4,136, the number had increased to 4,250 on 31st December, 1899. The following figures will explain the position:—The number of patients on leave with their friends at the end of 1898 was 226, but this number had decreased during the succeeding twelve months to 118, a difference of 108; the number boarded out was 30 against 32 for the previous year. These figures, taken in conjunction with the four names added to the registers, will account for the 114 additional patients under detention in the Asylums.

For the whole year the daily average number of patients resident was 4,206, an increase of 68 in the Asylum population over the previous year.

TABLE I.—Showing Distribution of the Insane on 31st December, 1899.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the Public Lunatic Asylums—			
Yarra Bend	421	353	774
Kew	494	460	954
Kew Idiot Asylum	124	107	231
Ararat	397	303	700
Beechworth	382	271	653
Sunbury	289	393	682
Ballarat	148	108	256
Out on probation—			
Yarra Bend	19	22	41
Kew	20	27	47
Kew Idiot Asylum	6	2	8
Ararat	2	8	10
Beechworth	1	4	5
Sunbury	1	5	6
Ballarat ... ..	...	1	1
Boarded out from—			
Yarra Bend ... ..	...	4	4
Kew	3	7	10
Kew Idiot Asylum	2	1	3
Ararat	1	7	8
Beechworth	3	...	3
Sunbury	1	1	2
Ballarat ... ..	...	...	...
Total number of registered lunatics on the books of the Public Asylums			
	2,314	2,084	4,398
In the lunacy ward at—			
Bendigo	1	...	1
Castlemaine ... ..	...	...	...
Geelong ... ..	...	...	...
Total number of registered lunatics in the colony			
	2,315	2,084	4,399

TABLE II.—Showing the Admissions, Re-admissions, Discharges, and Deaths in the Public Asylums during the Year ended 31st December, 1899.

				Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the Asylums, 1st January, 1899	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,300	2,094	4,394
Cases admitted :—									
First admissions	...	...	...	474	393	867			
Not first admissions	...	...	...	68	54	122			
Total cases admitted during the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	542	447	989
Total cases under care during the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,842	2,541	5,383
Cases discharged :—									
Recovered	...	...	...	183	169	352			
Relieved	...	...	...	27	51	78			
Not improved	...	...	...	121	86	207			
Died	...	...	...	197	151	348			
Total cases discharged and died during the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	528	457	985
Remaining in the Asylums, 31st December, 1899	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,314	2,084	4,398
Average number resident during the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,230	1,976	4,206
Persons under care during the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,726	2,453	5,179
Persons admitted	...	...	...	...	...	...	426	359	785
Persons recovered	...	...	...	...	...	...	179	168	347
Transferred from one Asylum to another	...	...	...	...	...	...	102	81	183
Escaped	...	...	...	...	...	...	15	3	18
Retaken	...	...	...	...	...	...	12	2	14

TABLE III.—Showing the Previous Attacks among Persons Admitted during the Year 1899.

Number of Previous Attacks.	Persons.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.
Have had one attack	56	44	100
Have had two attacks	14	8	22
Have had three attacks	3	1	4
Have had four attacks	...	3	3
Have had five attacks	2	...	2
Have had six attacks	...	1	1
Have had twelve attacks	1	...	1

TABLE IV.—Showing the Admissions, Discharges, and Deaths, with the Mean Annual Mortality and Proportion of Recoveries per Cent. of the Admissions, for each Year since the 1st January, 1882.

Year.	Admitted.			Discharged.						Died.			Remaining 31st December in each Year.			Average Number Resident.			Percentage of Recoveries on Admissions.			Percentage of Deaths on the Average Number Resident.						
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Recovered.			Relieved.			Not Improved.			Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.				
				Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.																
1882	246	219	465	117	135	252	13	8	21	...	...	...	138	60	198	1,732	1,415	3,147	1,636	1,263	2,899	47.56	61.64	54.19	8.43	4.75	6.82
1883	282	198	480	107	117	224	11	3	14	...	...	...	140	49	189	1,750	1,443	3,193	1,640	1,296	2,936	37.94	59.09	46.66	8.53	3.78	6.43
1884	298	249	547	145	145	290	8	4	12	...	...	...	142	67	209	1,749	1,479	3,228	1,660	1,338	2,998	48.65	58.23	53.01	8.55	5.00	6.97
1885	293	226	519	141	131	272	7	5	12	...	...	...	147	76	223	1,743	1,487	3,230	1,658	1,370	3,030	48.12	57.96	52.40	8.86	5.54	7.36
1886	333	262	595	128	115	243	7	3	10	...	...	...	125	74	199	1,818	1,560	3,378	1,694	1,421	3,115	38.43	43.89	40.84	7.37	5.27	6.38
1887	372	290	662	138	137	275	6	2	8	...	...	...	158	80	238	1,884	1,632	3,516	1,767	1,494	3,261	37.09	47.24	41.54	8.94	5.40	7.30
1888	381	267	648	171	136	307	4	4	8	...	...	...	127	90	217	1,966	1,666	3,632	1,811	1,513	3,324	44.88	50.93	47.37	7.01	5.94	6.71
1889	401	264	665	169	126	295	56	71	127	...	...	...	153	84	237	1,980	1,647	3,627	1,882	1,543	3,425	42.14	47.73	44.36	8.13	5.44	6.92
1890	438	311	749	168	126	294	17	24	41	...	...	...	161	103	264	2,066	1,703	3,769	1,954	1,588	3,542	38.35	40.51	39.25	8.24	6.48	7.45
1891	427	318	745	170	137	307	25	16	41	...	...	...	201	92	293	2,090	1,778	3,868	1,993	1,630	3,623	39.81	43.08	41.21	10.08	5.64	8.09
1892	399	307	706	142	144	286	20	22	42	...	...	...	181	102	283	2,136	1,818	3,954	2,045	1,681	3,726	35.59	46.90	40.51	8.85	6.07	7.59
1893	384	296	680	153	102	255	25	40	65	...	...	...	177	94	271	2,161	1,877	4,038	2,112	1,748	3,860	39.84	34.46	37.50	8.38	5.37	7.02
1894	402	293	695	124	97	221	21	43	64	...	...	...	207	118	325	2,205	1,911	4,116	2,119	1,793	3,912	30.84	33.11	31.80	9.77	6.58	8.31
1895	377	277	654	115	106	221	25	41	66	...	...	...	211	114	325	2,221	1,927	4,148	2,125	1,804	3,929	30.50	38.26	33.79	9.93	6.32	8.27
1896	384	305	689	114	96	210	19	37	56	...	...	...	231	129	360	2,234	1,970	4,204	2,147	1,823	3,970	29.69	31.47	30.48	10.76	7.08	9.07
1897	435	341	776	117	100	217	39	47	86	...	...	...	209	115	324	2,292	2,049	4,341	2,203	1,884	4,087	26.89	29.33	27.96	9.49	6.10	7.93
1898	396	324	720	127	108	235	25	38	63	...	...	...	233	133	366	2,300	2,094	4,394	2,202	1,936	4,138	32.07	33.33	32.63	10.58	6.87	8.84
1899	428	364	792	183	169	352	27	51	78	...	...	...	197	151	348	2,314	2,084	4,398	2,230	1,976	4,206	42.76	46.43	44.44	8.83	7.64	8.27
Total	6,676	5,111	11,787	2,529	2,227	4,756	355	459	814	...	...	...	3,138	1,731	4,869	...	...	...	34,878	29,101	63,981	37.38	43.57	40.35	9.00	5.95	7.61
																				1,937	1,617	3,554						

TABLE V.—Showing the Admissions, Discharges, and Deaths, with the Mean Annual Mortality and Proportion of Recoveries and of Relieved per Cent. of the Admissions, for each Asylum, for the Year ended 31st December, 1899.

Asylum.	Admitted.			Discharged.						Died.			Remaining 31st December, 1899.			Average Numbers Resident during the Year 1899.			Percentage of Recoveries on Admissions.			Percentage of Relieved on Admissions.			Percentage of Deaths on the Average Numbers Resident.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Recovered.			Relieved.			Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.			
				Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.																		
Yarra Bend	143	107	250	56	40	96	7	14	21	34	91	440	379	819	421	354	775	39.16	37.38	38.40	4.89	13.08	8.40	13.54	9.60	11.74	
Kew	156	163	319	66	97	163	15	25	40	49	105	517	494	1,011	514	451	965	42.30	59.50	51.09	9.61	15.34	12.54	10.89	10.86	10.88	
Idiot Asylum	21	22	43	...	1	1	3	4	7	5	16	132	110	242	124	98	222	...	4.54	2.32	14.29	18.18	16.28	8.87	5.10	7.20	
Ararat	42	33	75	21	15	36	...	3	3	22	41	400	318	718	383	301	684	50.00	45.45	48.00	...	9.09	4.00	4.96	7.31	5.99	
Beechworth	32	13	45	21	6	27	2	5	7	17	43	386	275	661	363	275	638	65.62	46.15	60.00	6.25	38.46	15.56	7.16	6.18	6.73	
Sunbury	31	21	52	14	5	19	...	...	...	20	34	291	399	690	281	391	672	45.16	23.80	36.53	...	...	...	4.98	5.11	5.05
Ballarat	3	5	8	5	5	10	...	...	...	4	18	148	109	257	144	106	250	166.66	100.00	125.00	...	...	...	8.87	5.10	7.20
Total	428	364	792	183	169	352	27	51	78	151	348	2,314	2,084	4,398	2,230	1,976	4,206	42.76	46.43	44.44	6.31	14.01	9.85	8.83	7.64	8.27	

TABLE VI.—History of Annual Admissions since the opening of the first Asylum in 1848.

	Admissions.			Numbers.			Number per cent. of Admissions.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Discharged:—									
Recovered ... ..	...	...	...	4,819	4,068	8,887	28·93	33·70	30·93
Relieved ... ..	...	...	...	673	805	1,478	4·04	6·67	5·14
Not improved ... ..	...	...	...	3,457	2,509	5,966	20·75	20·79	20·77
Died ... ..	...	...	...	5,397	2,603	8,000	32·39	21·57	27·85
Out on trial and boarded out on 31st									
December, 1899 ... ..	...	...	...	59	89	148	·35	·74	·52
Remaining ... ..	...	...	...	2,255	1,995	4,250	13·54	16·53	14·79
Total	16,660	12,069	28,729	16,660	12,069	28,729	100·00	100·00	100·00

TABLE VII.—Showing the Length of Residence in those Discharged Recovered, and in those who have Died, during the Year 1899.

Length of Residence.	Recovered.			Died.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Under 1 month	8	1	9	15	7	22
1 month and under 3 months	26	19	45	25	10	35
3 months " 6 "	27	26	53	13	11	24
6 " " 9 "	35	27	62	11	4	15
9 " " 12 "	20	17	37	16	12	28
1 year and under 2 years	40	44	84	26	21	47
2 years " 3 "	16	19	35	14	14	28
3 " " 5 "	8	10	18	13	13	26
5 " " 7 "	1	3	4	16	11	27
7 " " 10 "	2	1	3	11	16	27
10 " " 12 " ... ..	...	...	...	4	3	7
12 " " 15 " ... ..	...	1	1	4	6	10
15 " " 20 " ... ..	...	1	1	7	10	17
20 " " 25 " ... ..	...	...	...	8	3	11
25 " " 30 " ... ..	...	...	...	2	2	4
30 " " 35 " ... ..	...	...	...	11	7	18
35 " " 40 " ... ..	...	...	...	1	...	1
40 " " 45 " ... ..	...	...	...	...	1	1
Total	183	169	352	197	151	348

TABLE VIII.—Showing in Quinquennial Periods the Ages of those Admitted, Recovered, and Died during the Year 1899, and of those Remaining on 31st December, 1899.

Ages.	The Admissions.			Recovered.			The Deaths.			Patients Resident 31st December, 1899.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Under 5 years	5	1	6	...	...	...	...	1	1	5	2	7
5 years and under 10 years	9	3	12	...	1	1	...	1	1	25	15	40
10 " " 15 "	6	8	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	21	25	46
15 " " 20 "	14	21	35	3	8	11	5	4	9	62	67	129
20 " " 25 "	35	35	70	16	17	33	8	6	14	145	79	224
25 " " 30 "	79	65	144	24	23	47	13	6	19	179	159	338
30 " " 35 "	62	61	123	19	32	51	13	16	29	240	209	449
35 " " 40 "	58	53	111	33	21	54	17	5	22	250	197	447
40 " " 45 "	55	29	84	18	16	34	17	8	25	229	190	419
45 " " 50 "	30	36	66	12	20	32	11	12	23	183	189	372
50 " " 55 "	36	20	56	13	7	20	13	9	22	211	198	409
55 " " 60 "	27	20	47	11	5	16	10	7	17	168	200	368
60 " " 65 "	24	23	47	8	3	11	22	23	45	153	138	291
65 " " 70 "	15	20	35	4	7	11	22	11	33	133	119	252
70 " " 75 "	17	9	26	7	...	7	15	16	31	77	69	146
75 " " 80 "	12	8	20	...	1	1	12	6	18	38	40	78
80 " " 85 "	7	4	11	...	...	...	3	8	11	18	17	35
85 " " 90 "	2	1	3	...	...	...	3	1	4	4	6	10
90 " " 100 " ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1	4	...	...	...
Unknown	49	30	79	15	8	23	10	10	20	173	165	338
Total	542	447	989	183	169	352	197	151	348	2,314	2,084	4,398

TABLE IX.—Return of Patients on Probation under Section 87.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Out on probation on 1st January, 1899	92	134	226
Allowed out during the year	130	176	306
Total	222	310	532
Recovered :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	37	62	99
Of those allowed out during the present year	45	49	94
Total	82	111	193
Died :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	2	1	3
Of those allowed out during the present year	5	2	7
Total	7	3	10
Written off the books under section 89, Act 1113 :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	21	35	56
Of those allowed out during the present year	6	17	23
Total	27	52	79
Returned to the Asylums at expiration of probation :—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	25	30	55
Of those allowed out during the present year	32	45	77
Total	57	75	132
Remaining under care out of the Asylums on 31st December, 1899 ...	49	69	118

TABLE X.—Return of Patients Boarded out during the Year 1899.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Boarded out on 1st January, 1899	11	21	32
Allowed out during the year	1	10	11
Total	12	31	43
Returned to the Asylums by their guardians—			
Of those allowed out during previous years	2	8	10
Of those allowed out during the present year ... ..	...	3	3
Total	2	11	13
Boarded out on 31st December, 1899	10	20	30

TABLE XI.—Showing the Manner in which Patients were Admitted during the Year 1899.

	Yarra Bend.	Kew.	Idiot Asylum.	Ararat.	Beechworth.	Sunbury.	Ballarat.	Total.
Lunatics sent to the Asylums by their friends ...	36	66	12	7	4	...	1	126
{ Male	44	97	10	12	3	1	1	168
{ Female	91	89	4	35	27	31	2	279
" the police ...	51	64	4	21	9	20	4	173
{ Male	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
{ Female	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
" received from Benevolent Asylums ...	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	4
{ Male	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
{ Female	11	...	...	...	1	...	...	12
" Hospitals ...	9	...	...	...	1	...	...	10
{ Male	6	5	11	12	30	20	23	107
{ Female	5	4	10	33	10	21	7	90
" Gaols ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
" all other public institutions (including transfers)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	260	328	51	120	85	93	38	975
Escaped patients retaken ...	2	3	1	3	2	1	...	12
{ Male	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2
{ Female	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total admissions	262	331	52	125	87	94	38	989

TABLE XII.—Showing the Nationalities and Religious Persuasions of those admitted for the first time during the Year 1899.

Birthplaces.	Religious Persuasions.										Total.
	Protestant.					Roman Catholic.	Pagan.	Hebrew.	Mahome-tan.	Unascertained.	
	Church of England.	Presby-terian.	Wesleyan.	Lutheran.	Other Protestant Denomi-nations.						
Victoria	126	53	31	1	26	96	...	1	...	5	339
Other Colonies and British Possessions	21	6	3	1	3	15	...	...	1	2	52
England	92	2	19	...	11	10	...	2	...	3	139
Scotland	4	25	1	...	1	3	...	...	...	...	34
Ireland	10	8	1	...	1	62	...	...	...	2	84
France	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Germany ... ..	...	1	...	5	...	1	...	...	...	...	7
China ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	...	...	...	9
Other Countries ...	3	...	1	4	...	11	1	2	...	2	24
Not known	33	12	14	1	10	23	...	1	...	9	103
Total	290	107	70	12	52	221	10	6	1	23	792

TABLE XIII.—Showing the Average Number of Patients employed attending Amusements and Divine Service, &c.

Particulars.	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the Workshops (Male)—			
Blacksmiths	13	...	13
Carpenters	19	...	19
Mattress-making and repairing	12	30	42
Shoemakers	21	...	21
Tailors	27	...	27
Painters	16	...	16
Basket-maker	1	...	1
Mat-makers	23	...	23
Engineers	2	...	2
In the Workshops (Female)—			
Sewing (making-up and repairing clothing)	...	385	385
Fancy work ... ..	...	46	46
Miscellaneous occupations—			
Working on the farm	174	...	174
" in the garden	102	...	102
" in the kitchen	46	20	66
" in the store	8	...	8
" in the laundry	...	285	285
" in the wards and airing courts	536	563	1,099
" as servants at private quarters	27	23	50
" on roads and ornamental grounds	70	...	70
" in mess-room	6	3	9
Other work about the establishment	140	10	150
Amusements—			
Balls and concerts ...	650	641	1,291
Billiards and reading room	417	293	710
Cards, chess, dominoes, &c.	320	190	510
Bowls, cricket, croquet, football, and tennis	375	125	500
Walking and driving	486	387	873
Attending divine service ...			
" school	809	710	1,519
" school	125	99	224

TABLE XIV.—Return showing the Quantity of Produce supplied by the Farms and Gardens at the various Lunatic Asylums during the year ended 31st December, 1899.

Asylums.	Butter.	Eggs.	Meat, Poultry, &c.	Milk.	Vegetables.	Fruit.	Bacon.	Lard.
	lbs.	doz.	lbs.	qts.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Yarra Bend ...	869	889	3,642	68,469	252,117	1,824	...	...
Kew ...	...	2,873	4,032	111,859	516,412	19,965	4,424	50
Ararat ...	544	771	56	57,981	142,855	...	...	...
Beechworth ...	269	182	1,426	45,726	80,594	39,239	...	20
Sunbury ...	431	409	514	54,549	156,607	9,102	...	...
Ballarat ...	475	96	1,402	27,494	46,233	480	...	...

Asylums.	Green Food.	Hay.	Peas.	Root Crops.	Straw.	Wheat.	Oats.	Barley.	Chaff.
	bundles.	tons.	bushels.	tons.	lbs.	bushels.	bushels.	tcns.	tons.
Yarra Bend ...	1,400 tons.	75	...	80	...	...	...	...	16½
Kew ...	235	120	320	465	44,800	...	...	...	...
Ararat ...	135	120	...	79	...	...	...	70	...
Beechworth ...	53	35	16	...	51,520	40	150	...	...
Sunbury ...	160	29½	...	100	...	...	...	...	...
Ballarat ...	3	60	...	...	3,360	18	...	...	...

TABLE XV.—Showing the Total Receipts and Expenditure of the Department of Hospitals for the Insane during the Year 1899.

Receipts.							Amount.		
							£	s.	d.
Collections by the Master-in-Lunacy for maintenance of patients at—									
Yarra Bend Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	4,490	3	2
Kew Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	7,271	6	1
Ararat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	1,462	1	3
Beechworth Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	1,396	0	9
Sunbury Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	800	0	2
Ballarat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	442	1	2
Lunacy Wards	...	...	...	...	...	2	5	9
Amount of sales	...	...	...	...	...	1,054	11	1
„ fines	...	...	...	...	...	26	5	0
Miscellaneous collections	...	...	...	...	...	30	10	2
Total	...	...	...	...	...	16,975	4	7

Expenditure.							Amount.		
							£	s.	d.
General expenses	...	...	...	...	...	2,385	0	11
Maintenance at—									
Yarra Bend Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	21,165	2	6
Kew Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	29,453	9	9
Ararat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	18,641	5	11
Beechworth Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	16,411	3	9
Sunbury Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	15,753	19	5
Ballarat Asylum	...	...	...	...	...	6,510	0	4
Lunacy Ward, Bendigo	...	...	...	...	...	156	0	0
„ „ Geelong	...	...	...	...	...	111	5	0
„ „ Castlemaine	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	0
Expenses in connexion with committal and transport of lunatics	...	...	...	...	...	1,637	19	3
„ „ boarded-out patients	...	...	...	...	...	519	14	11
Total	...	...	...	...	...	112,746	2	9

TABLE XVII.—Showing the Average Weekly Cost of Maintenance of Patients—*continued.*

Asylums.	Forage.			Incidentals.			Total Weekly Cost of Maintenance per Patient.			Average Collections per Week for Maintenance, Sales, Fees, Fines, &c.			Weekly Cost per Patient, Deducting Collections for Maintenance, Sales, Fees, Fines, &c.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Yarra Bend ...	0	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	10	6	0	2	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	8	2 $\frac{3}{4}$
Kew ...	0	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	1	0	9	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	2	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	7	0 $\frac{3}{4}$
Ararat ...	0	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	1	0	10	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	0	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	9	6 $\frac{1}{4}$
Beechworth ...	0	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	9	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	0	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	0	8	11 $\frac{3}{4}$
Sunbury ...	0	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	1	0	9	0	0	0	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	8	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
Ballarat ...	0	0	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	0	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	0	10	0	0	0	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	0	9	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Total ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	9	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	1	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	0	8	4
General expenses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$

TABLE XVIII.—Showing the Admissions, Re-admissions, Discharges, and Deaths during the Year ending 31st December, 1899, in Lunacy Wards at Bendigo, Castlemaine, and Geelong.

	Males.			Females.			Total.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
In the wards, 1st January, 1899 ...	...	...	...	2	1	3	...	...	...
Cases admitted :—									
First admissions ...	70	48	118	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total cases admitted during the year ...	...	...	...	70	48	118	...	...	...
Total cases under care during the year ...	...	...	...	72	49	121	...	...	...
Cases discharged :—									
Recovered ...	35	17	52	...	...	...	...	...	...
Not improved—Transferred to Public Lunatic Asylums ...	34	31	65	...	...	...	...	...	...
Died ...	2	1	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total cases discharged and died during the year ...	...	...	...	71	49	120	...	...	...
Remaining in the wards, 31st December, 1899 ..	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...

TABLE XIX.—Showing the Number of Patients Visited and the Number of Miles Travelled by the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums during the Year 1899.

	Number of Patients on Day of Visit.		Number of Miles Travelled.			Number of Patients on Day of Visit.		Number of Miles Travelled.	
	Number.	Total.	Number.	Total.		Number.	Total.	Number.	Total.
Yarra Bend—	...	...	...	...	Beechworth—	...	...	...	...
11th January ...	772	...	2	...	16th March ...	633	...	345	...
6th March ...	783	...	2	...	8th June ...	640	...	345	...
15th April ...	785	...	2	...	13th September ...	632	...	345	...
21st April ...	777	...	2	...	7th December ...	656	...	345	...
20th May ...	783	...	2	...	...	2,561	...	1,380	...
26th June ...	773	...	2	...	Sunbury—	...	...	...	...
26th July ...	777	...	2	...	24th January ...	651	...	49 $\frac{1}{2}$	...
24th August ...	767	...	2	...	4th May ...	667	...	49 $\frac{1}{2}$	...
16th September ...	767	...	2	...	25th May ...	667	...	49 $\frac{1}{2}$	...
2nd October ...	765	...	2	...	22nd August ...	675	...	49 $\frac{1}{2}$	...
13th November ...	770	...	2	...	12th October ...	674	...	49 $\frac{1}{2}$	...
19th December ...	775	...	2	...	16th November ...	678	...	49 $\frac{1}{2}$	...
27th December ...	772	...	2	...	12th December ...	681	...	49 $\frac{1}{2}$	...
...	10,066	...	26	...	...	4,693	...	346	...
Kew*	...	...	...	...	Ballarat—	...	...	...	...
Ararat—	...	...	...	...	21st February ...	247	...	206	...
23rd March ...	679	...	320	...	11th May ...	248	...	206	...
22nd June ...	688	...	320	...	26th September ...	255	...	206	...
21st September ...	686	...	320	...	29th November ...	256	...	206	...
15th December ...	699	...	320	...	...	1,006	...	824	...
...	2,752	...	1,280	...	Total ...	...	21,078	...	3,856

* Inspected by Board of Official Visitors.

The following variations have taken place in the Asylum numbers during the year:—

Yarra Bend, an increase of	...	...	2
Kew, a decrease of	...	...	5
Kew Idiot Cottages, an increase of	...	...	28
Ararat, an increase of	...	...	33
Beechworth, an increase of	...	...	9
Sunbury, an increase of	...	...	35
Ballarat, an increase of	...	...	12

In the Idiot Cottages at Kew additional accommodation was provided during the year, and there is at present ample room. The increases in the County Asylums were caused by transfers from Melbourne. To keep down the overcrowding at Yarra Bend and Kew as much as possible, 70 patients were transferred from the first-named institution and 95 from the latter.

Admissions.—The admissions during the year 1899 numbered 785 persons, 426 being males and 359 females. This is the highest yearly number recorded since the Asylums were opened.

The general population of the colony at the end of the year was estimated at 1,180,878, and on this basis the ratio of the insane admitted during the year to the whole population would be 1 in 1,504. For the year 1898, the proportion was 1 in 1,653, when the general population was estimated at 1,175,490.

In 1898 it was calculated that in Victoria there was 1 lunatic in every 268 persons. The same ratio is found for the year 1899, for although there is an addition of only 4 to the total number of registered lunatics, yet the general population shows no appreciable increase.

The increasing number of certificated lunatics in every civilized country is a startling and dispiriting sequel to the hopes entertained in the middle of the century as to the results to be obtained from the scientific and humane treatment of the insane, and would at first sight seem to justify the fears that there is a large and growing increase of this dreaded disease. Authorities, however, are divided in opinion as to whether there is any increase of insanity or not. Viewing this important question from a Victorian standpoint, it is found that there is strong reason to believe that a lesser percentage of our population become insane now than 30 years ago. The increase in numbers is largely due to the extension of the meaning of the term "lunacy," so as to include many conditions of abnormal mental state—including certain forms of crime—and to the disinclination that is generally felt in the present day to allow even harmless lunatics to wander at large. The result is a large accumulation of incurable cases in the Asylums, which must not however be looked upon as proof of increase in the disease. Another factor in this accumulation is the low death rate of the insane now as compared with the rate during the first half of the century.

As to how far it is possible to lower the accumulative rate by more scientific treatment, and thereby increasing the recoveries, it is difficult to determine. A considerable percentage of the patients admitted are incurable, and many of the more curable cases are not received into the Asylums until the most hopeful stage of the disease is passed. Whatever the result on the discharge rate may be, the relatives of insane persons have a right to expect as scientific treatment, and as careful nursing should be given, as obtains in any hospital for bodily disease.

I subjoin statistics showing the admissions into the Victorian Asylums during the decennial periods 1869–1878, and 1889–1898. The yearly average number of patients admitted for the first period was 538, and for the second it was 564; but as there was a relatively large increase in the general population, it will be seen that the proportion of admissions to the population has decreased somewhat during the past 30 years.

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS TO VICTORIAN PUBLIC ASYLUMS DURING THE DECENNIAL PERIOD 1869-1878.

Year.	Number of persons admitted.	General Population.	Ratio of Admissions to Population.
1869 ...	507	710,317	1 in 1,401
1870 ...	518	738,200	1 in 1,425
1871 ...	523	752,287	1 in 1,438
1872 ...	555	769,558	1 in 1,386
1873 ...	566	791,083	1 in 1,397
1874 ...	538	807,756	1 in 1,501
1875 ...	559	823,272	1 in 1,472
1876 ...	556	840,341	1 in 1,511
1877 ...	552	860,804	1 in 1,559
1878 ...	509	879,386	1 in 1,727

ADMISSIONS FOR THE DECENNIAL PERIOD 1889-1898.

1889 ...	654	1,118,077	1 in 1,709
1890 ...	729	1,147,994	1 in 1,574
1891 ...	730	1,157,804	1 in 1,586
1892 ...	674	1,167,329	1 in 1,732
1893 ...	674	1,174,022	1 in 1,742
1894 ...	692	1,179,104	1 in 1,704
1895 ...	650	1,181,769	1 in 1,818
1896 ...	683	1,174,888	1 in 1,720
1897 ...	771	1,176,248	1 in 1,526
1898 ...	711	1,175,490	1 in 1,653

Discharges.—Recoveries.—The recovery rate shows a marked improvement over the preceding year. The patients discharged number 352, being 117 in excess of the numbers for 1898, and showing a percentage of recoveries of 44.44. The relieved rate also increased to 9.85 per cent., and these figures taken in conjunction give the satisfactory discharge rate of 54.29 per cent. on the admissions.

Relieved.—The number of patients written off the books as relieved was 78, as against 63 for 1898.

Mortality.—The number of deaths, 348, was 18 fewer than in 1898, and a diminished rate of mortality is shown, the percentage of deaths on the average numbers resident being 8.27 against 8.84 for the preceding year. The percentage of deaths for the past eighteen years averaged 7.61.

Probation.—I am sorry to notice that the number of patients on trial under the care of their friends has decreased by 108 as compared with the previous year, and the Asylum population has been thereby added to. This diminution in the number of probationers increases the expenditure of the Department, adds to the overcrowding, and lessens the liberty of the harmless insane.

No doubt the efforts that have been made by certain critics to disparage the work of the Victorian Asylums, by separating the number of patients returned as recovered from the patients discharged while on trial—making the former the one test of good management—has led the Superintendents to detain patients longer in the Asylums than formerly, with the hope of obtaining a greater number of direct discharges. Some legal decisions of the Courts and rulings of the Crown Solicitor seem also to have hampered the actions of the Asylum officers. The result is not, in my opinion, in the interests of either the patients or the Department, and a careful revision of the Lunacy Act might tend to remove some of the difficulties.

Pay Patients.—As private Asylums are not permitted in Victoria, it is only right that the Lunacy Department should provide suitable accommodation for paying patients. Hitherto the financial condition of the colony, and the needs of the Department to enlarge and improve existing institutions, has made it impossible to do more than set apart portions of the general Asylums for such patients, and to supply them with extra comforts. This system has only met the difficulty in a very partial manner.

If the state of the finances will permit, I would strongly recommend that special buildings for pay patients be erected in the grounds of the Kew Asylum, or on some other suitable site. Such an establishment should be, at least, self-supporting at an early date.

Receiving Houses.—The Lunacy Act directs that when a "Receiving House" has been proclaimed all patients must be sent there in the first instance, and retained for at least two days, and that transfer can only be made to an Asylum by a most complex system of examination. The enormous expense these institutions would entail has prevented the erection of suitable buildings, and there is a strong opinion among medical experts that the repeated examinations would be injurious to the patients. I would recommend that the law on the subject be amended, so as to allow persons who are clearly insane being sent at once to an Asylum, and Receiving Houses being provided for the reception of only those persons whose mental condition might be considered doubtful. Such a change in the Act would enable many persons who are now detained in gaols being remanded for safety and observation to a Receiving House.

Works and Buildings.—The works at the Idiot Asylum, except the enlargement of the kitchen, are finished, and all present fear of overcrowding in connexion with that institution is removed. A new block is in course of erection at the Ballarat Asylum, and necessary alterations to the kitchen, laundry, and bathrooms are in hand. It is expected that the new buildings will be available on an early date, and it is proposed to use them for the accommodation of female epileptics now detained in the Metropolitan Asylums. It is understood that the erection of a second block is to be at once proceeded with. The long-felt want of a proper laundry at Sunbury Asylum is now being met by the erection of a substantial building. Improvements have been made to the bathrooms of the Yarra Bend and Kew Asylums, the fowl-yard and drains of the first-named Asylum have been altered and repaired, and a new fence has been erected around the female cottages. Many urgent works are, however, still standing over until the Public Works Department can deal with them.

Training of Nurses and Attendants.—Lectures on nursing are continued in the Asylums as heretofore, but very few of the staff take advantage of the senior course. I am informed that this is largely due to the action of the Public Service Board in recommending for promotion members of the staff who do not possess nursing certificates, and are unqualified for the discharge of the medical duties connected with their offices. I am sorry that the Public Service Board is forcing a standard on the Asylums that would not be accepted in any other institution of a similar nature. The interests of the patients do not, in my opinion, seem to have received from the Board that consideration which the importance of the matter demands.

Concessions to Staff.—An increase of pay was allowed to the attendants and nurses from 1st July, 1899—the former receiving at the rate of £6 per annum, and the latter at the rate of £5. The attendants are to receive a further addition of £6 from 1st January, 1900. Several of the artisans, likewise, received increments, ranging from £5 to £12 per annum. It was also decided to extend the annual leave of the non-clerical staff to three weeks, and to grant an additional day each fortnight to the attendants and nurses to compensate for the long hours of daily duty.

Cost of Maintenance.—The total expenditure for the year in all the Asylums amounted to £112,746 2s. 9d., against £113,897 10s. 6d. for 1898, showing a reduction of £1,151 7s. 9d., notwithstanding the fact that an average of 68 more patients had to be maintained throughout the year.

The net weekly cost was 8s. 4d., being lower than for the preceding year, when the cost was 8s. 9¼d. weekly. Many of the contracts for supplies have been accepted at lower rates than those recently ruling, and without any curtailment of issues the Asylum votes have benefited to a considerable extent.

The Master-in-Lunacy collected the large sum of £15,863 18s. 4d. from the estates of patients towards their maintenance in the Asylums, and the sum of £1,054 11s. 1d. was paid into the revenue from sales of surplus stock and stores.

Tables XV., XVI., XVII., give details of the receipts and expenditure of the Department.

General Remarks.—For some years it has been felt by the Medical Staff of the Department that the Lunatic Asylums are not giving the patients all the advantages that are obtainable from modern medical treatment, and that in some other respects these institutions are not worked so as to keep them in line with those of other countries. A recent decision of the Public Service Board to promote by seniority, and not to adopt my recommendation to make the possession of nursing certificates an important ground for promotion, blocks the way to reform. It is my duty, therefore, to report that the patients in the Asylums are not receiving the care and attention which they are entitled to, and to recommend to you that such action be taken as may seem best for securing the needed reforms. I would beg to call your attention to the special reports I have made during the past few years on the condition of the Asylums.

In considering the difficulties of reform and management of these institutions it is impossible to ignore the effects of the constant use of political influence by members of the staff. Assuming that this influence has no potential value in determining the actions of the Department, it fosters a spirit of unrest and opposition to medical principles of work, and tends to keep the interest of the staff in the foreground.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. V. McCREERY,

Inspector of Lunatic Asylums.

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