

NELSON MENTAL HOSPITAL

I have the honour to present my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1948.

The number of patients under care during this period was 1,185. Of these, 1,126 were admissions under reception orders and 59 were voluntary boarders. Admissions totalling 157 included 47 transferred from other mental hospitals, 46 under section 8 of the amendment of the Act, and 38 voluntary boarders. Sixty-five, including 37 voluntary boarders, were discharged during the year. Twenty-one were transferred to other mental hospitals. Deaths totalled 36.

The health of the patients has been, on the whole, good; as is reflected in the low death-rate.

Building difficulties persist, as is the case elsewhere, but nevertheless a good deal of maintenance, a number of improvements, and some new works have been completed.

At Nelson, kitchenettes have been completed in El Nido and F Ward and washing-machines installed. The office has been enlarged and rearranged to give more efficiency. Renovations have been made to Hospital Ward and routine painting continued.

At Ngawhatu a hairdressing-salon has been erected, also a pavilion on the bowling-green. Storerooms in the female villas have been enlarged; mattress-rooms are in the course of building. The kitchen in main building has been remodelled. New roads have been made on the farm and old ones repaired. Painting and maintenance is catching up, and, all in all, progress is more satisfactory than it has been for a number of years. The Hospital Ward has been transferred from two-floored Viewmont to single-storied Kinross. This makes nursing much easier and enables the elderly and the frail to have much more time in the sun now that there are no stairs to surmount.

The non-replacement of worn-out boilers has been a serious handicap to the laundry, and some urgency must be given this. The non-sealing of Polstead Road has evoked continued complaint also, but arrangements are in train apparently to remedy this.

A 16 mm. film projector has been purchased for the dual purpose of staff instruction and patients' entertainment, and it serves these purposes very well.

The acquisition of a station-wagon is an amenity which has been of much use to patients, staff, and the hospital generally.

An agreement has been reached with the Fire Board whereby the alarm siren at Ngawhatu is now connected with the Nelson City Fire Brigade Station; connection from the Nelson branch has, of course, been in existence for some years. The recently appointed Fire Captain is undergoing a special one month's course of training at the city brigade.

Farm activities have proceeded satisfactorily, and returns have been adequate. Staffing conditions have been somewhat easier too.

Repairs to the farm buildings are proceeding at present.

Patients' amusements have been on a better basis than ever previously, I should think, largely due to the acquisition of the picture projector, but helped very much also by concert parties who have visited regularly, and by the continuing of fortnightly dances, regular picnics, and so on.

Mr. Croucher, of the Suburban Bus Service, is in particular to be thanked for his continued kindness in supplying buses for the taking of patients to various places of entertainment and for transporting concert parties without charge. He has been most generous.

Turning for a moment from the particular to the general, I think it opportune here to mention that the present policy of modern furnishing for the villas, modern clothing for the patients, and a more liberal and a more hospital-like outlook generally is a great improvement and makes conditions vastly more congenial for every one.