

tion for the neighbour and others in the same district to cease struggling for honest independence is too obvious. Laxity in the administration of charitable aid breeds poverty, and once more I would point out that the remedy lies to a very great extent in the hands of the citizens themselves through their representatives on local administrative bodies.

Regarding the institutions designed to provide indoor relief for the destitute and aged, I have to report as follows: The Old People's Home, New Plymouth; the Ohiro Home, Wellington; the Jubilee Home, Christchurch; Tuarangi, Ashburton; and the Lorne Farm, Southland, all merit high praise for efficiency, comfort, cleanliness, and economy. The only drawback to the Ohiro Home is its site. The Costley Home, Auckland, is busy making reforms, and I hope next year to be able to report on satisfactory conditions of cleanliness and comfort. The Caversham Benevolent Institution remains understaffed; as has been often pointed out the whole institution requires for its thorough-going reform removal to some larger ground-space in the country. The Jubilee Home, Wanganui, is fairly satisfactory, and the same may be said of the Old Men's Home, Tararu. The Whangarei Home is satisfactory, and the Gisborne Home better than formerly. At Hamilton there should be a resident caretaker. The Napier Old Men's Home is a disgrace to the Board, and something should speedily be done to remedy matters. Notes made on the visit of an Inspector in June, 1904, say, "The buildings are old, dilapidated, unlined, infested with bugs. The bedsteads are narrow, no sheets or pillow-cases, bedding dirty, and pillows in some cases filthy. Some of the inmates were very dirty, and are either neglected or beyond control." Nelson Old Men's Home is an old building, bug-infested, kept clean and habitable by indefatigable labour on the part of the matron, Mrs. Matthews. The Home at Timaru is also an old building, but the site has been chosen for a new one. At the Oamaru Home there is one good ward; the rest of the building is very unsatisfactory, although it is well managed and as clean and comfortable as such a building can be kept. Other institutions that have been visited during the year are St. Andrew's Orphanage at Motueka, thoroughly satisfactory in its management under Mr. and Mrs. Haycock. The children looked strong and healthy and find here a real home. St. Mary's Home, Wellington, and St. Mary's Home, Christchurch: In both these institutions the number of inmates is diminishing. The Linwood Refuge is still doing admirable maternity work. The Samaritan Home, Christchurch, is anxious to be placed on a firmer legal basis in regard to its inmates—the dregs of society. The patience and kindness of the Matron, Miss Early, show that her heart is in the helpful work. The Alexandra Home for Friendless Women, and the Levin Memorial Cottage Home for Children, Wellington, are working well; also the Convalescent Home, an invaluable haven of rest for delicate and convalescing patients.

HOSPITALS.

Generally speaking the management of our hospitals is satisfactory. Faults of construction in new hospitals are many, but this cannot be remedied until Hospital Boards are legally compelled to submit their plans for approval to this office before commencing to build. Ratepayers would be astonished if they realised the amount of money simply thrown away on defective material and workmanship, as well as the faults of construction that necessitate alteration when the building is supposed to be complete, in order to comply with laws of sanitation.

I would draw your attention to methods in use at the Northern Wairoa Hospital, Aratapu, that are a menace to our hospital system. Any person who pays £1 6s. a year is entitled to the benefit of free medicines and attendance by the doctor for himself, his wife, and children. If this benefit contributor or any of his family becomes an in-patient of the hospital they receive all the benefits thereof for 15s. a week. This means that the Aratapu Hospital is turned into a sort of private benefit club for the neighbourhood. An exceptional concession on the same lines was made to local committees in the isolated district of Mercury Bay, and this concession has been copied and taken advantage of by the Northern Wairoa Hospital, which cannot urge the same plea of isolation or difficulty of access.

I append a table giving a few comparative facts respecting our four largest hospitals:—

	Auckland.	Christchurch.	Dunedin.	Wellington.
Daily average of patients from 1st April, 1903, to 31st March, 1904	156	105	101	169
Number of deaths, same period	176	107	133	143
Total number hospital staff	86	71	61	99
Male officers and servants	19*	17	14	25
Female officers and servants	67†	54	47	75
Cost of antiseptics, dressing, &c.	£263 7s. 8d.	£249 5s. 5d.	£278 17s.	£308 14s.

* Also five old men doing odd work.

† No laundry-work done at this hospital.

NURSES' REGISTRATION ACT.

The New Zealand Nurses' Registration Act continues to work smoothly and effectively. There are now 391 nurses' names on the Register. Examinations were held at different centres on the first Tuesday and Wednesday in May and December. At the two examinations fifty nurses passed the preliminary examination in anatomy and physiology, and sixty nurses passed their final and practical, and were added to the list of registered nurses.