

CHRISTCHURCH MENTAL HOSPITAL.

SIR,—

Sunnyside Mental Hospital, Christchurch, 20th May, 1908.

I have the honour to submit the annual report for the year ending 31st December, 1907.

During the year there were 127 admissions, of whom 91 were males and 36 females. Of these, 13 males and 8 females were re-admissions.

At the end of December, 1906, there was a total of 529 patients, and at the end of 1907 the number had increased to 554. The discharges and removals were made up of 46 recoveries, 8 discharges not improved, and 48 deaths. Of the number admitted during the year, 25 males and 1 female were transferred from other institutions.

The average recovery-rate for the year for males and females is 45 per cent. Of the forty-eight patients who died twenty-five were over sixty years of age.

The general health of the community has been good, there being no epidemics of any kind and no serious accidents.

At one time during the year we had a deal of trouble with the water-supply. It was noticed that the water was muddy, and after investigating we traced the trouble to the overflow-pipe from the large cistern into which the two artesian wells flow. This pipe had hardly any fall, and the storm-water drains, owing to insufficiency of manholes, had got blocked, and the storm-water was backing up through the overflow into the well. This pipe was immediately cut off and the walls of the well made secure, and then permanganate of potash was pumped through the whole water-system. Fortunately there were no ill effects, but the incident tended to show the danger of storing water underground. The Public Works Department promptly made a start at driving a new well, but unfortunately, up to the present, we have not yet got a flow for our needs with sufficient rise to have the cistern constructed above ground.

The laundry machinery has been installed, and the new workshops are finished, but, as I foretold in my previous report, we are short of boilers. There are two at present, and we find that for this year we shall have to hire a portable boiler to allow of shutting down for cleaning and overhauling. A new boiler should be installed as soon as possible.

As I have reported previously, the bathing accommodation is insufficient, and I trust that during this winter your new scheme for a general bath-house will be carried through.

Since the beginning of the year we had a fire in the store and adjoining corridors. I have to record my thanks to the members of our own brigade for the prompt and—of more importance—intelligent way they fought the fire. By their efforts and the efficient condition of the fire appliances a great disaster was averted. I also take this opportunity of thanking the various fire brigades and general public who came to our assistance. Whilst dealing with fire-prevention, I again strongly recommend that the fire service should be connected with the reservoirs in the towers. It would be a most valuable first-aid addition, and might be the means of preventing the spread of a fire, as then on the lower two floors water would be available on the first discovery of a fire, instead of having to wait, as at present, for the pumps beginning to work.

The most important change in the staff was the loss of our farm-manager. Under the new *régime* we are reshaping the paddocks for the better rotation of crops, and also carrying out draining operations, which will add considerably to the acreage of the arable land.

As I considered, and was backed in my opinion by various individuals in the Stock Department, that the Ayrshire cow is not the most suitable for this district, we, with the permission of the Minister, held a sale of Ayrshires, and with the proceeds have purchased cows of the Shorthorn breed from the best milking-herds of the province. With a well-selected imported bull, we now have the nucleus of a herd of Shorthorns which, I trust, in the future will rival the old herd of Ayrshires. At the same time we have not lost touch with the Ayrshires, but intend running the two purebred herds for a time for the sake of comparison.

The patients' recreation-ground has been finished, and in the summer evenings both male and female patients go there and enjoy cricket, bowling, tennis, and croquet. The cricket team had a successful season, and at the Easter Bowling Tournament in Christchurch the silver medals for the doubles were won by a Sunnyside team. This striving with the outside world has a brightening effect on the patients' lives, and gives them much more interest in the news in the daily papers.

Religious services have been conducted throughout the year by the Anglican and Roman Catholic bodies and also by representatives of the Free Churches, who conduct the services one day in the month.

The patients have enjoyed the usual round of dances and concerts in the institution, and have had frequent opportunities of visiting the theatres in town, thanks to the managers of various theatrical companies. Miss Jessie McLachlan and her concert company kindly came out and gave an afternoon concert in the recreation-hall, and Mr. Stevenson, the champion billiard-player, gave an exhibition on the men's billiard-table.

To Dr. Gribben and the various members of the staff I have to tender my sincere thanks for their hearty co-operation in the work of the year.

The Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

W. BAXTER GOW.