

HOKITIKA MENTAL HOSPITAL.

1st June, 1908.

I visited this institution on the 30th May (to which date the statistics will refer) and to-day. Miss Maclean paid a visit of inspection on the 29th August last, and in the intervening period the Deputy Inspector and Official Visitors visited on four and thirteen occasions respectively.

Since Miss Maclean's visit the following changes have taken place in the population:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Patients resident on 29th August, 1907	149	58	207
„ on probation on 29th August, 1907	4	1	5
„ on register on 29th August, 1907	153	59	212
„ admitted since 29th August, 1907	11	5	16
Total under care since 29th August, 1907	164	64	228
	Males.	Females.	Total.
Discharged recovered	6	2	8
„ unrecovered	0	1	1
Died	10	4	14
Total discharged and died	16	7	23
Patients on register on 30th May, 1908	148	57	205
„ absent on probation on 30th May, 1908	4	0	4
„ resident on 30th May, 1908	144	57	201
Accommodation for	156	62	218
Vacant accommodation for	12	5	17

It will be seen that the discharges and deaths outnumber the admissions by seven, and that, after deducting the number on probation, there are now resident 201, as against 207 on the 29th August. The accommodation available is for 218 patients. The changes to effect the additional accommodation have been carried out in an economical and creditable manner. During the nine months there have been fourteen deaths, all due to natural causes. The age at death ranged from eighty-nine to twenty-five, the average being about sixty. Five of the above patients had been ailing for some time, and two were admitted from the General Hospital in a very debilitated condition, neither surviving as long as a fortnight.

All the patients resident were seen during the visit, and had opportunity to speak to me. I conversed with many. Three patients were accorded private interviews, and each gave evidence that he laboured under hallucinations of hearing and delusions of persecution, and also, in two of the cases, of unseen agency. These patients complained of unjustifiable detention. None of the other patients made any complaint.

The following are the subjects of special attention for the reasons assigned:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Epileptics	5	6	11
General paralytics	1	0	1
Suicidal	1	1	2
Dangerous (not enumerated above)	5	2	7
Do not wash, dress, or feed themselves	5	16	21

Only one patient is under a special-observation notice. On the 30th May there were three patients confined to bed (all males) for medical treatment: one had a leg-ulcer, one was convalescent from rheumatic fever, and one who has since died laboured under cardiac disease and bronchitis.

The Register of Restraint has entries referring to the use of gloves in two cases, one that of a woman for two hours during a destructive outburst, the other that of a man almost daily. I satisfied myself that this patient was incorrigibly destructive, and also impulsively dangerous. Every time the gloves have been removed and his hands were free, he has torn his entire clothing to shreds. The gloves are of kip leather, and are not unduly irksome.

The number of patients attending divine service is 47 (males, 34; females, 13), and the number joining in active amusements 81 (m., 64; f., 17). The following is a return of the employment of the inmates:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Farm and bush	56	...	56
Garden	9	...	9
Workshops	14	...	14
Wards	19	4	23
Laundry	...	11	11
Sewing	...	9	9
Total employed	98	24	122
Unemployed (mentally and physically unfit)	46	33	79
Total	144	57	201