

month with no less than 3,046 lb. of choice fish, mainly flounders and soles. While the falling-off in the supply of large fish is to be regarded as temporary and accidental, there is no question that the continuous working of a number of steam trawlers along the coast is driving the main supplies of fish further afield, and our experience coincides with that of all the line fishermen in the neighbourhood. Every year bait becomes more difficult to secure, and the boats have to go further and further from the shore-line to secure reasonable catches. Five or ten years ago nearly all the fishing was done at only a mile or so from the shore; now it is common for fishermen to go out from ten to fifteen miles in pursuit of kingfish, groper, and barracouta.

Owing to the general dampness of the year and the wetness of the ground there has been little chance of giving patients the amount of open-air recreation that is desirable.

The work of the year at the Waitati Branch Mental Hospital has been very satisfactory, but it will be necessary to push on the development of the institution rather than further extend the Seacliff buildings in future.

The Camp Auxiliary at the Peninsula is excellently managed, and the year's work has been highly satisfactory.

Religious services have been held by various denominations throughout the year.

The thanks of the authorities are due to the Otago Daily Times and Witness Company and to the Evening Star Company for newspapers and journals supplied free, and also to other donors who have kindly contributed to the amenities of our hospitals.

Owing to my being temporarily transferred to the Public Health Department, I have been away from Seacliff half the year, but everything has gone on perfectly satisfactorily, and without any hitch whatever during my absence. I have to express my appreciation of the way in which Dr. Jeffreys, who has been in charge, and the various members of the staff at Seacliff carried on the varied work of the institution, and the same applies to my colleague, Dr. Ross, at Waitati, and to the staff at the Camp Annexe.

I have, &c.,

F. TRUBY KING,

Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector-General, Mental Hospitals, Wellington.

PORIRUA MENTAL HOSPITAL.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on this Mental Hospital for the year 1912:—

At the beginning of the year there were 928 patients on the register (531 males and 397 females), and at the close 908 (488 males and 420 females), of whom 8 males and 24 females were absent on trial. The reduction in the number of male patients was brought about by the transfer of 60 men to the Hokitika Mental Hospital in June, and of 15 to the Tokanui Mental Hospital in July. By these transfers the overcrowding of male patients was greatly relieved. On the female side of the institution some relief must also be devised, as the number resident is considerably in excess of the accommodation provided, and the position tends to become worse.

There were 204 patients admitted for the first time, an increase of 7 as compared with the previous year; but the number readmitted (33) was 12 less than in 1911.

Of the 118 cases discharged the returns show 76 as recovered, 40 relieved, and 2 not improved. Under the Mental Defectives Act (which came into force in April of the year under review) any patient away on probation who does not return has to be discharged as relieved unless he submits a medical certificate vouching for his recovery or presents himself for examination at the mental hospital when the period of trial terminates. Although this regulation has always been explained to those responsible they very rarely comply with it. As long as a patient's discharge is granted they seem quite indifferent as to whether his recovery is recorded or not. Of the 41 patients who were discharged at the expiration of the period of trial, 31 were in good mental health when they left the institution, and these, I think, should reasonably be added to those entered up as recovered. With this addition our recoveries would number 107, which in proportion to the number admitted makes a recovery-rate of 44·4 per cent., as compared with 47 per cent. the previous year.

The number of deaths was 65, making a mortality-rate of 7·45 per cent. on 885, which was the average number resident. Included in the causes of death were 11 cases of general paralysis, 14 of senile decay, and 2 of typhoid fever. These last occurred early in the year, when we had 4 cases which may be regarded as an aftermath of the 1911 epidemic. Fortunately no further recrudescence of the disease appeared during the year 1912.

The new additions to the auxiliary building for male patients were not quite completed by the end of the year, but have since then been furnished and occupied. Now we are in the fortunate position of having sufficient accommodation on the male side of the institution. In connection with this auxiliary we are busy constructing a commodious airing-court, which will be chiefly used by the old and feeble-minded and demented unemployable patients, of whom a certain number are housed there.

Some years ago I recommended the building of a Nurses' Home, which is still more urgently needed now. The present accommodation for nurses is very unsatisfactory. Many of them occupy rooms which were designed for the use of patients, and other rooms which might quite well be converted into patient's bedrooms. If this were done there would be sleeping-accommodation for fully forty more female patients, and under present conditions this is an important consideration.

No difficulty of any consequence has been experienced by me in the administration of the hospital, and this is due to the loyal co-operation of the staff. There have been few changes in the higher grades of officials. Dr. Gray, the Junior Medical Officer, was promoted to the position of Senior Medical Officer at Auckland Mental Hospital, and Dr. Simpson, late Senior Assistant at Inverness Asylum, took his place here. To both of these officers, and to Dr. McKillop, the Senior Medical Officer, I am indebted for valuable assistance.

I have, &c.,

GRAY HASSELL,

Medical Superintendent.

The Inspector-General, Mental Hospitals, Wellington.