

SUNNYSIDE MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. St. L. H. GRIBBEN reports :—

At the beginning of the year 1916 there were 702 patients on the register, of whom 348 were males and 354 females. During the year there were admitted 73 males and 71 females, and at the end of the year there were remaining 692 patients, a decrease of 10 for the year. There were 51 deaths, giving a death-rate of 7·4 per cent. on the average number resident. There were 63 recoveries (23 males, 40 females), giving a rate of 43·7 per cent. on the admissions.

The health of the patients was on the whole good. In view of the long-continued epidemic of scarlet fever in Christchurch it was deemed advisable to keep the institution closed to visitors for some months, and this precaution fortunately kept us clear of the infection.

The building of the receiving-block is being carried on, but conditions incidental to the war make progress slow.

The whole kitchen system urgently requires reorganization, and the laundry also in its present state is unable to cope with the work, but the arrangement of having part of the washing done outside will make it possible to carry on till a time more opportune for undertaking additions.

The substitution of steam by electric power which is being gradually carried out will effect a considerable economy in the expenditure of coal.

The installation of the "Vigilant" fire-alarm system will fill a much-needed requirement, but in this connection the failure of the Lake Coleridge electric supply which has occurred at different times for varying periods will render some sort of stand-by plant necessary if complete efficiency is to be attained.

The purchasing of stock and having it killed at the public abattoir, a practice which has now been in vogue for a complete year, has proved from every point of view an unqualified success. Not only is the quality of the meat much better and the amount consumed lessened, but the price, including all charges, for both mutton and beef during the past twelve months has averaged 4½d. per pound. In view of our results I feel justified in recommending the adoption of this system at any public institution where it is practicable.

The committal of senile cases from Old People's Homes the moment they become restless or require some extra attention is becoming more and more frequent, and, apart from the embarrassment which the admission of such numbers of these cases causes us, I am convinced that it would be more economical for them to be given a little more attention at the various homes provided for them.

The usual amusements have been supplied to the patients, and in this matter I wish especially to thank the Hayward's Picture Enterprises (Limited) for their monthly picture entertainment, which is highly appreciated and eagerly looked forward to by the patients.

The absence of an Assistant Medical Officer during the year has naturally necessitated the saddling of the officers and senior members of the staff with greater responsibility, and I cannot speak too highly of the loyalty and enthusiasm displayed in circumstances which were rendered still more difficult by the numerous changes in the staff attributable directly and indirectly to the war. I have to express my gratitude to those ladies who supplied periodicals for the amusement of the patients during the year.

SEACLIFF MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. F. TRUBY KING reports :—

At the beginning of the year there were 975 patients (573 males, 402 females) in the institution. Exclusive of transfers from other institutions, 191 patients were admitted (inclusive of "voluntary boarders"), and 80 were discharged relieved or recovered, being 42 per cent. on the admissions and readmissions combined, or over 48 per cent. on the patients admitted for the first time.

During the year 17 voluntary boarders were admitted, and 15 were discharged relieved or recovered.

The general health of the patients has been good. There were 72 deaths, being 6 per cent. of the total number under treatment. The majority of the deaths were among patients between sixty and ninety years of age, and nine of the younger adults died of general paralysis.

There has been no suicide or serious accident of any kind during the year.

Our most urgent structural needs for the next twelve months in connection with patients will be improved bathing facilities, suitable accommodation for tubercular patients, and further accommodation for women patients.

The most pressing need for the staff is the erection of a number of cottages for married male attendants. Owing to all the single attendants volunteering for military service, the male staff now consists almost entirely of married men. Even before the war the accommodation available in the neighbourhood was much short of our requirements, but now we have some 25 married men who reside at a distance. This is a very serious and growing evil, and I trust it will be met as far as possible during the year.

Another outcome of the war is the provision needed for returned soldiers suffering from neurasthenia, due to wounds, shell-shock, &c. To meet this class of nervous prostration, which does not come within the scope of a mental hospital, but calls for a healthy life in the open air in pleasant surroundings, with facilities for sea-bathing, boating, &c., we have a well-equipped seaside cottage at Karitane, besides a number of tents and a large marquee. This Convalescent Home,