

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS.

AUCKLAND MENTAL HOSPITAL.

DR. BEATTIE reports :—

The year gave us a total of 1,328 patients under care, with an average number resident of 1,062, of whom 15 were voluntary boarders. There were 1,084 remaining at the end of the year.

The number of voluntary boarders was unfortunately small. The old prejudice against mental hospitals persists, and is, I think, likely to persist for a long period. Although I state that the number was unfortunately small, I cannot say that I have much sympathy with the voluntary section of our Act. I would like to see an out-patient department started at the general hospital, with an in-patient ward attached; a psychiatric clinic, which would be convenient for patients and instructive for students.

The chief causes of admission were—heredity, 38; congenital and senility, 28 each; epilepsy, 14; and previous attack, 42. The largest number of patients admitted on the male side were between the ages of forty and fifty. From this period they gradually tapered to either extreme. The chief contributors were labourers, farmers, and Maoris.

The percentage of recoveries was 50.54, as compared with 31.25 last year. The percentage of deaths was 8.25, as compared with 11.98 for last year. The deaths were chiefly due to senile decay, 23; chronic brain-disease, 20; and general paralysis, 10.

The general work of the Hospital and the farm has been carried out normally. The kitchen arrangements, which were largely of a temporary nature owing to increased accommodation being required for nurses' and attendants' dining-rooms, were most unsatisfactory. There is a certainty now of considerable improvement being effected. A large amount of painting of the wards is required.

We have no difficulty now in securing nurses, with the result that our female staff is a very satisfactory one, and one which is working well and harmoniously under a very capable and conscientious matron. On the male side, in spite of the very excellent conditions of service now obtaining, we do not succeed in securing the right class of man from the many applicants, although many of the attendants are competent and well worthy of their positions.

The usual religious services and entertainments are held regularly.

I have to thank my colleagues Drs. Tizard and Dorothy Crawley for loyal and zealous work. I am still convinced that a lady doctor for the women patients is, at least, necessary. I have also to thank the District Inspector and the Official Visitors for their help and sympathy. Our thanks are also due to the *New Zealand Herald* and to many others who have contributed to the interest, amusement, and well-being of our patients.

TOKANUI MENTAL HOSPITAL.

DR. GRIBBEN reports :—

On the first day of the year there were on the register 145 male and 95 female patients, total 240; also 1 male and 1 female voluntary boarder. During the year 1 male patient was readmitted under Part IV, Mental Defectives Act, 1911, and 10 male and 10 female patients were received on transfer. One male voluntary boarder was also admitted. Five males and 1 female were discharged, and 1 female was transferred to another institution. Two voluntary boarders were discharged, and 3 patients—1 male and 2 female—died during the course of the year, thus leaving on the register on the 31st December, 1921, 150 male and 101 female patients, making a total of 251 patients, and 1 female voluntary boarder. The average number of patients resident during the year was 243.

Of the 3 deaths, 1 was due to phthisis, 1 to heart-disease, and 1 to carcinoma.

The health of the patients has been very good, and especially so bearing in mind that most of them are chronic cases, and many advanced in years.

The work of building the male reception block by the Public Works Department is proceeding. The blockmaking-shed at No. 1 Camp is approaching completion. A dam to catch the supply of two streams about half a mile from the shed will give a gravitation water-supply.

Work on the farm has proceeded satisfactorily. By employing patients more extensively in wagon and team work it has been possible to reduce the staff of paid farm hands to two. The Department's policy in employing inmates from Waikeria Reformatory will, I am sure, be productive of good results. During the coming autumn there will be some 350 acres of new country ploughed and in grass, and it should be possible to bring in a larger area next year. The provision of labour will be further available for blockmaking for the building of the main institution.

In the way of recreation for patients we have had fortnightly dances during the winter months, concerts and other entertainments at intervals, also fortnightly visits to the picture-theatre in Te Awamutu for workers of both sexes.

Religious services were conducted twice monthly during the year.

I wish to tender my thanks to Dr. Macpherson for his enthusiastic co-operation, and to the staff generally, whose loyal support has considerably lightened the work of administration.