

DEATHS UNDER ANÆSTHETICS.

Twenty-two deaths occurred, in comparison with twenty-four for the previous year. The high standard of our medical and dental services in this country, and the careful attention being given to the administration of anæsthetics, should confine deaths during anæsthesia to a minimum.

SECTION 2.—HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

Hospital Board Finance.—The subsidies paid to Hospital Boards under the permanent appropriations were £575,432, or if validating grants and other grants in aid to the Hospital Boards are included the amount was £596,908. The estimated subsidy payable during the year was £600,000, and, although all the estimates of Hospital Boards are not yet to hand, it is expected that during the current year there will be little or no increase thereto.

Loans for Capital Works.—Apart from several authorities to borrow for capital works by way of overdraft for one or two years, the following is a summary of loans approved during the year:—

Term.	Amount.	Rate of Interest.
	£	
Four years	8,000	6½
Ten years	7,000	6½
Fifteen years	70,000	5½
Sixteen years	5,000	5½
Twenty years	144,300	6
Twenty-one years	50,000	6

Buildings—Construction and Inspection.—During the past year the Department has approved of the erection, additions, or alterations to hospital buildings estimated to cost £556,839. In each case a careful survey of the plans and specifications was made by the technical Inspectors of the Department, and approval has not been given until all suggestions have been carefully weighed and the Department satisfied as to the necessity of the work and the economical construction thereof.

Of the amount mentioned, the Department itself prepared plans and specifications and supervised work amounting to £13,060, whilst the combined activities of the Architectural Branch of the Public Works Department and the Department's Technical Branch have resulted in works actually in progress totalling £53,300.

It is pleasing to note that Hospital Boards are availing themselves of the experience and knowledge of the Department's officers when proposing to undertake new work and thus ensure the best and most economical results.

Summary of the work approved during the past year:—

	Number.	£
General hospitals	2	184,000
Additions to hospitals	19	243,004
Maternity hospitals	5	22,840
Tuberculosis sanatoria	8	14,941
Infectious-disease hospitals	2	4,100
Nurses' homes	2	5,427
X-ray appliances	2	1,940
Engineering services	10	49,089
		525,241
Alterations and additions to Departments' institutions	13	31,498
		556,839
Land purchase	..	6,900
Total	..	£563,739

Individual Average Days' Stay of In-patients in Hospital.—This is a matter which requires the attention and co-operation of both Boards and professional staff. The returns for the previous year, 1924–25, show that for hospitals in classes 1 and 2 the stay varies from nineteen days at Christchurch to thirty-three at Invercargill. The corresponding average in the voluntary hospitals in England (excluding London) is 19·5 days. The retention of patients in hospital for a longer period than is absolutely necessary is not only uneconomical and expensive, but means in the long-run applications for additional beds and consequent auxiliaries involving capital expenditure which otherwise would not be necessary.

Out-patient Department at Hospitals.—This is a phase of hospital work which I should like to see extended in New Zealand, in order to relieve as far as possible the tax on the available beds for in-patients.

Hospital Dietetics.—Following up the notes on this subject in last year's report, arrangements were made during the year for Miss Airini Pope, M.Sc. (a New-Zealander), who had just returned from an extensive tour of study in England and America on dietetics and physiology, to report on (a) General organization of kitchens; (b) the routine food services; (c) special therapeutic work. The result of her study in New Zealand when completed will, I am sure, be of great service to hospitals generally.

Stores System.—The desire evidenced at the Hospitals Associations' Conference to obtain a uniform system was most gratifying, and already great interest has been shown by many institutions in connection therewith.