

The new male and female hospital wards have been opened during the year, thus giving us accommodation and facilities to treat the sick on the same lines as a General Public Hospital.

In view of the increase in the number of our admissions on the female side, the question of accommodation is again becoming an urgent problem; on the male side this is not a pressing matter. Wards F and D on the female side require either extending or additional wards built; the same applies to Ward 3 on the male side.

I must again draw attention to the kitchen in the main building, which requires to be extended and remodelled in order to bring it up to our requirements, as also does the male dining-room, also used as a recreation-hall, which is inadequate and far too small to accommodate the number of patients attending the dances, cinema, &c. The necessity for transferring the piggeries from its proximity to the male and female villas to a site further distant still remains.

Our lighting plant will shortly be relieved for a time by the installation of power from the Mangahao supply, thus allowing us to light the additional buildings adequately.

The present lack of accommodation in the store is an urgent matter, the space being far too limited for our requirements, as, in addition to the space required for our own use, we are the distributing centre for stores to other Mental Hospitals. The majority of the male patients are still usefully occupied in assisting in the many activities and work being carried out on the estate, deriving much benefit from such employment.

The attendance by the public requiring advice and treatment at Wellington Public Hospital is increasing, and incipient mental and nervous patients are induced to come early under treatment, and in-patients are seen in consultation with Hospital staff.

The weekly entertainments still continue to be much appreciated by the patients, and my sincere thanks are given to those who by their thoughtfulness and kind attention to the amusements help to lighten the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. Amongst the many who frequently give their services are the Red Cross Society, the Victoria College Social Service Club, and various other clubs and bands. Mr. Prosser also has our thanks for the free passes he gives for patients attending the cinema pictures in the village.

I also have to thank the ministers of religion for the services they render to the patients, and the Official Visitors (Mrs. Fraser, Mrs. McVicar, and Messrs. Bothamley and Bradey) for their continued interest in the welfare of the patients and Hospital. My thanks are also due to my colleagues (Drs. Blair, Hunter, and Cox) and to the staff generally for their loyal support and assistance in carrying out the work of the Hospital.

NELSON MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. JEFFREYS reports :—

I have the honour to forward my report for the year 1926.

On the 1st January there were 357 patients on the register, and at the end of the year there remained 389 (males 269, females 120). The total number under care during the year was 406 (280 males and 126 females), and the average number resident was 368. There were 49 admitted during the year, and of these no fewer than 23 were imbecile boys under the age of fifteen, the youngest being only two years of age. There were 11 voluntary boarders under treatment during the year, and of these 2 were discharged and 2 died, leaving 7 remaining at the end of the year. Two males and 5 females were discharged as recovered, and 1 male as not improved; and 9 patients died. The death-rate was again remarkably low, being only 2.47 per cent. of the average number resident.

The general health of the patients has been good. There were four cases of diphtheria among the female staff at Nelson, and one patient, an imbecile boy at "El Nido," was also infected. As these nurses had all been on duty at "El Nido," nasal and throat swabs were taken from all the patients of this ward, and two of the boys were found to be carriers. These two were sent to the Public Hospital for isolation and treatment, and there have been no other cases since.

Owing to the number of imbecile boys who have been admitted to "El Nido" from all parts of the Dominion during the year, this ward is far too full, and until the new villas are erected at Stoke it will be impossible to avoid the overcrowding, for, although all the bigger boys have been sent out to Stoke to make room for the new-comers, it is obviously inadvisable to send any of the smaller ones, as they could not at present be separated from the adults, for owing to lack of accommodation the classification at Stoke is still far from perfect.

The new villa at Stoke has been opened and is in charge of female nurses, and the men greatly appreciate the comfort and homelike surroundings.

An up-to-date washing-machine has been installed in the old laundry at Nelson and is a great boon, but a new laundry is urgently required, for with the number of defective children we have here the washing is out of proportion to the size of the institution, and it is almost impossible to cope with the work in our small out-of-date laundry.

The water-supply at Stoke is far from satisfactory, and, although it will no doubt be improved by the relaying of the pipe-line from the reservoir, the question of making use of the excellent supply in Poorman's Valley will shortly have to be considered.

A new lavatory block has been erected at the main building at Stoke, and is a great improvement.

A large proportion of the men at Stoke and Nelson are usefully employed, and the majority of these enjoy the privileges of full parole.

In addition to the weekly dance through the winter months, numerous concert parties have visited Stoke and Nelson throughout the year, and lately a number of inmates from both institutions have been taken into Nelson once a week to the pictures. These amusements are very much looked forward to by the patients.