

The value of immediate, complete isolation was strikingly demonstrated during this outbreak. The infected boys were at once isolated in one of the large dormitories, and were in sole charge of three nurses, who were put on eight-hour shifts. The result was most gratifying, for in spite of the overcrowding in this ward no other patients were infected.

In July there was a fairly severe outbreak of influenza. No fewer than 160 of the patients and staff at Nelson and Stoke were laid up, and, owing to the sudden onset and the number infected, it was quite impossible to isolate them without a special isolation ward, and the necessity for such a ward, which has long been recognized, was very apparent. It is to be hoped that the necessary funds will be forthcoming to build one in the near future.

It is a relief to know that the contract has been let for the erection of three villas at Stoke, for the overcrowding has become a very acute problem. Most of the excavation for the site of the first villa was done by patients, the majority of whom are mentally deficient boys, who are being trained to become useful members of our little community. At the time of writing the contractors have made a start on the excavation for the second villa, and by this time next year the erection of the villas should be well on the way to completion.

At present there are seventy-nine boys at El Nido, and until the villas at Stoke are ready for occupation it will be quite impossible for us to find accommodation for any more boys.

In spite of the many disadvantages we still labour under at Stoke, conditions there are very satisfactory. A large percentage of the patients are on full parole, and many of the remainder are on limited parole. Although there are no fenced-in parks or airing-courts, it is rarely a patient attempts to escape. The freedom from unnecessary restraint is greatly appreciated, and what was regarded by many as a rather doubtful experiment has proved to be an unqualified success.

The people of the Nelson District take a practical interest in the institution, and have been most generous in their donations towards the recreation funds, and in helping in other ways to provide entertainment for the inmates.

I deeply regret that ill health has rendered necessary the resignation of Mrs. Scantlebury, who has been Official Visitor for many years. She has always taken the keenest interest in the welfare of the patients, and has aroused the interest of others. My sincerest thanks are due to her for her self-denying work.

I am indebted to Archdeacon Dart and other members of the Nelson Ministers' Association for regular Sunday services and visits to the patients. I must also express my appreciation of the valued assistance given me by Dr. Sadlier and the other officers and staff throughout the year.

HOKITIKA MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. BUCHANAN reports :—

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 31st December, 1928.

At the beginning of the year there were 216 patients on the register and 1 voluntary boarder; at the end of the year there remained 144 males and 61 females, making a total of 205 patients. Admissions numbered 12 ordinary patients. No voluntary boarders were admitted during the year. Discharges were 7, deaths 15, and 1 transfer. One voluntary boarder was discharged. It will be noted that the total number of patients is slowly diminishing year by year.

The general health of the patients continues to be good.

On the 17th August the hay-shed was destroyed by fire. We have since erected a larger one on a new site away from the institution. This new site will ultimately be the position of the farm-stead when the present old and unsatisfactory buildings are replaced by new ones. The old pigsties have been broken up, and a series of discrete movable ones have been erected at a suitable distance away from the main buildings.

Towards the end of the year a greenhouse was added to the garden. By utilizing old iron and available glass this was built cheaply. It is in use for growing tomatoes and raising pot-plants for the wards.

I had hopes that commencement would be made before the end of the year on the projected water-tower and laundry. The delay in these two items has been a great disappointment to me.

Over 5 acres of virgin ground has been stumped, drained, and sown down into pasturage. By reason of similar work carried out last year we are beginning to show an increase in our milk-supply. Thirty-nine chains of new road was formed and linked up with the old bush-track, thus completing a circular walking route for the patients. Tree-planting was continued, and we have now 17 acres afforested. We raised most of the trees from seed in our own nursery; the balance was kindly donated to us by the local Conservator of Forests.

The bowling-green is now completed, and we expect to play on it in January, 1929. Besides providing additional recreation for the patients, this work also serves the purpose of beautifying a hitherto ugly spot at the entrance of the grounds.

The annual picnic was held in February, and, as usual, was a great source of pleasure to the patients.

Mr. Clifton and Miss Reynolds have visited us regularly, and taken an interest in the welfare of the patients.

My thanks are due to the staff for their loyal assistance throughout the year.