Porirua.—It would be quite undesirable to erect more buildings at Porirua, where there are 1,603 patients, with shortage of accommodation for 186 males and 133 females.

The land at Porirua is generally of very poor quality, and we have difficulty even now in producing sufficient vegetables and milk for our needs. The time is long overdue when a new institution should be built somewhere in the Marton area to receive patients from the Taranaki and Hawke's Bay areas and the northern part of the Wellington Province, reserving Porirua as a metropolitan mental hospital.

It must be borne in mind that Porirua was built for a population of about 500, or less than a third of its present population, and that in addition to mere lack of bed space, we have to cope with bakehouse, laundry, stores, dining-halls, and kitchens which are quite insufficient for present-day requirements. I am glad to report that the plans for new stores, kitchen, and boiler-house are nearing completion, and that many administrative difficulties at Porirua will soon be of the past.

Christchurch.—Besides the main hospital at Christchurch we have two entirely detached institutions, Hornby Lodge (for recent and recoverable cases) about three miles from the city and Templeton Farm Colony about five miles distant.

Overcrowding does not affect these auxiliary institutions, but in the main institution there is a deficiency of accommodation equivalent to 266 patients. We have so far kept the numbers down by transferring patients to Hokitika, but the space there for further building is very limited, and another institution is needed in the South Island to take the growing surplus from Christchurch and Seacliff.

Seacliff.—Overcrowding at Seacliff has been accentuated by the fact that part of the institution was originally built upon moving ground, and the effect of the movement upon the female side—about 8 ft. in thirty-five years—has been so pronounced that one wing has had to be evacuated and is now being demolished. Another wing is involved and cannot much longer be used for patients. Our excess population is 226, of whom 168 are males and 58 females. We have until now had an outlet at Waitati Auxiliary—about seven miles distant, but possibilities in this direction are exhausted. Between Seacliff and Christchurch, we have overcrowding to the extent of 492 patients, or the equivalent of ten villas in a new modern mental hospital, which should be built in the Timaru-Oamaru area.

The most pressing need at Seacliff is an admission hospital, and plans have been prepared for additions and alterations to Clifton House, so as to adapt it for this purpose.

Hokitika.—This institution is not overcrowded and is never likely to be, as direct admissions from the West Coast are few in number. The institution has for many years been used to relieve the larger places, but it has almost reached its limit. There is room for three more villas to accommodate about 150 patients. A certain rearrangement of the administrative offices is necessary.

Nelson.—There are two institutions in Nelson—the old mental hospital in the city—which was built in 1874 of timber—and Ngawhatu, near Stoke, about five miles distant.

We acquired Ngawhatu from the Department of Education in 1923 in order to erect a villa mental hospital and to begin the separation of the mental patients proper from the congenitally defective children, who have since been housed in the old city building. Ngawhatu is a good villa hospital, but the classification could be vastly improved by the erection of two male "closed" villas for the accommodation of our worst cases, who are now housed in the main building, which is quite unsuited for this purpose. The main building could then be remodelled so as to provide entertainment-hall, stores, offices, and assistant medical officer's quarters. There is no great pressure on our space at Nelson.

Consideration must soon be given to the policy to be pursued in regard to the old institution in Nelson. The buildings are sixty-two years old and are almost beyond the stage of being further preserved. We must shortly decide to rebuild on the site or to go elsewhere.

Alterations, Additions, and Improvements.

Capital expenditure on new buildings, additions, and improvements effected during the year amounted to £69,858 16s. and the following summary shows the principal items making up the total:—

Auckland (£307).

Improvements were made in the fire-fighting service and a new boiler was installed. A grant was made towards building the library.

Kingseat (£21,973).

Four new villas were completed and occupied during the year and a commencement has been made with four others. Two residences have been completed—one for a medical officer and one for a chief clerk.

A commencement was made with the building of the main store.

Road-making, sewerage construction, lighting, and drainage have all been carried forward.