

Tokanui (£12,682).

One new villa has been completed and two others are in course of erection. A complete reorganization of the sewerage system has been carried out.

Ngawhatu (£18,307).

The new laundry and boiler-house were completed, and three new villas for females were erected.

Hokitika (£2,739).

Two new villas were completed and a commencement was made with the erection of another.

Christchurch (£12,397).

Two new villas were completed; a new kitchen was installed in the Reception House; and a new granary was built.

At Templeton Farm Colony, a new villa was completed for adult males and another one for juveniles; a tennis-court was constructed for the use of the staff; a new water-tower was erected to serve the needs of the adult section of the colony.

Seacliff (£1,453).

Additions were made to the Nurses' Home and to the boiler-house; a new shower-room was added to the male side; and a commencement was made with the demolition of an unsafe part of the main building.

CLINICS.

The clinics held by our medical officers at the general hospitals continue to do good work, and during the year we have tentatively extended the work to Palmerston North, at the request of the local medical men. This clinic will be held once a month in the meantime.

During the year, 305 new cases were seen at Auckland, 163 at Wellington, 134 at Dunedin, and 39 at Invercargill.

The Medical Superintendents of Seacliff and Porirua have been appointed to the honorary staffs of Dunedin and Wellington hospitals, respectively, to take charge of psychiatric cases, and I am satisfied that the co-operative and progressive spirit thus shown by the Boards concerned will be of great assistance to the clinics in carrying out their function in giving assistance to early and recoverable cases. I trust that the Auckland and Canterbury Boards will soon come into line.

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS' CONFERENCE.

After an interval of some years, a conference of medical superintendents took place recently in Wellington, and your attendance and encouraging address were greatly appreciated by all present. Whilst the agenda paper contained many matters of great interest which stimulated full, frank, and most helpful discussions, I can refer here to only two of them:—

Staff Working Hours.

It was agreed that the hours worked by our nurses and attendants are too long, and that some scheme be devised which would give more time for staff relaxation and at the same time, if possible, gain advantages for the patients committed to our care.

With your concurrence one of our head attendants is co-operating with the Secretary of the Public Service Association to formulate a plan acceptable to every one concerned. The matter is rather complex, involving as it does the matter of increased accommodation for the extra staff required; but as there is an entire agreement as to principles, I hope in the near future to be in a position to submit concrete proposals.

Supervision of Cooking and Distribution of Food.

I am satisfied beyond any doubt as to the excellent quality and the sufficient quantity of the meals provided in our mental hospitals, but that there is room for improvement in the general supervision of the kitchen and the distribution of the food was the opinion held by all the superintendents.

This distribution is relatively a simple matter in the new villa hospitals, where we are doing away with central kitchens and cooking and dining small numbers in the villas as in a private house, but in the larger institutions serving over a thousand patients and staff, the supervision of the kitchen and distribution of meals is a task which can no longer be regarded as one of the matron's subsidiary duties. This is a full-time occupation, which could only be done efficiently by a highly trained competent woman, who should receive a good salary.

APPRECIATION.

In conclusion, I desire to acknowledge the unfailing loyalty and generous support which I have received at all times from my colleague, Dr. John Russell, the medical superintendents, and the other officers of the service.

To Mr. Sinclair, Chief Clerk, and the head office staff I return my thanks for good work carried out during the year.

I have, &c.,
THEO. G. GRAY.