

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS.

AUCKLAND MENTAL HOSPITAL.

DR. BUCHANAN reports :—

I have the honour to present my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1935.

The total number of cases under care during the year was 1,576, with a weekly average of 1,170. The admissions numbered 303 (145 males, 158 females). Of this number, 223 were admitted for the first time. Under section 8 of the Mental Defectives Amendment Act, 165 patients were admitted.

Ninety-four voluntary boarders were admitted during the year, making a total of 212 under care, and of these 82 were discharged.

At the end of the year 186 patients were on probation, 140 on full parole, and 198 on limited parole.

Generally the health of the patients has been good throughout the year. Deaths totalled 110 (54 males, 56 females).

The hospital was honoured by the visit of His Excellency the Governor-General on the 8th July.

I left Auckland in April to take up six months' temporary duty at Porirua. Dr. B. D. Hart took my place as Superintendent during this period.

The actual constructive work carried out has been small; most of our energies have been directed towards maintenance.

The new hot-water supply and additional boiler-capacity were completed and now give satisfaction.

A library has been built on to the bowling-green pavilion, and promises to be a bright and interesting centre for parole patients.

Extra covered cow-bails were built on to the byres, and provided much desired shelter during inclement weather.

On the male side the increasing number of recent cases and convalescents is taxing our accommodation to the utmost. The admission ward, Wolfe Home, and hospital wards are generally full. The admission of new patients frequently requires a lot of juggling among these wards in an endeavour to prevent long-period recoverable cases (such as mild melancholia, of whom we have many) being sent into main building wards. Unfortunately, we cannot always prevent this. Existing main building wards are not altogether suitable for such patients. I hope to put forward concrete proposals to you for an additional observation ward.

It is a difficult question to solve without entailing new building, but it may be possible to transform a part of the auxiliary building into such a ward. This will necessitate increased staff, which, I think, under the circumstances would be justifiable.

A separate institution for children now seems indicated. As you are aware, many parents living around and in Auckland are averse to sending their children to Nelson or Templeton. We have, in consequence, a growing number of defective children in our several wards who would be better segregated. Such a ward may be made available when the next lot of female patients is transferred to the new villas at Kingseat, now under construction.

Criminal inmates and dangerous patients are yet another problem, and I hope that your recommendation for the separation of these cases will bear fruit.

The Psychiatric Clinic remains a very active centre. The relative figures are :—

	Tuesdays.	Thursdays. (Dr. Short.)	Total.
(1) Number of separate persons seen ..	M. 235 F. 36	56 36	291 72
	271	92	363
(2) Number of—			
(a) First visits	.. 234	71	305
(b) Subsequent consultations ..	.. 676	653	1,329
	910	724	1,634
(3) Sources of reference :—	Tuesdays.	Thursdays.	
Pensions Department	.. 191	12	203
Medical practitioners	.. 52	61	113
Voluntary calls.. .. .	.. 9	19	28
Prisons Department	.. 16	..	16
Psychological Clinic	.. 2	..	2
Porirua Mental Hospital	.. 1	..	1
	271	92	363

(4) of the 363 persons who attended the clinic, 13 became voluntary boarders and 10 were committed to the Mental Hospital.

Of the 13 voluntary boarders, 2 were discharged "recovered," 7 "relieved," and 1 died.

Of the 10 committed cases, 1 was discharged on probation.

Monthly visits were paid to the Inebriates' Homes on Rotorua and Pakatoa Islands.

The annual picnic, unfortunately, had to be cancelled owing to stormy weather. In its place a special entertainment was held in the institution, which all seemed to enjoy thoroughly.