

The following works were commenced during the year and are at present progressing :—

New store block, extensions of hot-water service in Male Wards 5, 7, and 8, reroofing of wards Male 4 and B, and the removal of towers which have become structurally unsafe. Under contract the complete painting of five villas, roofs of lower buildings, and the wards Valima and Tiro-Moana is now progressing.

It is hoped that as soon as possible the new boiler-house and kitchen for the main building will be commenced so as to overcome at as early a date as possible the cooking, laundry, and central heating difficulties existing at present in that portion of the hospital. I still believe that when arrears in patient accommodation throughout our hospitals have been overcome that the now desirable provision of a modern laboratory at Porirua will then become very definitely a justifiable and necessary expenditure.

There is at present unsatisfactory and inadequate accommodation for a portion of the medical staff, and an additional residence for a married assistant medical officer is required. The office accommodation for assistant medical officers and clerical staff is hopelessly inadequate, and it is desired that monetary provision be made in the current year for a reconstruction of the administrative block, which will be made possible when the new store is completed.

Activities on the farm, in the orchard, and gardens have continued as formerly. The fact that too great a proportion of our acreage consists of sheep country means that there is insufficient area for herd pasturage. Due to the good grass season milk returns were higher than the previous year, but during certain months of the year we had to purchase milk from an outside source.

Patients' recreations were well provided for in the way of golf, tennis, bowls, concerts, fortnightly dances, weekly cinema, and picnics to the beach. The library activities have been extended, and we are very grateful to Mr. Hooker for his continued interest in this phase of patients' recreation. I am indebted to many individuals and societies for their donations of goods and money towards patients' recreation, and, although it would be impossible to name all, I desire particularly to thank the Rev. Mr. Harding, Mrs. Heard, Mrs. Gordon Glassford, concert parties, the Commercial Travellers Association, the Women's National Reserve, Women's Service Guild, Women's Institute, and the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union. The various Ministers of religion have held their services at the hospital at regular intervals.

The hospital was honoured by a visit from the Governor-General on 15th May, 1936.

I regret to have to record the sudden deaths of Dr. Lang and charge attendant Stewart, which occurred during the year. Both were efficient and conscientious officers, and their deaths were deeply regretted by all members of the staff.

Drs. Hunter and Marshall were transferred to Kingseat and Waitati respectively, and replaced by Drs. Lewis and Bowell.

In conclusion, I must thank all members of the staff for their assistance in the work of the year.

NELSON MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. WILLIAMS reports :—

I have the honour to present my annual report for the year ending 31st December, 1936.

During the year 936 persons were under care, of whom 34 were voluntary boarders.

The admissions totalled 212, of whom 154 were transferred from other mental hospitals.

Twelve patients were discharged, 9 were transferred to other institutions, and 35 died.

Twenty-four patients were admitted under section 8 of the Mental Defectives Amendment Act, 1928.

Eleven voluntary boarders were admitted and 16 were discharged "recovered," while the mental state of 4 necessitated certification.

It is interesting to note that of the 846 patients resident at the end of the year, 649 were born in New Zealand. This preponderance is, of course, largely due to the fact that the old Nelson Mental Hospital is now reserved for the reception of cases suffering from congenital mental defectiveness.

Speaking more generally, the year has been in some degree an eventful one, though, on the whole, pleasantly so.

Firstly, three new female villas have been opened and occupied by patients transferred from Sunnyside and Porirua. To me, who knew many of these previously, and undoubtedly also to others, it has been a tribute to the villa system generally to have noted the altered and happier outlook and consequent more rational conduct of even the most difficult patients since their transfer to surroundings where conditions are so much less irksome and where restraint is practically non-existent.

The staff too have benefited by a radically reduced working-week, and without doubt this improved state of affairs will be reflected in the greater well-being of the patients, notwithstanding perhaps that the continuity of care and the consequent knowledge and understanding of the individual patient is not so complete as formerly.

As for myself, I had the opportunity of attending a Superintendents' Conference in Wellington. This enabled me, and no doubt the others attending, to gain a fuller understanding of mental hospitals affairs generally, and it is an innovation I consider which might with continued benefit be repeated at intervals.

Maintenance-work has gone on as usual, as have also the various activities associated with the farm and gardens and in opening up new areas generally. In the latter respects we have been handicapped considerably by a paucity of good and able workers, but progress has been very satisfactory in the circumstances.

Farm receipts have continued to show a pleasing buoyancy.