

1938.
NEW ZEALAND.

MENTAL HOSPITALS OF THE DOMINION
(REPORT ON) FOR 1937.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 78 of the Mental Defectives Act, 1911.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL to the Hon. P. FRASER, Minister in Charge of the Department of Mental Hospitals.

SIR,—Wellington, 1st June, 1938.
I have the honour to present my annual report upon the work of the Department of Mental Hospitals for the year ended 31st December, 1937.

There were 8,234 names of persons upon the registers at the end of the year, including 46 patients and boarders at Ashburn Hall, which is the only licensed institution in the Dominion, and 638 patients and boarders who were on probation in the care of friends and relatives.

In actual residence in State hospitals there were 7,552 persons, an increase of 13 over the previous year, and of this number 7,242 were the subject of a reception order, whilst 310 were voluntary boarders.

There was a decrease of 22 in the number of patients and boarders admitted for the first time, the relative figures being 1,123 for this year and 1,145 for last year, and 304 former inmates returned to the hospitals.

We were able to discharge 875 patients and boarders, or 61·32 per cent. calculated upon the admissions, but not more than 502, or 35·18 per cent., could be regarded as recovered. Having regard to the large number of those admitted whose mental disorder is due to congenital causes, to the degenerative changes of old age, and to incurable organic disease of the nervous system, the percentage of discharges must be regarded as satisfactory.

ACCOMMODATION.

The position in regard to accommodation and the distribution of patients is shown in the following table compiled in March, 1938 :—

Hospital.	Accommo- dation.	Number of Patients and Boarders on Registers.	Number on Probation.	Number actually Resident.	Deficiency.	Surplus.
Auckland ..	1,205	1,408	125	1,283	78	..
Kingseat ..	620	591	5	586	..	34
Tokanui ..	633	676	25	651	18	..
Porirua ..	1,284	1,620	101	1,519	235	..
Nelson ..	820	842	42	800	..	20
Hokitika ..	471	460	7	453	..	18
Christchurch ..	1,188	1,453	134	1,319	131	..
Seacliff ..	956	1,161	26	1,135	179	..
Totals ..	7,177	8,211	465	7,746	641	72

The net deficiency of accommodation is 569, as compared with 514 last year, but the difference is accounted for by the necessity which occurred during the year to evacuate part of the female side at Seacliff, with accommodation for 65 women, as the buildings had become unsafe, due to the unstable ground.

In discussing the matter of accommodation it is necessary to bear in mind that this does not consist merely of the quarters which the patients occupy in the daytime and those in which they sleep and dine. Simultaneously with or preferably ahead of the erection of these quarters, provision has to be made for the proportionate Nurses' Homes, stores and other administrative needs, laundries, medical staff, &c., and during the past year we have carried out a large programme with a view to entirely wiping out the deficiency of accommodation at an early date.