

SEACLIFF MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. BROWN reports :—

I have the honour to submit the annual report for the year ending 31st December, 1937.

At the end of October, Dr. Henry Douglas Hayes, who had been the Medical Superintendent for the past five years, died. Still a young man, his ideals of duty and service were of the highest and he gave unsparingly of himself. The welfare of his hospital was ever his foremost thought. He was much esteemed in the community, and his loss is felt there as well as in Seacliff. All of us who worked with him extend our deepest sympathy to his widow and children.

On the 1st January, 1937, there were 1,184 patients on the register. During the year 153 patients were admitted, 59 were discharged, and 64 were transferred to other institutions. A total number of 1,337 patients were under care during the year.

There were 69 voluntary boarders under care, and 36 of these are still in residence.

There were 81 deaths, the principal causes being senile decay and heart-disease.

At the end of the year there were 1,133 patients and 36 boarders. Towards the end of the year it was found necessary to abandon as dangerous another female wing, F. 3, and, while patients were transferred to Christchurch and Tokanui, this nevertheless accentuated the overcrowding problem. The male side is overcrowded to the number of 109 and the female side to 82. New admission units are an urgent necessity.

Various replacements and improvements have been made to the institution during the year. A new kitchen and scullery in the male hospital have improved the facilities there. An open-air veranda has been added to D Ward for the treatment of pulmonary cases, and a new kitchen with a range and hot-water boilers has improved the food-service there. The kitchen and scullery in F. 5 were modernized, and provision for keeping food warm provided. In F. 4 the bathroom and lavatory were remodelled. The Retreat at Waitati was overhauled, more lavatory and bathroom facilities were provided, and the building was papered and painted. General maintenance of the buildings has been going on, including the renewal and repair of the chimney-tops. Both at Seacliff and Waitati a great deal of external painting has been done. The water-main from Double Hill Reservoir has, due to the slipping ground through which it passes, required a great deal of maintenance.

A new and modern dairy has been built at the farm. The farm-work has progressed satisfactorily. The garden has been well tended, and a plentiful supply of fresh vegetables has been provided at all seasons of the year.

Miss Miller, of the Red Cross Society, who has been teaching handicrafts to the male patients, extended her activities to the female side, with excellent results. She has also been instructing attendants and nurses with a view to later introducing this work to the chronic wards. Various members of the Dunedin Branch of the Women's National Council have visited regularly and taken part in the occupational-work. The various handicrafts have, at present, to be done in the sitting-rooms of the wards, and I think that the time has come when the erection of a small pavilion for use as an occupational centre should be considered.

Your appointment of an officer to supervise the kitchen services has resulted in improved methods of food-distribution and an improvement in the meals in general. The provision of more equipment in the kitchen is a matter in hand, and this should show further beneficial effects.

Various organizations have done much for us in the way of entertainments. The Patients' and Prisoners' Aid Society has shown its continued interest, and Mr. Steven, the society's agent and chaplain, has conducted religious services and promoted many concerts. The society provided the transport which allowed a large party of patients to attend the circus, and the proprietor of the latter gave free admission. I am grateful to the Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Association for allowing a number of patients free admission to their summer show in November. The Dunedin Royal Male Voice Choir and the Justices of the Peace Association provided concerts, as in former years.

Band concerts were given by the Dunedin Highland Pipe Band, the Palmerston Pipe Band, the Kaikorai Band, the Tramways Band, and the Salvation Army Band; and the Dunedin Burns Club and 'Toc H gave concerts at Seacliff and Waitati. I wish to express my thanks to them and to the companies who provide our weekly picture programmes also to the Returned Soldiers' Association for tobacco, &c., supplied to our soldier patients.

I desire to thank various local firms for supplies of novels and periodicals.

The psychiatric clinic at Dunedin Public Hospital is held twice a week, and during the year 173 new cases were seen. The Invercargill Public Hospital was visited monthly either by Dr. Hay or myself, and 26 new cases were seen there. During the year a clinic was inaugurated at the Oamaru Public Hospital, and I visit there once a month.

During the year Mrs. McLaren, the matron, was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire and was invested by His Excellency the Governor-General. It is gratifying that her many years of faithful and efficient service should be so recognized, and I would tender her my congratulations.

I wish to thank the clergy of the various denominations who have conducted services and visited the patients.

I have to thank the matrons, the head attendants, and their respective nursing staffs for their loyal support and efficient work. I have also to thank Mr. Thomas, the Chief Clerk, and the various other heads of departments for their services.

I wish to pay tribute to the loyal support of my medical colleagues. The illness and death of Dr. Hayes, and the necessity of lending a medical officer to the Christchurch Mental Hospital at various times, placed on them much extra work, which was well and ungrudgingly done.