

## AUCKLAND MENTAL HOSPITAL.

DR. RUCHANAN reports :

I have the honour to present my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1938.

The total number of cases under care during the year was 1,769, with a weekly average of 1,273. The admissions numbered 356—under certification 133 males, 152 females; by transfer 9 males; and as voluntary boarders, 30 males, 32 females.

During the year 144 patients and 58 voluntary boarders were discharged. Transfers to other hospitals numbered 14 (6 males and 8 females). Deaths totalled 131.

At the end of the year 196 patients were on probation, 135 on full parole, and 202 on limited parole.

I append figures relative to the Psychiatric Clinic held by Drs. Hunter, Macky, and myself at the Auckland Public Hospital :

|                                               |    |    | Tuesdays.       | Thursdays<br>(Dr. Hunter). | Total.    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|----|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| (1) Number of separate persons seen           | .. | .. | M. 266<br>F. 22 | 79<br>10                   | 345<br>32 |
|                                               |    |    | 288             | 89                         | 377       |
| (2) Number of                                 |    |    |                 |                            |           |
| (a) First visits                              | .. | .. | 212             | 89                         | 301       |
| (b) Subsequent consultations                  | .. | .. | 404             | 243                        | 647       |
|                                               |    |    | 616             | 332                        | 948       |
| (3) Sources of reference-                     |    |    |                 |                            |           |
| Pensions Department                           | .. | .. | 220             | 65                         | 285       |
| Medical practitioners                         | .. | .. | 26              | 15                         | 41        |
| Voluntary calls                               | .. | .. | 10              | 4                          | 14        |
| Prisons Department                            | .. | .. | 15              | ..                         | 15        |
| Police Department                             | .. | .. | 2               | ..                         | 2         |
| Salvation Army                                | .. | .. | 4               | ..                         | 4         |
| City Missioner                                | .. | .. | 2               | ..                         | 2         |
| Public Trustee                                | .. | .. | 1               | ..                         | 1         |
| Institute for the care of Backward Children   | .. | .. | 2               | ..                         | 2         |
| Crown Law Office                              | .. | .. | 1               | ..                         | 1         |
| Director-General, Mental Hospitals Department | .. | .. | 1               | ..                         | 1         |
| District Inspector                            | .. | .. | 2               | ..                         | 2         |
| Nelson Mental Hospital                        | .. | .. | 2               | ..                         | 2         |
| Public Hospital                               | .. | .. | ..              | 5                          | 5         |
|                                               |    |    | 288             | 89                         | 377       |

I was away on leave of absence for the greater part of the year under review. I desire to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to the Minister of Mental Hospitals and yourself for making this possible.

Part of my leave was spent in visiting mental hospitals and homes for congenital mental defects in England. My most intense interest was in the great strides certain hospitals have made in occupational therapy. To see this work, which in many places permeates a whole hospital, is a great experience. Later I hope to give you separately a report on what I have seen. Here, on a smaller scale, we have done occupational therapy for many years, and I have now every intention of expanding this to a scale similar to that which I have seen overseas.

The introduction of a hairdresser for the female patients has proved a most excellent innovation. She has helped many a patient to regain some personal pride, and, in consequence, a sedative effect in behaviour has resulted.

No major work has been carried out during the year, but all the same there has been consistent effort to maintain things at a good level.

Besides the usual painting programme, the other important works were the installation of machinery in the laundry and the alterations of the water service to bring our fire-fighting apparatus up to date. This latter work is not as yet fully completed.

We were unfortunate in having an outbreak of typhoid in May and June. This necessitated the procedure of blood-testing and inoculation of all patients and the members of the staff. This imposed an additional burden on our staff, already weakened in numbers. The members, however, rose well to the occasion.

In parentheses, I may state that the staff-shortage problem is almost as acute in some parts of England as it is here.

A most successful bazaar and sale of work of patients' handicrafts was held on the 2nd December, 1938. The most gratifying sum of £143 was made. This money will be devoted to the patients' recreation and providing materials for occupational work.

The Auckland Hospital Auxiliary continues to be our very good and much appreciated friend. They are constant in their help in person, kind, and cash. Performances by the Waterside Workers' Band were much appreciated, as also concerts given by Miss Ward and her pupils.

In concluding I must express my gratitude to the Medical Officers, Matron, Head Attendant, Chief Clerk, and all other members of the staff for the help and encouragement given me.