

## PORIRUA MENTAL HOSPITAL

Dr. HART reports :—

I have the honour to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1946.

The total number of cases under care during the year was 1,816, of which 1,492 were committed patients, 319 voluntary boarders, and 5 persons were remanded for psychiatric observation.

Admissions for the year totalled 587, of which 217 were admitted as voluntary boarders. Over 38 per cent. of the persons admitted during the year voluntarily applied for admission and treatment in this hospital.

During the year 381 cases were discharged and 105 deaths occurred.

The admissions each year tend to show a progressive increase in the number of persons suffering from senile mental disorders. During the year 124 persons were admitted suffering from mental abnormalities associated with old age. Of these, 43 were between the ages of seventy and eighty years and 17 were between the ages of eighty and ninety years. As the expectancy of life increases, these figures have and will continue to increase. Although some senile cases must continue to be admitted to mental hospitals, the time appears to be overdue when New Zealand should make some provision for people suffering from mental infirmities, other than certification and admission to a mental hospital.

During the year extra mural psychiatric work has continued with wards and clinics at the Wellington and Palmerston North Hospitals. An additional psychiatric clinic has been opened this year at the Wanganui Public Hospital. Psychiatric clinic work has so extended and increased that we are finding it increasingly difficult to give adequate time to this important community service.

Regarding specialized treatment such as sub-coma insulin, electroplexy and electric narcosis have been used extensively during the year. Our results with the first series of cases treated with electric narcosis have recently been published. The therapeutic results obtained with a group of relatively early paranoid schizophrenics were considerably better than had previously been obtained with other forms of treatment. In other psychoses we found that the results of electric narcosis treatment were no better than those obtained with electric convulsive therapy.

Continued progress is being made with the building programme. Villas 4 and 5 were occupied during the year; the increased accommodation available has reduced the overcrowding. The number has now been reduced to 263 patients resident over and above the authorized accommodation. The construction of Villas 6, 7, and 8 has commenced, and there is every prospect of Villas 7 and 8 being occupied during 1947.

With the exception of the old laundry block and F Ward, the demolition of the old main block has been completed. The new laundry block has been finished, but, owing to lack of machinery, it is not in use. It is hoped that this machinery will soon be available as the restricted facilities and inconveniences associated with the old laundry make it very difficult to cope with hospital washing.

Last year the Public Works Department took over the responsibility of the maintenance of the hospital buildings, but, owing to a lack of materials and labour, the overcoming of the arrears in building maintenance which arose during the war has not made much progress, although some contracts have been let. Some interior renovations of buildings have been carried out by our staff and patient labour, but progress has been somewhat restricted due to lack of materials.

During the year additional provision for the segregation of male T.B. patients was made at Kaumatua Villa. Satisfactory segregation for both male and female is provided and should be quite adequate, pending the construction of the T.B. wing, which will be built along with the main hospital block which has next priority.