

The demolition of a large section of the hospital and rebuilding has called for additional roads, paths, and repairing of existing roads. After a delay the expenditure for roading has been authorized, and I trust that the Public Works Department will complete this work without further delay.

Several oil-fuel ranges were installed during the year with success, and in part alleviated the difficulties associated with the acute shortage of coal. Our experience is that this type of range is well adapted to mental hospital cooking, and it is recommended that favourable consideration be given to the installation of oil-fuel ranges in some of the proposed villas. The electric-power cuts naturally caused difficulties in the administration of the hospital. The consequent interruptions in treatment were in the main overcome by the use of the new steam-generators.

Considerable attention has been given to fire protection during the year. Contract has been let for the installation of an automatic fire-alarm completely covering all buildings on the estate, and a sprinkler system is being installed in the lower buildings, which are our greatest fire risk. Water-pressure has been improved and additional hoses have been installed where necessary.

During the year the Post and Telegraph Department has replaced the old telephones connected with the internal hospital system with some improvement. The very scattered nature of the hospital demands an efficient service, and I am afraid that the internal telephone system will not be entirely satisfactory until the old exchange is replaced with more modern equipment and housed in a satisfactory building. The two town telephone numbers are insufficient to cope with the demand and are a constant source of complaint, but at present there are technical difficulties which prevent the Post and Telegraph Department from giving us additional numbers.

Replacement of power-lines was carried out during the year. A new 11,000 v. high-tension transmission-line from the Titahi Bay road was erected, replacing the 6,600 v. line coming in at the southern end of the estate. The new line has reduced interruptions formerly occurring with the old line in association with storms, fallen trees, &c.

Staff shortages remain, and, naturally, vary somewhat from time to time. The shortage at 31st December, 1946, was 31 nurses and 30 attendants. The staff has been augmented by student trainees from the British Isles. Of the 35 who commenced duty here, 27 remain, and their services are a valuable contribution towards relieving the acute staff shortage.

Some progress has been made with occupational therapy, but the work is still somewhat hampered by the lack of suitable accommodation.

The hospital is in the process of rebuilding, and at the same time has to cope with the largest mental hospital admission rate in New Zealand. Obviously inconveniences and difficulties exist for both patients and staff on account of this, and the work of all branches of the hospital is more difficult than it would be were the hospital completed and fully established.

I must thank the staff for the good work which has been maintained under the above-mentioned difficulties.

NELSON MENTAL HOSPITAL

Dr. WILLIAMS reports :—

I have the honour to present my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1946.

The number of patients under care during this period was 1,178; 1,132 were admissions under reception order and 46 were voluntary boarders. Admissions totalling 141, included 4 transferred from other mental hospitals, 39 under section 8 of the Amendment of the Act, and 22 voluntary boarders. During the year, 47, including 25 voluntary boarders were discharged; 13 were transferred to other mental hospitals. Deaths totalled 54.