

The Christmas-tree festivities this year were held in the grounds at Nelson, which was beautifully illuminated by vari-coloured electric lights, and the proceedings were enlivened by the Nelson Regimental Band, which was in attendance. The innovation was thoroughly appreciated by the patients, and by the visitors who had generously contributed towards the entertainment.

I desire to express my thanks to the ministers of religion who conduct services, and to Mrs. Scantlebury and Mr. Gould, Official Visitors, for their interest in the patients; also to Dr. Hay and the other officers and staff for their loyal assistance throughout the year.

HOKITIKA MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. BUCHANAN reports:—

At the beginning of the year there were 221 patients on the register; at the end of the year there remained 159 males and 67 females, making up a total of 226. Admissions numbered 27 ordinary patients. Discharges were 9, and deaths 13.

The general health of the patients has been good.

The programme of reconstruction commenced five years ago at this Hospital is now showing definite results. In place of the old and rambling buildings huddled up against each other, there is now to be seen a specimen of the villa system of housing mental patients. The wards are self-contained, and, on the whole, set well apart from each other. No villa houses more than forty patients, the average number being about thirty.

The breaking-down of all yard-enclosures and the consequent opening up of pleasing vistas undoubtedly engages the attention of even some of the most enfeebled minds, and diverts many of the patients from brooding over their fancied wrongs.

This is reflected in the fact that assaults among patients are fewer than formerly, and that there is a lessened necessity for us to resort to methods of restraint.

It is interesting to note that the majority of our patients were transferred here from the Porirua and Christchurch Mental Hospitals about ten years ago, and it is quite certain that the patients transferred were by no means of the best-behaved type.

Though much work has been achieved in the modernizing of this institution, there is yet much to be accomplished before anything like completion is reached.

Our wants are still great. The most pressing requirements are:—

1. Erection of a new ward on the site of "Moana." Because of its relative isolation, this is the situation *par excellence* for a ward to house the most refractory of the female patients. At present "Moana" houses thirteen patients and four nurses. The opinion of the Public Works Department is that the ward will not economically stand alteration because of its age. I suggest that a new building on this site should be capable of housing thirty patients and contain ten single rooms. This would allow us to destroy a block of ten single rooms (a dingy and unsightly relic of the past) which abuts directly on to the new female-reception unit. We have of necessity to use these rooms for the most noisy and violent patients, and their propinquity to newly admitted patients is most unsatisfactory.

2. A system of fire-alarms. At present the only means of alarm is to ring a bell situated at the most central part of the institution. The wards, which are all wooden, are now discrete and spread out over an extensive area, and there might consequently be an undue delay before fire-fighters could be summoned to one of the more distant wards. I would suggest that an intercommunicating telephone system be installed. This would meet the case, and also be useful in the event of other emergencies which of necessity must arise from time to time in the different wards.

3. Increased accommodation for nurses. Nurses perforce are using rooms that should be available for patients. There is, in general, an all-round lack of suitable accommodation for nurses.

4. A water-supply independent of the borough water-supply. Not only is the latter supply expensive, but it is the expressed opinion of some of the members of the Borough Council that it is in a precarious state owing to the bad condition of the mains. The Borough Council charges us 1s. 3d. per 1,000 gallons. About two years ago I had a well sunk on our own grounds, which gave us good potable water in sufficient quantity for our needs. The Westland Hospital, which lies adjacent to us, procures its water from a well on their property similar to that which we have already sunk on our own ground. They pump more water than is necessary for their requirements. The Hospital Board have suggested that they should sell us their surplus water at 5d. per 1,000 gallons. They guarantee a daily supply of 5,000 gallons. If we accepted this offer we would have to build an elevated reservoir. Would it not be better in that case to pump our own water into it?

5. A recreation-hall. The lack of a hall suitable for Church services, cinematograph entertainments, wireless and other concerts, and dances is much felt, and results in an inadequate amount of entertainment for the patients.

6. The construction of farm buildings on a new site. The Public Works Building Overseer when asked to value the present buildings expressed the opinion that the stable buildings, barn, dairy, and pigsties, were valueless because of their great age and state of disrepair. The present buildings are an eyesore, and are situated too close to "Te Maire."

Below I give a summary of new work accomplished during the year: Erection of Setton Ward, which houses twenty-seven patients (the greater part of this building was constructed from suitable portions of old F Ward moved to the new site); building of a new large bathroom, a scullery, and the installation of a hot-water supply at "Aorangi"; building of a bathroom,