

Porirua is being rebuilt on modern villa lines, and two of the new villas constructed in concrete each to house fifty patients are almost ready for occupation, but much requires to be done before those evacuated after the earthquake can be returned to Porirua.

A commencement has been made with the erection of Lake Alice Hospital, near Marton, but it must be some considerable time before we can get relief by its occupation.

We have fifty boys at Levin Farm, and, as soon as alterations now in progress are completed, we shall transfer more children from Nelson, which we hope to vacate at an early date.

ALTERATIONS, ADDITIONS, AND IMPROVEMENTS

Capital expenditure on new buildings and improvements amounted to £208,987 during the year, and the following summary shows the principal items making up the total :—

(1) *Auckland* (£7,307).—New building as training school for nursing staff and occupational therapists has been erected, and additional class-rooms for occupational therapy have been completed.

(2) *Kingseat* (£1,487).—Wood and coal sheds have been erected at staff residences, and roading and water supply services have been extended.

(3) *Marton* (£44,696).—A new villa is in course of erection and several staff residences have been erected. A water-tower is being erected, and roading, water-supply, and drainage work carried out.

(4) *Levin* (£83,966).—The R.N.Z.A.F. station at Levin has been purchased for use as an institution for children whose parents are in the North Island.

(5) *Porirua* (£45,867).—Demolition of the old main building has continued. Two new villas have been erected and equipped, and a start made on the erection of a new laundry.

(6) *Seacliff* (£24,918).—A new villa at Waitati has been erected and equipped, and preliminary work at Cherry Farm was undertaken during the year.

SHORTAGE OF NURSES

The work of the Department is overshadowed by the continued shortage of nursing staff, and I regret to report that there has been no improvement, but rather the reverse, since this time last year. At present we are 253 nurses and 85 men short of our authorized establishment, which throws an undue burden on existing staff and prevents them from receiving the amount of leave which is so necessary in the nursing profession.

The status of our nurses was greatly enhanced by the recent legislation, which accords to them State registration, and a great deal has been done to improve their training, which is now subject to inspection by the Nurses and Midwives Registration Board. The standard of our training is reflected in the fact that our certificated nurses who proceed to general nursing training in the hospitals almost invariably do well above the average, and in this connection it is gratifying to record that Miss M. E. Little, now appointed Matron at Raventhorpe, was awarded the Silver Medal at Waikato Hospital as being the best nurse of her course.

Salaries have recently been substantially raised, so that commencing trainees receive approximately £3 5s. per week in addition to board and lodging after deduction of all taxation. Unless there is an early improvement in the situation it may be necessary to extend our area of recruitment.