

TOKANUI MENTAL HOSPITAL

DR. HUNTER reports :—

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending 31st December, 1945.

The total number of cases under care during the year was 1,236, including 73 voluntary boarders.

Admissions numbered 164, of whom 17 were transfers from other institutions and 39 voluntary boarders.

Discharges were 56 patients under certificate, 30 voluntary boarders, and 13 transferred.

There were 66 deaths.

At the end of the year 1,031 patients, including 42 on probation and 40 voluntary boarders, remained on the register. These figures include Chateau and Wairakei.

The out-patient clinic of the Waikato Hospital has been extended to two days per week and has served a useful purpose. It is appreciated by the patients and by the medical practitioners, who send cases for opinion and diagnosis.

Consultations are also held once monthly at Rotorua Convalescent Home for returned servicemen.

Examinations and reports are made also for the Waikeria Borstal Institution and the Child Welfare Department.

The appointment of the Occupational Therapist has allowed the formation of three classes for women and one for the men. The interest which the patients have taken in these classes is revealed in the improvement in their mental condition. The building of an occupational centre will benefit a larger number of patients and increase the usefulness of the occupational therapy.

During the year the hospital has lost a true friend in the death of the Official Visitor, Mr. Frank Findlay, M.P. His monthly visits were looked forward to, and patients appreciated very much his interest and advice in their welfare.

It has been increasingly difficult to obtain sufficient nursing and attendant staff, and much overtime has been necessary. In my opinion, the only solution for a real improvement in the staffing position for attendants at this hospital lies in the erection of sufficient houses. A building-site has been selected near the hospital, and I hope that the erection of houses will be proceeded with as soon as possible.

I hope that the new buildings which were under consideration when the war started will be proceeded with in the near future. The new boiler-house, laundry, bakery, and butcher-shop are a real necessity, as our present buildings and equipment are out of date and should be replaced as soon as possible.

The building of the new boiler-house will necessitate the erection of separate kitchens and bathing facilities in the male wards, A, H, and C. This will bring the male side in line with the women's side, in which wards are self-contained. A new kitchen for male staff, with dining-room and recreation-room (large enough to accommodate a billiard-table) will be necessary and should be provided as soon as possible. The hospital is overcrowded to the extent of approximately 100 patients; and two new villas, one for the men and one for the women, is urgently required.

The access road to the hospital from the main highway remains in a very bad state, is corrugated, and a menace to any sick persons who require transport along it.

The only solution appears to be to have this road tar-sealed.

Wairakei and Chateau, which were branches of the Tokanui Mental Hospital, and were for women patients, continued to serve a useful purpose, but the eruption of Mount Ruapehu interfered so much with the light and water systems at the Chateau that it was necessary in December to transfer all the Chateau patients to Raverthorpe.

With the exception of the gastro-enteritis epidemic from which the rest of New Zealand was suffering, the general health of the patients has been satisfactory.

Special thanks are due to all members of the staff, who have worked under trying conditions and who have done their best throughout the year.