

SEACLIFF MENTAL HOSPITAL.

SIR,—

Seacliff, 31st March, 1909.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Seacliff Mental Hospital for the year 1908.

The year opened with 735 patients, and at the close there were 763, being an increase of 28. This increase was due to : (1.) The very large number of admissions during the year—viz., 146. The average admission-rate during the four preceding years of the quinquennium was only 120. (2.) The unusually small proportion of deaths—viz., 46. This equals 6 per cent. on the number of patients resident, whereas the average of the last few years for the Dominion shows 7 per cent. on the total certified insane population. It is interesting to note that 10 of the patients who died during the year at Seacliff were between seventy and eighty years of age, and 2 were over eighty. Of the younger patients who died 7 were general paralytics, and 7 suffered from phthisis.

The discharges during the year numbered 72, being practically 50 per cent., of the admission-rate, or about the average for the institution ; and in other respects the statistics of the year show no special features.

On the whole, the health of the inmates has been good throughout the year.

The escapes have been rather below the average proportion to the population ; and there are only two serious casualties to record—viz., an accidental simple fracture of the femur, and the death by suicide of an old man who had been for many years in the institution.

The amenities of the branch establishment at Waitati are being steadily developed, and year by year the value of the estate is growing as more land is drained and brought under cultivation. The year's record at the Camp has been uneventful.

The farm, the gardens, and the fishing-station have contributed largely to the support of the population of the different branches. It is anticipated that a good oil-launch, now under construction, will make the fish-supply in future more regular and abundant.

Two new wings which will afford additional sleeping-rooms for men and women will be completed at an early date, and are much needed.

Regular religious services have been held by the various denominations throughout the year.

The thanks of the authorities are due to the Otago Daily Times and Witness Company and to the Evening Star Company for newspapers and journals supplied free.

To Dr. Tizard and to the other officers and members of the staff I wish to express thanks for hearty co-operation in carrying out the work at Seacliff ; similar thanks are due to Dr. Donald and the staff at Waitati.

I have, &c.,

The Inspector-General of Mental Hospitals, Wellington.

F. TRUBY KING.

PORIRUA MENTAL HOSPITAL.

SIR,—

Mental Hospital, Porirua, 10th May, 1909.

I have the honour to submit the following report on this Mental Hospital for the year 1908.

The total number of patients under care was 769, and the average number resident 613 (327 males and 268 females), an increase of 17 above the average of the previous year. The admissions amounted to 146, and the discharges and deaths to 111. Of the admissions, 74 males and 52 females were admitted for the first time, while 10 males and 10 females were readmissions ; 23 were sixty years of age and upwards, and 13 were twenty-one years and under, the youngest being sixteen years.

Seventy-three patients were discharged as recovered—a ratio of 50 per cent. to the number admitted—while 32 patients died, making a death-rate of a little over 5 per cent. (5.22) of the average number resident.

The physical health of patients has been satisfactory, and no epidemic of consequence visited the institution.

A case of suicide unfortunately occurred. Two male patients who were friends, and were known to one another before admission, were out working with others in the Hospital grounds. They consulted together, and determined to commit suicide, and to carry out their purpose they broke open a locked desk in a garden toolhouse and secured a patent mixture for spraying plants, which they drank in turn. The fluid consisted of a poisonous compound of nicotine. From the effects of this one died, although prompt means were taken to evade the fatal issue, while the other recovered after restoratives were administered. Further details of this most regrettable tragedy I supplied to you at the time.

With a view to preserving our native bush, which covers an area of upwards of 50 acres of rough hill land to the south-west of the estate, and which forms an important part of the catchment-area for our reservoir, steps were taken to securely fence this preserve, into which the cattle and sheep have made serious inroads. Moreover, rabbits have been on the increase, and the outskirts of the native bush form shelter and breeding-grounds which seriously handicaps our endeavours to eradicate the pest. The fencing around the bush has therefore been made rabbit-proof, and there is evidence already that the extra cost will be soon repaid by the better stock-carrying capacity of the land adjoining.

During the dry summer and autumn of 1908 deficiency of water caused some anxiety, as the level of the reservoir sank many feet below the overflow ; but by stopping the large consumption used by condensers in the engine-room, and by the Pelton wheels in the workshops, we managed to raise the water-level up to the full capacity of the reservoir just before the drought finally broke up.