

I regret losing the services of Dr. Monaghan, who left to take up private practice, but was most fortunate in procuring as his successor Dr. Blair, one of the most capable and conscientious medical officers it has been my good fortune to be associated with. I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to him and to Dr. Prins and other officers for their able assistance.

NELSON MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. GRAY reports :—

During the year 1923 we have had under care 379 patients, with an average resident number of 306. Our average number has increased by 43, mainly due to transfers from other institutions. Our recovery-rate upon the direct admissions was 37 per cent., which is satisfactory considering that the irrecoverable male imbeciles from all over the Dominion are admitted to this institution. Our death-rate was 9 per cent. upon the average number resident, the principal cause (25 per cent.) being senile asthenia.

The general health of the patients has been good.

The experience of each successive year adds to my conviction that in the villa system we have the means not only of ideal classification, but also of obviating all the objectionable features which loom so largely in the public mind.

At Stoke, Nelson, we have already seven different degrees of classification, which enables each type to be dealt with in a villa appropriate to its needs.

During the year the two outstanding events have been the opening of the reception block and the provision of a well-equipped male hospital block.

The former—named Braemar—is in charge of Sister I. D. Brand, R.R.C., who has had a large experience in mental hospitals and other institutions in Britain and is *au fait* with the latest methods of treatment. In addition to her ordinary duties Sister Brand gives lectures and nursing demonstrations to the staff, which are much appreciated.

The inauguration of the male hospital ward has marked a big advance. This ward, to which most of our male cases have been admitted, is staffed by female nurses, and the experiment has been an unqualified success.

I am satisfied that 90 per cent. of our male admissions into mental hospitals could be looked after by female nurses with much benefit to patients and institutions. The employment of indoor male staff is more or less a survival of the prison tradition, and we should aim at their replacement by nurses, retaining only sufficient males to deal with the really few recalcitrant cases we meet.

El Nido—the boys' villa—has 64 residents, and enlargement will have to be considered in the near future. The nurses in charge do excellent work, not only in providing for the comfort of the boys, but in training them to useful occupations.

The development of Stoke farm goes on steadily, and the institution is admirably suited for its function as a parole colony. Excavations are being carried out for the new "closed" villa, and plans are well forward for the new laundry and three female villas on lovely sites facing the sea.

No less than 72.5 per cent. male patients are usefully employed, and 65.5 per cent. are on parole.

I am very glad to record that the public of Nelson are showing a kindly and practical interest in the institution. The children of Hampden Street School sent for our juvenile Christmas-tree a handsome donation, while the public of the neighbourhood, through the School Committee, has arranged a picnic for the children. These and similar acts of kindness are most encouraging.

There have been no regrettable incidents throughout the year, a state of matters which is largely due to the excellence of my officers and staff to whom my thanks are due.

HOKITIKA MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. BUCHANAN reports :—

The number of patients on the register at the beginning of the year was 242. At the end of the year there remained 236, made up of 171 males and 65 females. There were 19 admissions, 10 discharges, and 15 deaths. The general health of the patients has been good.

Since my last report Love Bros. have been building the male reception wing of the admission block and a central administration block. The female wing, built by ourselves, has been completed for some months now with the exception of the plumbing. I hope to have both wings in working-order by the end of June, 1924.

An old building which stood on the site of the above has been removed, renovated, and set up as a small fever hospital.

The large recreation-ground has been completed. This will be of immense benefit to the patients.

The appointment of a sister, who has qualified in both mental and general training, to take charge of the new block is a most important innovation. The training of the nurses will naturally be more comprehensive, and the nursing of the sick and new admissions will be centralized. This cannot but be of immense benefit to all concerned.

I must again express my appreciation of the loyal manner in which my staff has co-operated with me during this difficult period of reconstruction.

CHRISTCHURCH MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. CROSBY reports :—

The year opened with 812 patients on our register, and closed with 806—viz., 359 men and 447 women. During the year 136 patients were admitted (60 males, 76 females), making a total under care of 948 (437 males, 511 females). Sixty-nine patients were discharged (35 males, 34 females), and 34 males and 27 females died.