

The work has been done so far in New Zealand, partly by outside voluntary effort and to some extent by part-time paid instructors, but the experience in other countries leads to the expectation that occupational therapy will develop to an extent which will necessitate the employment of regular whole-time officers.

CHANGES IN MEDICAL STAFF.

It is with great regret that I record the death on 30th December of Dr. H. M. Prins, Medical Superintendent of Tokanui Mental Hospital. Dr. Prins was a man of generous and kindly nature, and during his twenty years of service in the Department he had earned the respect and affection of the patients and his fellow-officers.

Dr. James Dewar Hunter was promoted to be Medical Superintendent at Kingseat Mental Hospital last August. Dr. Hunter has had special experience of the villa system both in Scotland and in New Zealand and is therefore well qualified to be the first Medical Superintendent of our leading villa mental hospital.

Dr. Gilbert Mortimer Tothill was promoted to the position of Medical Superintendent of Tokanui Mental Hospital in January in succession to the late Dr. Prins. Dr. Tothill had several years' experience in psychiatry in England before joining our service nine years ago. His promotion is well earned.

APPRECIATION.

I am always glad of the opportunity to include in this report my sincere appreciation of the generous loyalty and support given to me at all times by my colleagues Dr. John Russell and all the Medical Superintendents and by the other officers of the service.

I am extremely fortunate in my Head Office staff, and to Mr. Sinclair, Chief Clerk, and the other officers I tender my thanks for valuable work well done throughout the year.

AUCKLAND MENTAL HOSPITAL.

Dr. BUCHANAN reports :—

I have the honour to present my annual report for the year ended 31st December, 1936.

The total number of cases under care during the year was 1,592, with a weekly average of 1,185. The admissions numbered 303 (147 males, 156 females). Of this number, 242 were admitted for the first time. Under section 8 of the Mental Defectives Amendment Act, 169 patients were admitted.

Eighty-four voluntary boarders were admitted during the year, making a total of 193 under care, and of these, 70 were discharged.

At the end of the year 157 patients were on probation, 104 on full parole, and 159 on limited parole. Deaths totalled 113 (50 males, 63 females).

Generally, the health of the patients has been good. However, we were unfortunate in having an epidemic of dysentery, which broke out in March, came to a peak in June, and became quiescent in October. It is now over, though occasional sporadic cases still occur. This outbreak presented many difficulties. Our accommodation was already very limited, and the necessity of providing adequate isolation taxed our ingenuity. This experience has prompted me to include the cost of building an isolation block in my annual estimates.

The work of the nurses who were in charge of the epidemic was admirable, and deserves praise.

On the 15th September we were honoured by a visit from the Minister of Mental Hospitals, the Hon. Peter Fraser.

A fairly comprehensive programme of maintenance and new work has been effected. In this list the main items are general painting, outside and inside; tarring and sanding roads and airing courts; alterations to the water service to provide a more efficient fire-fighting supply; a new veranda built on to the Wolfe Home; a sun-shelter shed in M. 3; preparations for the installation of a cool storage in the main kitchen; introduction of a vegetable-peeling machine, also in the main kitchen; and the addition of ventilating skylights to M. 3. Many other small, but none the less important, works were also carried out.

The library has proved a great success. It now possesses a great number of books of excellent quality. The increasing number of books, and the enlarging number of patients who take advantage of the amenities this club provides, will probably necessitate building-extension.

During the year we have lost the services of two old members of the staff, one having reached retiring-age and the other on account of impaired health. I refer to Mr. White, who has been our Chief Engineer since 1st May, 1928, and Mr. Myers, our Storeman since 27th December, 1923. The former was a valuable colleague and sincere friend. His wide knowledge of engineering, and his broad practical common-sense in everyday matters, was of very great use and importance. The latter was a devoted, loyal, and conscientious member of our staff.

Entertainments have been good. In this connection I wish to thank specially Mr. Neville Carlson for his consistent entertainment and amusement of our patients, and the Amateur Magician Society for giving a most entertaining and thoroughly appreciated performance.

The Official Visitors continue to take a useful and regular interest in the welfare of the patients.

On the 15th August I handed over the charge of the Kingseat Mental Hospital to Dr. Hunter, who was appointed Medical Superintendent. In spite of relief from the extra work entailed in looking after this growing hospital, it was with regret that I partially severed my connection with it. The supervising of buildings embodying new ideas in the nursing of mental cases was always interesting and congenial. I tender to Dr. Hunter my congratulations on his appointment and best wishes for his future at Kingseat.