

PART IV.—HOSPITALS.

In presenting my annual report for the year ending 31st March, 1937, I wish to draw attention to the increasing difficulties which have been met with owing to the much greater activity of Hospital Boards as regards new buildings and extension to existing hospitals. A large amount of the time, both of the Technical Inspectors and myself, has been taken up in discussing and reviewing plans prepared by the Board's architects. As a result the work of inspection of hospitals is much behind, and it has been found impossible to visit hospitals in any routine or with any degree of regularity.

BUILDING ACTIVITIES.

Following a period of almost complete inactivity, and with the increasing demands for more accommodation, all except a few of the Boards have building operations in hand or are preparing to start in the near future.

Following a request that every Board should prepare a five-year building programme, many of the Boards called upon us for suggestions and assistance. The following list sets out the more important items either under construction or under consideration.

Mangonui Hospital Board.—(1) New laundry and boiler-house to be erected during the current year.

(2) The Board requested assistance in planning for future extensions to their hospital, such plan to be so designed that the present hospital will ultimately be replaced. A scheme was provided.

Bay of Islands Hospital Board.—(1) A new ward and kitchen block has been erected and is now in occupation. This is the second ward designed on modern lines that has been completed in the Dominion.

(2) Further remodelling and extensions have been tentatively planned so as to ultimately provide a practically complete new hospital.

(3) Extensions to the Nurses' Home have been completed.

Whangarei Hospital Board.—Plans are being prepared for—

(1) A new ward block.

(2) Additions to the Nurses' Home.

(3) New boiler-house and laundry.

(4) Remodelling of and additions to the present laundry to provide office accommodation, residents' quarters, lecture-room, laboratory, and central store. This work will proceed during the current year.

(5) Two of the other wards are also to be extensively remodelled.

(6) The new ward block is also so designed and located that it will form part of a complete remodelled hospital.

Kaipara Hospital Board.—The present hospital at Te Kopuru is an old building, and owing to its location on the site does not readily lend itself to future extensions. At the same time the ward accommodation is almost continually severely taxed and gross overcrowding occurs. The Board therefore asked for a report on the future building programme. Two tentative schemes were submitted—

(1) To gradually build a new hospital on the present site.

(2) To erect a complete new hospital on another site in Dargaville.

A final decision as to where the new hospital will be located has not yet been reached, but in the meantime a new site has been purchased in the town of Dargaville, and this new site is ample in area and has many excellent features.

Extensions to the Nurses' Home are at present being constructed.

Whangaroa Hospital Board.—Plans and specifications for a five-bed maternity annexe have been completed, and tenders will shortly be called.

Auckland Hospital Board.—Over a period of some years the Auckland Hospital Board has been discussing various schemes for providing additional accommodation. In the earlier part of the year a firm of Australian architects was invited to report on the best method of providing additional beds at the Auckland Hospital. The report recommended an extensive demolition in order to provide a site for a large new block of buildings. It has, however, long been the opinion of departmental officers that the same object could be achieved by a more conservative process. There seems little reason in the meantime to consider demolishing a well-constructed building, accommodating two hundred beds, when a considerable addition as part of a completed scheme can be made by replacing other buildings not so well constructed. This latter method of approach is now under consideration by the Board.

Auckland Hospital District is by far the largest in the Dominion, and it is essential in any building scheme to ensure that the vital question of administration is considered, and every effort made to remove existing difficulties. Each addition to this hospital in the past has apparently been considered merely as a separate entity, with the result that the difficulties of administration and control have been accentuated. The proposals now under consideration are—

(1) Extensions to the Nurses' Home. Plans for this are at present being prepared and the new block should be one of the most modern in the Dominion.

(2) Erection of a new multi-story ward block on modern lines, and, later on, in conjunction with this new block,

(3) A new administration building. In this block closely related services can be conveniently located and centralized.