

KINGSEAT MENTAL HOSPITAL.

DR. HUNTER reports :

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending 31st December, 1938.

The total number of patients under care during the year was 596 (307 males and 289 females), with a weekly average of 577. Patients admitted for the first time numbered 2 (males), and 1 male patient was readmitted during the year. Patients admitted by transfer were 9 (7 males and 2 females). Transfers to other hospitals numbered 3, all of whom were males. There were 5 patients (4 males and 1 female) discharged, and there were 13 deaths (9 males and 4 females).

The weekly average of voluntary boarders resident during the year was 6 (3 males and 3 females). One male was discharged and committed, while there were no admissions or deaths.

The general health of the patients and staff has been excellent, on the whole, although the measles epidemic affected a large proportion of the nursing staff. I also regret to have to report the death of one of the members of our nursing staff, Nurse Mavis Evelyn Nicholson, who passed away on 20th July, 1938, following an operation. To her relatives we tender our deepest sympathy.

The building programme continues, and this year the following buildings have been completed or are in the course of construction : Medical Superintendent's house, Engineer's house, hospital and treatment centre, Villas 7 and 8 for male patients, oil-store, mortuary, workshops block. Tenders have been called for the erection of a Nurses' Home.

Renovations have been carried out to the cow-byres, and this part of the farm buildings is now in first-class order.

The installation of equipment for the laundry, engineer's block, bakehouse, and butchery has been proceeded with, and this block should be in operation early in the new year. The main thing which is causing delay is the non-arrival of the boilers, which are expected early in February, 1939.

The furnishing and equipment of the hospital and treatment centre is nearly completed, and this fine addition to the hospital, situated on a slight rise overlooking the recreation ground, has a bright and sunny outlook.

The amenities provided in this block should do much towards the successful treatment of our nervous and mentally ill.

The automatic-telephone system mentioned in last year's report has been installed, and is proving of great benefit in the administration of the hospital.

With the increasing number of patients and staff the question of suitable entertainment is becoming somewhat of a problem. The use of three rooms in a villa for the weekly dances is not satisfactory, while concerts require the transportation of seating-accommodation from villa to villa, so that a recreation hall with cinema facilities is now essential for further development of the villa system.

The staff-housing problem is acute, and will be more so when the service blocks are fully staffed. We are short of single-male-staff accommodation, and there is difficulty in securing houses in the vicinity of the hospital for married staff.

Another problem that is arising is the fact that our distance from Auckland, and the difficulty of transport has resulted in many of our staff acquiring motor-cars, and the question of staff garages has arisen. I think that this matter will be required to be dealt with in the near future.

The patients, on the whole, are happy and contented, and appreciative of the parole privileges, to which they are reacting satisfactorily. They are fully occupied in constructional work on the farm, in the grounds, gardening, laundry, and sewing-room. Their amusements have not been neglected, and they are all eligible to play in the various sports, teams, and clubs which the hospital has. Our sports clubs have had a successful and enjoyable year.

Mrs. Waugh, working under the auspices of the Auckland Hospital Auxiliary, Mental Hospitals Branch, conducts a weekly handicraft class, and this year this class has been extended to the more restless and unstable types of patients, and the results are encouraging. These patients are better behaved, and look forward eagerly to the weekly visit. I feel that this result would be enhanced if it were possible to have the handicraft class daily instead of weekly.

Mr. McFarlane, of the Public Works Department, has taken his usual active interest in the progress of the hospital, and for his many useful and practical suggestions I am very grateful.

A weekly clinic is conducted at the Auckland Public Hospital, where 89 new cases were treated, whilst there were 332 attendances. New cases were referred by Pensions Department, 65 ; Hospital, 5 ; medical practitioners, 15 ; voluntary, 4.

I am most grateful to those who have helped to provide entertainment and for the gifts of reading-material : to the several local branches of the Returned Soldiers' Association for their interest in ex-soldier patients ; the women's division of the Farmers' Union and the Women's Institute for their interest in the activities of the hospital ; the Auckland Women's Auxiliary for regular donations for the benefit of the patients ; and the members of the clergy who have conducted Church services throughout the year.

Finally, I wish to thank the Chief Clerk and his staff, the Matron, Head Attendant, and all members of the staff for their very helpful and encouraging services for the benefit of the patients and in forwarding the interests of the hospital.