HEALTH MINISTER INSPECTS HOSPITAL EXTENSIONS

Cont. from page 1

additions should be ready by March.

The extensions include a three-storey high ward block, kitchen and boiler rooms. The ward block will include a complete casualty section, with two operating theatres and a five-bed holding ward. Additions should be ready by March.

The lift in the new section will also serve the existing two-storey building which has no lift facilities.

Doctors' consulting rooms, a dispensary and sisters' station will also be provided.

When completed the two floors, level with the present building, will each hold 31 beds.

The kitchen block will include a nurses' dining room, a cool room and modern cooking facilities.

The extensions will mean an increase in capacity at the hospital from 65 to 130 beds and an increase of about 100 in staff.

Mr. Boyce pointed out that the laundry costs for the year totalled £7000, a considerable quantity of which was done by a private firm.

Not only would the new laundry save money, but more important it would provide fresh linen when urgently needed, particularly during public holidays when accident cases drained the laundry stock. The maternity section also used a large quantity of linen.

In reply to Mr. Jago, the secretary stated that it cost £170,000 per annum to run the hospital, but when the extensions were completed it would cost £300,000. The State Government would be expected to meet half this amount, the balance coming from patients' fees.

1500 transported

Mr. R. M. Vaughan, who is also chairman of the BWD Ambulance Committee, pointed out that 1500 cases each year were taken out of the district by ambulance.

As the district was growing so rapidly he did not think the extensions would make much difference to this figure.

Mr. Boyce said once the hospital reached 130 bed capacity it would have its own pathology and physiotherapy departments, which were urgently required.

Mr. Jago, who earlier in the day had been addressed by a Woy Woy deputation which stressed the need for hospitalisation of geriatrics, questioned board members on what was being done for geriatric patients.

Mr. Boyce said six district nurses, operating from the hospital, made 27,000 visits to private homes last year.

He praised the work of these nurses who had been able to provide excellent care for elderly patients in their own homes.

Mr. Jago said he was amazed to find that there were 9000 to 10,000 people over 60 years of age in the Woy Woy area.

The Rev. Ian Davidson asked the Minister whether it was time for a national health scheme.

The Minister disagreed, stating he felt it was more important to encourage community self help instead of having hospitals run completely by the State.