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# ECT SHOCK NOT USED FOR PUNISHING — PSYCHIATRIST

WANGANUI, Today (PA). — The child psychiatrist in charge of the adolescent unit at Lake Alice Hospital yesterday described allegations that electric shock treatment had been used there to "punish" youngsters as "arrant rubbish."

Dr S R Leeks, commenting on allegations made public by the Opposition spokesman on health, Mr J Hunt (New Lynn) also said it was nonsense to claim, as Mr Hunt's informant had, that youngsters had received the treatment without reference to their psychiatric

status or grounds for admission.

The person's statement said his impressions were based on discussions with staff and with a number of youngsters seen in clinical interviews. The person said he was not medically qualified, but Mr Hunt said he was perfectly satisfied with the authenticity of the material with which he had been supplied and the integrity of the individual involved.

Dr Leeks said he guessed that the terms treatment and punishment became "awfully mixed up at times."

In group therapy sessions children at times were in tears. . . . "And I suppose some people see this as treatment and others as punishment. Any emotional thing is aversive, or an emotional pain to the person involved in recalling past bad experiences."

"But to state that ECT has been used as a form of corporal punishment is arrant rubbish," he said.

Each person was seen when admitted and before any treatment was carried out, and the person's claim that ECT was often applied before any psychiatric diagnosis had been recorded was "nonsense."

Dr Leeks said the statement released by Mr Hunt represented the personal impressions of one person who admitted he was not medically trained.

Dr Leeks said the statement released by Mr Hunt closely resembled one made about four years ago by a Wellington psychologist, and was also similar to one recently referred to him by the Director of Mental Health.

Dr Leeks said the recent inquiry in Auckland into the ad-

ministering of ECT to a Niuean boy was a full and exhaustive one, and he regarded Mr Hunt as being "just another MP trying to hop onto the bandwagon."

Dr Leeks said that, in the past, medical students and psychologists had been present during some clinical interviews, but they were "just interviews" which could not form the basis of the present attack.

Dr Leeks has been in charge of Lake Alice's children's unit since its inception in 1972.

## Another 'Normal' Inquiry Into Treatment

THE Government does not intend setting up a commission of inquiry into the use of electro-convulsive therapy at Lake Alice Hospital.

The acting Minister of Health (Mr Templeton) said this last night when commenting on a document released by the Opposition health spokesman, Mr J L Hunt (New Lynn), alleging that the hospital was using ECT to punish children.

Mr Templeton later released a statement which identified the person as a psychologist, Mr C C Jackson, whose experience at the hospital spanned the years 1972 to 1974.

Mr Hunt released the document to the news media yesterday morning, then later tried to bring it up in Parliament but was ruled out of order by the Speaker (Sir Roy Jenkins), because the House was debating the Shop Trading Hours Bill.

He did not indicate when the inquiry would be completed.

There have been two independent inquiries into the use of ECT at Lake Alice recently.

The first was the report of a Magistrate, Mr W J Mitchell, into the case of a 13-year-old Niuean boy in which he specifically mentioned punishment.

"I am certain that ECT was not used at Lake Alice Hospital as punishment," Mr Mitchell declared in his report.

The second was a report of an inquiry conducted by the former Chief Ombudsman, Sir Guy Powles, who considered that a 15-year-old boy had been detained in Lake Alice unlawfully.

This was subsequently denied by the Minister of Health.

Mr Templeton said there