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No crime at Lake Alice, but . . .

WELLINGTON, Today (PA).— Staff at Lake Alice psychiatric hospital had shown "lack of judgment" in using electric shock treatment on adolescents, a top health official said last night.

His comment followed a police investigation into allegations of ill-treatment of patients in the hospital's adolescent unit.

The commissioner of police, Mr K. B. Burnside, said that because of the nature of the investigation an independent medical opinion was obtained.

This had confirmed that no criminal offences had been committed.

The results of the seven-month police inquiry had been sent to the Health Department's director of mental health, Dr S. W. P. Mirams, Mr Burnside said.

The investigation was sought by Dr Mirams, after claims that electric shocks were administered to boys in the unit as punishment, between 1972 and 1974.

Details of the claims were sent to Dr Mirams by Dr Oliver Sutherland, of the

Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination, in May last year.

The shocks had been administered by a machine designed to give shocks to the brain as part of electro convulsive therapy (ECT).

Dr Sutherland said today the report had not denied that the boys had been given shocks in the legs.

"That may not be technically criminal behaviour," Dr Sutherland said.

"Nevertheless in the view of our organization it is mor-

ally indefensible and a gross violation of the rights of the child."

Dr Mirams said Dr Sutherland's statement that the claims had not been denied was "a fair interpretation."

"There is no question of it being a criminal matter and there will be no disciplinary proceedings against the staff," Dr Mirams said.

"However, in as far as we can pass judgment on something that happened four years ago, I would certainly say that there was a lack of

judgment."

Some courses of treatment in the unit had been abandoned by the staff since 1974.

"To the best of my knowledge nothing of the sort has happened since and certainly I have received no complaints."

Dr Mirams said a patient's complaint about a psychiatrist had been directed to the penal cases committee of the Medical Council which had decided in November there was no case for disciplinary action.

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Lack Of Judgment Shown

WELLINGTON (PA).— Staff at Lake Alice Psychiatric Hospital had shown "lack of judgment" in using electric shock treatment on adolescents, a top health official said.

His comment followed a police investigation into allegations of ill-treatment of patients in the hospital's adolescent unit, which found no evidence of criminal misconduct.

The investigation was sought by the Health Department Director of Mental Health, Dr S.W.P. Mirams, following claims that electric shocks had

been administered to boys in the unit as punishment, between 1972 and 1974.

Details of the claims were forwarded to Dr Mirams by Dr Oliver Sutherland of the Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination, in May last year.

The shocks had been administered by a machine designed to give shocks to the brain as part of electro convulsive therapy (ECT) treatment.

Dr Sutherland said

the report had not denied that the boys had been given shocks in the legs.

"That may not be technically criminal behaviour," Dr Sutherland said.

"Nevertheless in the view of our organization it is morally indefensible, and a gross violation of the rights of the child, to give electric shocks to a child's body."

"It's time the community, and particularly the

medical profession, reconsidered the whole matter of whether children should even be given shocks to the body."

Dr Mirams said Dr Sutherland's statement that the claims had not been denied was "a fair interpretation."

"There is no question of it being a criminal matter, and there will be no disciplinary proceedings against the staff," Dr Mirams said.

"However, in as far as we can pass judgment on something that happened four years ago, I would certainly say that

there was a lack of judgment."

Some courses of treatment in the unit had been abandoned by the staff since 1974.

"To the best of my knowledge, nothing of the sort has happened since, and certainly I have received no complaints," Dr Mirams said.

Dr Mirams said that Lake Alice was under constant pressure and as it was one of the few adolescent psychiatric units it tended to get a collection of extremely difficult cases.