

(Group x-ray examination of certain sections of the community has been undertaken, but the work has been limited because of the inability of the x-ray departments of public hospitals to cope with it. When sufficient radiologists and equipment are available, a more general use of this method of examination will be possible. In the meantime, efforts are being concentrated upon family contacts and other groups exposed to infection, such as nurses in public hospitals, dental nurses, training college entrants, school-teachers, medical students, and laboratory workers. A limited number of factory employees have also been examined.

The following reflects the work done by the district nursing service and school medical officers:—

New tuberculous homes brought under control	..	..	..	2,050
Total number of homes under control	..	..	..	6,865
Number of new contacts examined and brought under control	..	..	..	4,611
Total number of contacts under supervision to be brought up for revision	..	..	..	18,094
Number of Mantoux tests	..	..	..	1,822
Number of positive reactors	..	..	..	474 (26 per cent.)
Number of contacts x-rayed	..	..	..	5,522
Number of cases found amongst contacts as active from Mantoux testing and x-ray examination	..	..	..	377 (6·8 per cent.)

The routine examination of contacts yielded 377 active cases.

An improvement in housing, both for the Maori and the European family, will be one of the main factors in effecting the hoped for decline in tuberculosis in this country. The source of infection of every case must be traced, and, in turn, when discovered should be brought under treatment and placed under institutional or domiciliary control. Improvement in housing should be far less costly than the provision of new tuberculosis institutions.

Nursing.—The work of the Nursing Division has been influenced by two factors during the current year, the first being the increasing difficulty which is being experienced with hospital staffing, and the second the rapid expansion of the Department's public health nursing service owing to the extension of the tuberculosis, immunization, and health education programmes.

The following measures were undertaken to relieve the hospitals staffing difficulty: (1) Man-power regulations were gazetted which laid down that the staffing of public and private hospitals, of any State Department, and the Plunket Society should rank as an essential service. The movements of all nurses leaving training schools and of all married nurses were controlled. (2) The Civil Nursing Reserve was extended, and now consists of 28 registered nurses and 280 voluntary aids helping a very large number of hospitals for varying periods. (3) The Nursing Division was used as an advisory body in regard to hospital vacancies. (4) A nursing recruiting campaign was carried out. Towards the cost of this the Government granted the sum of £1,000.

Hospitals used as training-schools for nurses during the last five years show an increase of 2,271 in the average number of occupied beds. These employ an additional staff of 1,462 nurses, of whom 557 are registered nurses. The district nursing staff has been increased to cope with the intensified public health programme, and authority was obtained to appoint an additional 50 nurses over a period of eighteen months. With the establishment of a Tuberculosis Division, more detailed reporting and visiting of this type of patient has been required. New houses and equipment have had to be provided for the additional nurses. A difficult problem has been the provision of motor-cars, and many areas have been handicapped by lack of transport for the nurse.

Matters of special importance dealt with by the Nurses and Midwives Registration Board were: (1) The gazettement of regulations to allow Voluntary Aids to sit for the State examination for nursing aids if they have carried out 6,000 hours of duty in approved hospitals. This will give voluntary aids who have given valuable wartime service a reduction of one year in the period of training they must undergo if they wish to seek registration as nurses. (2) The Mental Hospitals Department asked that the training and registration of mental nurses should come under the authority of the Board. The necessary authority is now being sought. (3) A special committee of tutor sisters from different hospitals under the Chairmanship of Miss Bridges was set up to prepare a report on a preliminary course to be taken at secondary schools, with the possible provision of bursaries for those taking the course, and the revision of the Nursing Syllabus in the light of present-day medical science.

The new school provided for the post-graduate nurses is now in use and the number of students has been increased. A short course for nurses entering public health district service is now held twice a year and has been of much service in providing standard introductory instruction.

During the months of July and August Miss Lambie visited Fiji for the purpose of reporting on the development of a South Pacific Nursing Service.

Maternal Welfare.—The occasion of the retirement of Dr. Paget makes it opportune to refer to the progress which has been made in the saving of lives of mothers.

In 1923 the maternal-mortality rate from all puerperal causes was 5·11 per 1,000 live births. In 1943 it was 2·21.