

Dr. Anderson says :—

In our pre-school work our main obstacles are housing shortages and working mothers. The children are left with relatives or friends, so that they never develop any sense of security and have no one around them with a stable attitude towards them.

These environmental conditions are not the whole story, for behaviour problems arise in households where the only cause operating is parental ignorance of correct child care. Our health education activities are meant to help "backward" parents.

IMMUNIZATION AGAINST DISEASE

Whooping-cough.—Immunization is given on request against whooping-cough, and endeavour is made to limit departmental work to the age group 3 months to 2 years. Older children are done for the first time when this age has been passed only on urgent representation of the parent. It is better to restrict this work to the age group at greatest risk. During the year, 4,892 complete courses of whooping-cough vaccine were given, of which 621 were in the older age groups.

Typhoid Fever.—Maori children attending primary schools are vaccinated against typhoid and paratyphoid fevers with triple vaccine in the autumn term of each year. During the year, 19,684 children were vaccinated, only 469 of these being below five years of age, the remainder being in the age group of 5 to 15 years.

Diphtheria.—There is an apparent falling off in diphtheria immunizations, 29,991 complete courses of prophylactic having been given during the year, as against 66,533 in 1946. The difference is accounted for in a change of incidence in immunizing personnel. The Department has been encouraging private medical practitioners to undertake this work and has supplied prophylactic free of charge for the purpose, on the understanding that practitioners would return to the Department a record of children immunized. The return of records to the Department is done by the minority of practitioners, but the immunizing work is now undertaken by the majority. The result is that our babies and pre-school children are being immunized, but the exact state of protection cannot be stated until better co-operation in the matter of records is forthcoming from the medical profession.

Departmental officers immunized a smaller group, therefore, mostly within the younger age groups.

Health District.	Babies, 3 Months to 1 Year.	Pre-school, 1-5 years.	School, 5-10 years.	School, 10-15 years.	Total.
North Auckland	1,281	784	93	98	2,256
Central Auckland and Thames- Tauranga	1,502	859	99	28	2,488
South Auckland	1,352	1,875	1,041	289	4,557
Taranaki	571	628	281	14	1,494
Wellington - Hawke's Bay	1,654	1,976	244	52	3,926
Wellington	1,344	931	804	8	3,087
Nelson-Motueka	304	373	162	48	894
Canterbury - West Coast	906	2,359	1,986	178	5,429
Timaru	156	444	281	184	1,065
Southland	171	982	617	89	1,859
East Cape	222	401	415	157	1,195
Otago	527	1,119	230	312	1,661
Totals	9,990	12,131	6,253	1,457	29,911

THE MEDICAL STATE OF SECONDARY-SCHOOL CHILDREN

For the first time in medical inspection history it became a routine obligation of medical officers to inspect secondary schools. The beginning was in the nature of a trial run, each officer being asked to visit one secondary school and examine the School Leaving Certificate classes only. The response from teachers and parents was appreciative, and this activity will be intensified in the future as staff is augmented.