

In the majority of instances our hospitals do have good teaching departments and equipment. Nurses' homes are not luxurious, but are comfortable. Recreational facilities are fairly good, although they could be improved in places.

In spite of these conditions, there has been a marked shortage of staff—in certain hospitals particularly—and the following table shows the position with regard to nursing staff in our training-schools for the past six years :—

-----	1943.	1944.	1945.	1946.	1947.	1948.
Number of daily occupied beds ..	6,808·5	7,603·2	8,493	8,550·05	7,812·1	7,352·5
Number of registered nurses ..	1,172	1,366	1,500	1,347	1,199	1,221
Number of pupil-nurses ..	2,974	3,124	3,390	3,280	3,203	3,138

The decrease in occupied beds may in part be due to the number of Service patients being very much reduced, but is due also to a closing of wards and to shortage of staff. The proportion of nurses to patients, however, is better than for the last two years :—

—	1946.	1947.	1948.
Total number of nurses to patients	1-1·9	1-1·77	1-1·68
Total number of registered nurses to pupil-nurses	1-2·4	1-3	1-2·5

The total number of hospital beds available in New Zealand is as follows :—

Type of Bed.	Public Hospitals (Including Government Institutions.)		Private Hospitals.		Total Beds. (Exclusive of Mental Hospitals).	
	Number of Beds.	Number Per 1,000 of Population.	Number of Beds.	Number Per 1,000 of Population.	Number of Beds.	Number Per 1,000 of Population.
General	9,934	5·6	1,898	1·1	11,832	6·7
Maternity	1,428	0·8	819	0·4	2,247	1·2
T.B. and I.D.	2,460	1·4	..	..	2,460	1·4
Total	13,822	7·8	2,717	1·5	16,539	9·3
Average number occu- pied	10,947	6·2	..	..	..	..

The required number of nursing staff should be :—

Public Hospitals (of All Types, whether Training-schools or not).—Average occupied bed rate : 10,947. Allowing 1 nurse to 2 occupied beds and 1 registered nurse to 2 unregistered—i.e., 1 nurse to 1·5 general beds, 1 nurse to 1 maternity bed, 1 nurse to 3 tuberculosis beds—the total nursing staff would be 5,475, or 1,825 registered and 3,649 unregistered.

Private Hospitals.—Average occupied bed rate : 1,500. Allowing 1 nurse to 1·5 occupied beds and 1 registered nurse to 1 unregistered, the total nursing staff would be 1,666, or 833 registered and 833 unregistered.

Registered Nurses.—The shortage in registered nurses is largely due to a very high marriage-rate during the last two years (in one year, 1946, it was estimated at 600) and to the large number of nurses going overseas for further experience, which, for the year ended 31st March, was estimated at 160. Although there are a number of overseas nurses in New Zealand, the large majority are here primarily on a visit to the Dominion