

Yaws

Yaws is endemic in the Group, although active cases are now seldom seen. A few cases occurred during the year in Atiu, and there is an untreated field in Pukapuka, but it has not been possible to arrange for an inspection of that island this year.

Hospitalization

The following table gives a summary of treatments given in the hospital at Rarotonga during the last five years:—

—			1944-45.	1945-46.	1946-47.	1947-48.	1948-49.
In-patients	..	..	446	469	638	664	654
Out-patients	..	..	8,603	6,895	9,029	8,812	10,679
Visits	..	..	1,374	1,145	2,016	2,241	2,884
Anæsthetics—							
General	..	..	52	30	99	73	53
Local	..	..	336	377	53	*	*
Spinal	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
Operations—							
Major	..	..	101	26	43	43	47
Minor	..	..	467	440	109	119	344†
Confinements	..	..	63	43	29	30	51
X-rays	..	..	39	77	248	*	787

*Not available.

†Estimate.

The daily average number of patients at the hospital was 33.5 and the average length of stay 17.4 days. There were 36 admissions to the sanatorium and the daily average of patients was 13.8.

Water-supply

Increasing attention is being given to this serious problem, reference to which has already been made in the section dealing with the topography of the area. There are two aspects to be considered—in the case of the volcanic Lower Group islands the problem is one of ensuring that the adequate supply is hygienically distributed, and in the case of the coral atolls of the Northern Group that such rain as falls is not allowed to escape, but is stored in suitable bulk containers for use during the drier periods.

In Rarotonga there is a piped water-supply gathered from five different sources. Further reticulation is required, and it is intended to obtain the services of a qualified engineer with a view to improving the catchment areas, which are at present somewhat liable to pollution. In the outer islands there is a need to improve and extend both the storage available and the catchment areas.

In the year under review, water-tanks were constructed as under:—

Mauke: one 10,000-gallon tank in the district of Areora-Makatea; one 4,000-gallon tank at the wireless station.

Mangaia: Seven 3,500-gallon tanks.

This work has been restricted in the past owing to a shortage of materials, but strenuous efforts are being made to overcome this problem. It is also proposed to investigate artesian sources of supply.

Sewage and Disposal Systems

In the Lower Group, pit latrines with a concrete slab and pedestal are used in a fair percentage of cases; shortage of cement has been a factor in preventing a greater number from being constructed. In the Northern Group, the high surface-water level has necessitated the use of deep sea latrines, though in some cases the other type are used.

A rubbish-collection scheme has been established in Atiu.