

in connection with the latter I would especially like to thank Drs. Blackmore, Hardwick-Smith, and Falconer, Medical Superintendents of our three principal sanatoria, for their assistance and loyal co-operation.

Inspection of School-children.

It is hoped that during the coming year a scheme for the medical inspection of school-children will be put into operation. Delegates to the Hospital Conference unanimously agreed as to the necessity for some scheme for detecting defects or disease in their early stages, and were quite sympathetic as regards the details of the scheme submitted them—which details appear in the report of the Hospitals Conference, attached as an appendix to this report.

Vaccination.

The arrival on the 30th December of the s.s. "Knight of the Garter" at Lyttelton with a case of small-pox on board occasioned some anxiety to the Department, and that will ever be the case while our population is practically unprotected against small-pox. In last year's report I mentioned that of some 20,000 infants born every year in the Dominion only 5 per cent. are vaccinated.

I do not advise a repeal of the present law; but if it be decided that the law is not to be more vigorously administered than heretofore it would be better to repeal it, and, in the event of an outbreak of small-pox, provide, by Order in Council, that all persons within a certain area be vaccinated unless they can show satisfactory evidence of recent vaccination.

Reorganization.

By the amendment in the Hospitals Act whereby Hospital Boards are responsible for the control of infectious diseases it has been possible to organize on a better system. Almost without exception Hospital Boards have appointed the necessary officers to give effect to the change in the law, and uniformity in action is now possible.

These officers, though appointed by the Boards, are gazetted Sanitary Inspectors under the Public Health Act: they keep in touch with the Department on all matters relating to the public health, including the administration of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, an Act which, for the want of sufficient local officers, has not hitherto been administered with sufficient vigour. Details as to the work of these Sanitary Inspectors are set forth in the schedule.

It is especially interesting to notice that some of the Boards acknowledge the value of these officers' reports in considering the claims of applicants for charitable relief. Much saving to the rates and Consolidated Fund has already been effected thereby.

Laboratory Reports.

The increase of the work in the laboratories can be gauged by a perusal of the reports of Dr. Makgill, Dr. Champtaloup, and Mr. Hurley.

Despite the fact that Dr. Champtaloup has relieved the Wellington laboratory of the majority of specimens from the South Island, there has been a very marked increase in the number of specimens forwarded to headquarters for examination, and there is every reason for believing that there will be a great increase in the work of this branch of the Department: in fact, it is to be hoped that during the coming year Bacteriologists will be appointed at the Wellington, Christchurch, and Auckland Hospitals, who will perform the bulk of the bacteriological work of those respective districts. The excellent work done by Dr. Champtaloup at the Dunedin Hospital should convince Boards of the necessity for making such appointments.

It is to be hoped that by this means it will shortly be possible to manufacture in the Dominion those vaccines in common use, and thereby effect a considerable saving in expenditure under this item, to say nothing of the convenience of the public and the medical profession.

Native Medical Service.

By Cabinet minute of the 7th April, 1911, the Native medical service was retransferred to this Department. This step was very necessary in the interests of the public health, and it will shortly be possible to place this branch of the Department on a better footing. Indeed, something has been done already. Having held for some years that the gospel of sanitation among the Natives would be best carried out by trained nurses under medical supervision, no time was lost in appointing nurses to visit the Native settlements and rendering aid where their services were required.

The reports of Dr. Monk and Miss Bagley on the outbreak of typhoid at Ahipara speak much for the value of the scheme, and show what a devoted nurse can do. To those districts where there is a considerable proportion of Natives special District Nurses will be appointed. Already some of these appointments have been made, and the nurses' work is giving general satisfaction.

It is not contemplated that by this means it will be possible to dispense with medical assistance—far from it. The nurse, as may be seen from the rules guiding her work, is specially directed to call in medical assistance when she may consider such necessary, and to faithfully follow out the instructions of the medical man who is summoned.

Further details of this scheme may be gathered from the Hospital section of this report.

In connection with this branch of the Department, I regret to report that Dr. Pomare has resigned his position as Health Officer to the Natives, with a view of entering a wider arena. During the ten years that Dr. Pomare has been an officer of this Department he has been most zealous in his efforts for the benefit of the Native race, and I feel certain that his voice will ever be found urging, *inter alia*, the registration of Native births and deaths. Improvement in the health of the Maoris will begin when such registration becomes law, but not till then.