

RETURNED SICK AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS.

Subsequent to the year under review the sole control of the special military hospitals which were established by the Department—viz., King George V at Rotorua and Queen Mary at Hamner—have been handed over to the Defence Department; but the Hospital Boards of the Dominion still continue to afford treatment to returned discharged men. In some cases the accommodation at the Board's institutions has been so taxed that it has been necessary to build additional wards, and in these cases it has been considered only right that the Defence Department should bear some of the expense incidental thereto. With a view to assisting the dependants of those at the front, it was decided that the Department should afford free treatment at the St. Helens Maternity Hospitals to the wives of soldiers on active service. The Department also pays the fees charged by the Hospital Boards for treatment in hospital of the wives and children of men on active service outside New Zealand. Free treatment at the Department's expense is also given to the brothers, sisters, and parents of such men if such are solely dependent upon the soldiers in question.

CHANGES IN STAFF.

Dr. T. H. A. Valintine (Chief Health Officer and Inspector-General of Hospitals) and Dr. R. H. Makgill (District Health Officer, Auckland) have been granted indefinite leave to take up duties in the Defence Department. During such leave Dr. J. P. Frengley (Deputy Chief Health Officer) has been appointed Acting Chief Health Officer and Acting Inspector-General. Dr. A. W. T. O'Sullivan has been appointed Assistant District Health Officer at Auckland; Dr. I. E. Faris, recently returned from military service, has been appointed Acting District Health Officer at Dunedin, *vice* Dr. O'Sullivan. There has been a great increase in the work of the Department, and the temporary transfer of the Chief Health Officer and of Dr. Makgill has thrown a great deal of work upon the shoulders of the remaining administrative officers. In order to assist the Acting Chief Health Officer by relieving him of as much work as possible of a non-professional nature, Mr. E. A. S. Killick, Chief Clerk of the Department, has been promoted to the position of Secretary. It was also decided to appoint a Consulting Engineer to the Department to advise the Inspector-General and Hospital Boards on matters in connection with machinery and heating arrangements. Mr. J. H. Anderson, Chief Engineer to the Porirua Mental Hospital, was appointed to the position, and his inspections and reports have shown the necessity for such an appointment. Owing to the great amount of hospital building being undertaken it has been proposed to appoint an architect to assist the Chief Health Officer in relieving him of much work in connection with plans prior to their submission by him to the Minister for approval.

The frequent changes in the staff during the year caused by officers of the Department going on active service, combined with the difficulty in temporarily replacing them with suitable men, and the increase in the work of the Department, has made the year an arduous one to the remainder of the staff.

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Acting Chief Health Officer and Acting Inspector-General of Hospitals.

NURSES REGISTRATION ACT, MIDWIVES ACT, MATERNITY HOSPITALS, AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS.

Miss Maclean (Assistant Inspector and Deputy Registrar of Nurses and Midwives) reports as follows:—

NURSES REGISTRATION ACT.

During the year 1917–18 two examinations of nurses were held by the State. 193 candidates sat for examination, of whom 161 were successful in passing, and their names were placed on the register. Fifteen nurses were registered from overseas. There are now 2,195 nurses on the register. 490 nurses have joined the Army Nursing Service, and (with a few exceptions for home service only) have been sent to England, while twelve nurses were sent as reinforcements to Egypt, where twenty-five nurses were still working in Imperial hospitals and ships. Although recalled to join the New Zealand Forces, it had been found inadvisable to send these nurses from Egypt, and a few have returned to New Zealand. The number of members now enlisted on military service is 511. Of these, twenty-one are masseuses only, and are enrolled on that branch of the service. Nineteen have returned invalided during the year, and thirteen have been granted pensions. Other have had sick-leave and later returned to duty at the camp hospitals.

The hospital ships have been recommissioned and staffed early in the year. Orders were received from the War Office that sisters, owing to the submarine danger, were not to proceed on hospital ships, and that male orderlies only were to carry out the work of nursing the sick and wounded. This was found so unsatisfactory, not only in New Zealand ships but in all hospital ships, that the sisters were allowed again to share the risks from which they themselves had never shrunk. The number of volunteers for active service is continually being added to, but only small reinforcing drafts are now being sent.

The shortage of nurses for civil hospital work has much decreased, and there has been little call for staff nurses and sisters from outside the hospital training-schools. A few of the smaller hospitals have had difficulty in obtaining suitable Matrons, and the Department has usually been able to help