

very useful little booklet, "Hints on Home Nursing," which has been sold at the classes for a nominal price, is lecturing and demonstrating in the Taranaki District and Wanganui, and has also spent some weeks in the West Coast holding classes in the different towns and country places. Sister McAllum, A.R.R.C., gave a course in the Wairarapa and Waipawa districts.

The classes often consist of from sixty to eighty members, and both men and women have asked for instruction. The demand still continues, and more nurses will be required for the work.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the great increase of work in my Department, in coping with which I have had the loyal assistance of Miss Bicknell in Wellington and Miss Bagley in Auckland. Miss Willis, for some months helping with my military work and now as an Assistant Inspector, has been also of great assistance. Miss Wilson (late Matron, Walton-on-Thames Hospital) has since her return acted most efficiently as assistant in the military work.

I have, &c.,

H. MACLEAN, Matron-in-Chief.

The Inspector-General of Hospitals, Wellington.

REPORT ON HEALTH OF THE MAORIS.

The MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THE MAORIS to the CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report on the health of the Maoris.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The last census taken of the Maori population was in 1916, when the return showed—Males, 25,933; females, 23,843; total, 49,776. This showed a decrease of 68 from the previous census of 1911, but it is more than made up by the number of Maoris who were away on active service. The first Maori Contingent of 500 men left early in 1915; the second Contingent arrived in Egypt in November of the same year, and the third Contingent early in 1916. From this it will be seen that there must have been nearly 1,000 Maoris who missed the census of 1916.

Registration.

The registration of Maori births and deaths has always been a difficult question. It takes generations to educate a community into a routine, and it will only be by enforcing a penalty that the matter will be put on a satisfactory basis. Up to 1912 Maoris were exempted from the necessity of registration. The Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act, 1912, empowered the Governor in Council to make regulations providing for registration in districts or throughout New Zealand. In 1913 regulations were gazetted, and Registrars for Maori births and deaths appointed. It is largely done by the Native-school teachers. There is no body more keen to furnish authentic statistics than the Registrars themselves, but they have to contend against Maori apathy and lack of realization of how important these matters are. I am reluctantly compelled to the opinion that registration of deaths should be enforced in the same manner as amongst pakehas. A few post-mortems would create a drastic change and probably curtail the operations of amateur tohungas, who are still a menace to the community.

Though a large number of births and deaths must still go unregistered in some districts, the numbers registered under section 20, Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act, 1912, and the main Act, give valuable information :—

<i>Births.</i>						Total.	Increase or Decrease over previous Year.
1914	...	...	...	...	...	961	...
1915	...	...	...	...	...	976	+ 15
1916	...	...	...	...	...	1,031	+ 55
1917	...	...	...	...	...	1,261	+ 230
1918	...	...	...	...	...	1,179	+ 82

These figures show a steady increase except for the fatal influenza year of 1918.

<i>Deaths.</i>						Total.	Increase or Decrease over previous Year.
1914	...	...	...	...	...	765	...
1915	...	...	...	...	...	817	+ 42
1916	...	...	...	...	...	808	- 9
1917	...	...	...	...	...	773	- 35
1918	...	...	...	...	...	2,036	+ 1,263

Except for 1915, there was a slight decrease in the number of deaths until the catastrophe of 1918. Dr. Makgill has pointed out that 1,160 deaths were due to influenza in the last three months of 1918, yielding the huge death-rate of 226 per 10,000 of mean population, as against 49.6 of the white population from the same cause. It is probable that 1,160 is a low estimate, so that the year 1918 must figure as the severest setback the race has received since the fighting days of Hongi Hika. Influenza in three months caused more casualties to the Maoris than the campaigns in Gallipoli, France, and Belgium.