

DIETITIANS.

(e.) A statement was given by Professor Helen Rawson, of Dunedin, on the work of dietitians and institutional housekeepers in such public institutions as involve a large expenditure on housekeeping, stressing the waste of time and material, and the lack of efficiency, especially in the kitchen department, caused by unskilled organization in the domestic departments. She said, "The amount of good food that finds its way into the refuse-bins of many public institutions is amazing. It is due in the first instance to lack of skill in supervising stores and in calculating the amount of food required, but it is also true that care is required to prepare palatable and digestible made-over dishes, and, rather than take the extra trouble, the inefficient cook will discard the food unless the waste is being carefully watched. The waste of food through wrong methods of cooking, and the dissatisfaction throughout the institution when the food is badly cooked, are a challenge to the authorities in charge." She had seen instances where the waste of foodstuffs had been shown to equal the salary of a skilled food-supervisor.

Speaking on the scientific aspect of the question, she stated that the study of dietetics had revealed the fact that for normal people the food requirements—both in proportion and kind—varied according to age, occupation, climate, and other factors, and that while the planning of dietaries was required for normal people, it was clearly essential for sick people. Under the direction of the dietitian, the diets for special diseases would be prepared in a diet kitchen, and all nurses would be trained by her to prepare such dietaries. Professor Rawson claimed that when the feeding of the patients was dealt within that skilled way the recovery of the patients was more rapid. The dietitian should be given professional standing, and should be directly responsible to the Medical Superintendent.

Evidence showed that dietitians are now employed in Canada, United States, and Great Britain.

Your Commission recommends that a skilled dietitian from overseas be appointed at Dunedin at once, and subsequently at Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch by the respective Hospital Boards.

The necessary training to fit students for this profession is already available at the School of Domestic Science at the University of Otago, and this should be supplemented by six months' practical work under a qualified dietitian in one of the large hospitals. Your Commission believes that the adoption of this proposal would not only bring about a great reform in our hospitals, but open up an attractive career for educated New Zealand girls, and ultimately exercise a beneficial effect on the social and domestic life of the community.

MEDICAL RECORDS.

(f.) The Director of Hospitals stressed the necessity for establishing a good system of medical records in hospitals, to enable the staffs to check results and effect improvements in treatment. It was also pointed out that these records would be of great value as an aid to medical research.

Medical Superintendents are already fully seised of the importance of records, and to assist in the development of the system your Commission recommends the appointment of Medical Registrars by the Boards of the base hospitals.

TREATMENT OF CONVALESCENT PATIENTS.

(g.) Evidence was given by Dr. Colquhoun and other witnesses to the effect that in most of the hospitals there is always a proportion of convalescent patients who do not require constant nursing and medical attention, and who would do much better if removed to a secondary or convalescent hospital in the country, where they could get the benefit of fresh air.

Your Commission suggests that, as additional accommodation for patients becomes necessary in the larger centres, the policy might well be considered of building a secondary hospital in healthy surroundings, for convalescent and chronic cases, instead of continually adding to existing buildings. Such secondary hospitals should be as simple and inexpensive in construction as possible.