

That there were 7,912 attendances at the ante-natal clinics affords an eloquent testimony of the phenomenal growth of the Department's work in this particular direction and the increasing confidence shown in it by the expectant mothers and the medical profession. It is pleasing to record this, as ante-natal supervision should prove an effective means of reducing maternal mortality.

On the other hand, every mother has a personal responsibility in this matter, for the door of health is open to all. Medical science endeavours to aid them, but it says to the future mother of mankind, "Strive for the goal of unconditional perfect motherhood, and produce in yourself by healthy living the natural vehicle that should need no aid, and so blot out the mortality stain from the future civilization." In this connection I deprecate to the full the statement of a well-known London obstetrician to the effect that child-birth should be regarded as a disease rather than a normal physiological process.

The accompanying reports of Dr. Jellett, Dr. Paget, and Dr. Gurr detail the progress made during the year in their separate spheres of maternity work.

Venereal Disease.—The regulations in operation for better control and supervision of sufferers from these diseases are working satisfactorily. The compulsory powers conferred have proved invaluable, and I am glad to be able to report that so far the Department has had no occasion to take extreme measure for their enforcement.

Goitre.—Great credit is due to Dr. Baker-McLagan, Canterbury, for her exact and comprehensive work in determining the endemicity of goitre in New Zealand as manifested by the school population. These investigations acted as a stepping-stone for the intensive research work into this disease being conducted under the supervision of Professor Hercus at the Otago University Medical School. Prophylactic and curative treatment of the children by the administration of small weekly doses of potassium iodide has been considerably extended with beneficial results. Dr. Ada Paterson presents in her report an interesting summary of this work.

Publicity and Propaganda.—With a view to educating the public in matters affecting the health of the community there were obtained from the Ministry of Health, Whitehall, London, some of the most instructive sections of their unique health exhibit as shown at Wembley for display at the Department's court at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition held at Dunedin. These and other exhibits prepared by the Department attracted large numbers of visitors. Pamphlets and leaflets covering various aspects of preventive medicine were widely distributed, while officers of the Department in attendance delivered health talks and broadcast lectures on suitable subjects. A booklet entitled "Striking Facts and Records"—a compendium of the activities of the Department—was printed and widely circulated.

Through the medium of our library, officers have availed themselves of the opportunity of keeping fully informed of the latest developments in curative and preventive medicine. Overseas visitors, members of the medical profession, and medical-research workers have much appreciated this source of reference. There continues to be experienced a growing spirit of fellowship and co-operation with other countries regarding problems of preventive medicine, and the numerous applications received for information as to the activities of the Department indicate the close interest with which its work is being studied throughout the world. The Department's thanks are due to Mr. Clayton, the departmental librarian, for his energy and enthusiasm in these matters.

Legislation.—The Nurses and Midwives Registration Act was placed on the statute-book. The main feature of this Act was the setting-up of a Registration Board comprising representatives of the Department, the medical profession, and nurses and midwives. The measure was a consolidation of Acts governing the registration of nurses and midwives.

The National Provident Fund Act was amended to provide for the superannuation of nurses, for which the Department has been striving for many years past. This provision is much appreciated by the nursing profession.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

During the year, at the invitation of the League of Nations, I visited Geneva, and took the opportunity of visiting hospitals in France, Switzerland, and England with a view to ascertaining whether there was anything of interest to be learnt in the field of hospital administration. Generally speaking I was somewhat disappointed with the hospitals I saw on the Continent, but I must admit that the maternity (100 beds), and women's diseases hospital (90 beds), at Zurich, made me wish we had some hospitals of that kind in New Zealand. I am of opinion that it is to the best of the provincial hospitals in Great Britain rather than the continental hospitals we should turn for examples of efficient hospital administration of the type suitable for New Zealand.

My deputy, Dr. Watt, during the year visited Japan, at the invitation of the League of Nations, to attend a conference of public-health personnel from countries bordering on the Pacific, where many helpful ideas were interchanged. He also took the opportunity of visiting the United States and inspecting the methods of hospital and health administration in vogue therein. Generally speaking, Dr. Watt is of opinion that in both respects New Zealand is proceeding on the right lines, though he saw much to interest him in the tackling of problems similar to ours in districts which, from the viewpoint of population and general conditions, bear a resemblance to the conditions obtaining in New Zealand. Undoubtedly there is much in America, more especially in regard to health administration and the application of the newer methods of preventive medicine, which we could adapt with advantage to our own needs.

RESEARCH.

Medical research into cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, acute poliomyelitis, and tuberculosis (among the Maori race) has continued to be conducted at the Otago University Medical School, along definite lines. Dr. R. H. Makgill, who is visiting Great Britain, will interview the Medical Research Council and the Ministry of Health with a view to ascertaining the best means of co-ordinating our research work with those great organizations, and to formulate the extension of the Department's medical-research policy.