

HISTORY.

Late in 1924 the Chief Medical Officer approached the author and suggested that she take over the district as an experiment and see what could be done by visiting the section regularly. It was desired that special efforts be made to reduce the infant mortality by systematic child-welfare work. No fixed plan was adopted at the beginning, and the present scheme was worked out more or less empirically.

LUFILUFI DISPENSARY.

Through the kindness of the Methodist Mission, a building for a dispensary has been made available at Lufilufi. Drugs are supplied by the Government Hospital and dispensed free of expense to the Native patients. The dispensary is in charge of a trained Samoan nurse. She is a graduate of a hospital training-school, is sympathetic, industrious, and capable. Her service in the remote end of the district has relieved the Medical Officer of a large amount of detail work, leaving time free for child-welfare work.

ORGANIZATION.

The policy from the beginning has been to instruct the Native in health subjects and hygiene, although incidentally the experiment has brought medical service to his *fale*. It was felt that as much responsibility as possible should be thrown upon the Samoan to hold his interest and gain his co-operation. Furthermore, it was believed that constant instruction repeated week after week over an extended period of time would leave some impression in the village, and perhaps some of the leading village women in time would be able to intelligently treat minor illnesses and complaints. Accordingly committees of women were set up in each village. The selection of the members was left entirely to the village women. Invariably the committees have been composed of the leading women of the village. Often the wife of the village pastor has been elected president of the committee.

Simple rules have been evolved for the committee, and they are carried out reasonably well. The most important rules are as follows:—

- (1) Meetings must be held once a week and different women appointed to do certain tasks falling upon the committee.
- (2) The president presides, and is responsible to the Medical Officer for the manner in which the work is carried out.
- (3) A bell must be rung morning and night. The morning call is for attention to minor complaints such as colds, coughs, sores, small cuts, and to the cleanliness of the children. The night bell at 8 is the curfew for all children under twelve years.
- (4) All houses, kitchens, and latrines must be inspected once a week. Persons in charge of dirty places are reported by the committee to the Pulenuu, the Native official in charge of the village.
- (5) All cases of illness are to be reported to the Pulenuu (Native official), and if serious they must be brought to the attention of the Medical Officer of the district.
- (6) Aid must be given to all ill persons or others needing attention.
- (7) During epidemics the women's committees distribute medicines from house to house, maintain quarantines, and assist the Medical Officer and nurses.

A few simple remedies are left with the women's committee with instructions as to the proper use of the medicines. The medicines used in the Falefa district are—(1) Hydrogen peroxide and dropper, for otitis media; (2) oil of eucalyptus, to mix with native coconut-oil for a liniment; (3) castor-oil, for intestinal disturbances; (4) tincture of iodine, for ringworm, sores, and cuts; (5) Argyrol (5 per cent. solution) with dropper, for eyes; (6) cod-liver oil, for marasmic children.

The work of the women's committees has been excellent, and progress has been as rapid as could be expected. The attention given to the women's committees by the Administrator and by the Chief Medical Officer when on inspection trips has impressed the Native with the importance of the work done by the committees.

INSPECTIONS.

The Medical Officer meets each Village Committee every two weeks. The district is divided into two sections—Apia to Solosolo, and Solosolo to Falefa. One week is allotted to the Apia-Solosolo section, the next week to the second section. The schedule of meetings is as follows:—First week: Monday—Vaiala, Matautu, Matautu-uta, Faatoia; Tuesday—Letogo, Vailele, Vailele Plantation; Wednesday—Laulii, Luatuanuu, Solosolo; Thursday—Fagalii; Friday—Moataa, Matafagatele; Saturday—Magiagi. Second week: Monday Lecture at Papauta Girls' School; Tuesday—Surprise inspections; Wednesday—Saluafata, Lufilufi, Faleapuna, Salelesi-Fusi-Eva, Falefa; Thursday—inspections; Saturday—lecture at Methodist Training-college, Piula.

PROCEDURE AT NATIVE MEETINGS.

A large Samoan house is made ready for the meeting by placing a table and a chair in one end for the visiting Medical Officer. The village Pulenuu (Government official), members of the women's committee, and all children under two years of age with their mothers are ordered to be present.

First a short talk on appropriate subjects is given to the assembled Samoans. The feeding of infants, general care of children, sanitation of the village, flies, mosquitoes, latrines, drinking-water, tuberculosis, dysentery, frambœsia, and hookworm have been subjects that were used. If any disease is in the village, or an infectious disease is approaching, special lessons are given to the village.