

The following are extracts from the annual report of the Dental Officers:—

"A considerable amount of operative work has been done on the Avarua School children, two hundred of whom were rendered dentally fit by the end of November, 1926. The value of the work done has been considerable, both from a monetary and health standpoint. It is doubtful, however, if the parents of the children sufficiently value it.

"The one bright spot was evinced when about sixty of the completed children were re-examined in March, 1927, after a lapse of nearly six months without dental treatment. Contrary to expectation, all the mouths presented a clean and healthy appearance, food debris was absent, and the teeth themselves exhibited a minimum of caries. As the sixty children examined are in the most junior classes (ages ranging from about five to eight years), the conditions were most encouraging; also, the general appearance of the children was most noticeable—healthy, care-free, and vivacious to a degree. Great credit reflects on the children, who are handicapped by a lack of tooth-brushes, and have had to make shift with the suggestion to eat fruit after all other food. Credit is also due to the teachers, who have impressed the value of a clean mouth on the plastic minds of these junior children, and interested them in making toothpicks and other homely prophylactic instruments.

"It was found impossible to institute routine tooth-brush drill into the school curriculum, mainly because of the financial aspect. Also a certain amount of education in the necessity of prophylaxis seems to be essential, both for the parents and the children. However, the thin edge of the wedge has already been inserted, and we can only hope that progress will be sure, if gradual.

"A fair amount of adult work has also been done.

"The plan of work for the new year comprises the periodic examination and treatment of the two hundred completed children and an extension of treatment to the Takitumu children.

"It is quite a noticeable fact that the children's teeth in the various classes in the schools are progressively worse from the senior classes downwards. For example, in the Aitutaki School, Class 8 showed a higher percentage of fairly sound mouths than Class 7, and so on. A few figures which have been compiled may serve to illustrate this. They are as follows:—

					Number in	Fairly Sound Mouths.
					Class.	Per Cent.
"Class 8	..	..	..	..	25	32
" 7	..	..	..	..	29	24.1
" 6	..	..	..	..	29	24.1
" 5	..	..	..	..	33	18.2
" 4	..	..	..	..	24	8.3

"These figures seem to fairly indicate the rapid progress in the incidence of caries during the last few years. Rarotonga may be considered worse in this respect, the actual incidence of caries being 97 per cent., as compared with Aitutaki, 91 per cent. Undoubtedly, the dental constitution, at least, of the children born in 1927 is not so strong as that of those born in 1917. Unbelievable as it may be, there are some children who already require partial dentures, without which their digestion will unquestionably suffer, and the long train of ills following insufficient digestion will unquestionably manifest itself."

VITAL STATISTICS.

Name of Island.				Births.				Deaths.				Marriages.	
				European.		Maori.		European.		Maori.		European.	Maori.
				M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		
Rarotonga	..	..	..	2	2	78	71	..	2	37	34	6	48
Aitutaki	..	..	..	..	..	51	55	..	..	34	19	3	27
Mangaia	..	..	..	..	1	30	25	..	..	14	25	..	13
Atiu	..	..	..	..	..	30	29	..	..	23	12	..	6
Mauke	..	..	..	..	..	13	8	..	..	12	4	1	11
Mitiaro	..	..	..	..	..	16	9	..	..	2	5	..	5
Manihiki	..	..	..	..	..	6	14	..	..	12	3	..	5
Rakahanga	..	..	..	..	1	6	9	..	..	5	4	1	2
Penrhyn	..	..	..	..	..	7	7	..	..	7	10	..	4
Papapuka	..	..	..	..	..	6	12	..	..	9	5	..	8
Totals..	..	..	..	2	4	243	239	..	2	155	121	11	129

MIGRATION.

The following returns show the migration to and from Rarotonga from the 1st April, 1926, to the 31st March, 1927:—

Arrivals.—Europeans: Adults—80 males, 80 females; children—9 males, 11 females. Natives: Adults—77 males, 47 females; children—16 males, 23 females.

Departures.—Europeans: Adults—72 males, 77 females; children—13 males, 14 females. Natives: Adults—49 males, 32 females; children—16 males, 12 females.