

HEALTH CAMPS.

The yearly health camp for under-nourished children in the Wanganui District was held for five weeks at Turakina, 112 children being taken into camp. The success of this camp was once more convincingly demonstrated.

Sixty-three pupils of the special classes for mentally backward children in the Wellington District attended a health camp on the Central Development Farm, Levin, of twenty-eight days' duration. Thirty children of the special classes in Napier and Hastings, Hawke's Bay, attended a health camp for two weeks at Puketitiri, on the ranges thirty-five miles from Napier. Exact observations on the physical and mental condition of the children concerned left no room for doubt as to the benefit obtained.

NUTRITION CLASSES.

Owing to the unavoidable interference with the school routine necessitated by the establishment of a nutrition class, it has not been possible to arrange for these very extensively. At the Auckland Normal School, however, the health class under Miss Earl is being continued. In Wanganui Dr. Gunn reported that excellent results were obtained by the establishment of health classes including two hundred children. An extra milk ration was provided and a general improvement in health and growth was observed. The Wellington Rotary Club generously arranged for a supply of milk to a city school for six months of the year, a period during which unemployment was unusually extensive. About fifty to sixty children benefited by this gift, each receiving half a pint of milk, with a whole-meal biscuit in the middle of the morning. The general health of the group was definitely improved. The secretary of the Red Cross Society organized a plan for providing hot lunches for forty-three of the poorer children at a city school during the winter term. This effort on the part of the Red Cross at a time when unemployment was acute and poverty prevalent was welcomed and much appreciated.

EXAMINATION OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Children attending the free kindergartens in various centres have been examined by School Medical Officers. In Wanganui Dr. Gunn reports considerable extension of the examination of pre-school children. Parents are now developing a habit of bringing these children for regular examination to the centre. The result of this work shows that the examination of pre-school children is essential if we wish to obtain a higher standard in the physical condition of children entering the elementary schools.

NATIVE SCHOOLS.

The extent to which medical inspection of Native schools is carried out varies in different districts according to existing facilities. A conference of Native-school teachers was held in Auckland in January. This was attended by the Director of Maori Hygiene and the Director of School Hygiene. Interesting discussions took place. It is evident that improvement in the Maori race will be most readily obtained by the education and training of its children. An arrangement was made for the supply of Native schools with health literature, and the teachers were encouraged to apply for advice on all health problems. A common source of difficulty is the large proportion of Maori children suffering from septic sores and neglected scabies. In some districts these skin-conditions may be said to be almost endemic, and nothing short of heroic effort is needed to secure their elimination. Another problem is that of obtaining adequate precautionary measures in households where an inmate suffers from tuberculosis. Actively phthisical children are not infrequently found attending school and living under very adverse conditions at home.

IMMUNIZATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

The work of preventive inoculation against diphtheria was extended last year. Figures for all districts are not available, but Dr. Collier reports that to date there have been in the Southland District alone approximately 3,500 children protected from diphtheria. Unfortunately, it was found advisable to suspend this work pending the report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the cause of the Bundaberg fatalities. We are glad to be able to report that there have been no undesirable results other than of a slight and transient nature following on the inoculation of New Zealand school-children with toxin anti-toxin. In this connection it may be noted that it is our custom to use fresh supplies of toxin anti-toxin mixture each day and not to carry over from day to day partially used stock. Again New Zealand is fortunately free from such climatic extremes as might prejudicially affect toxin anti-toxin mixtures.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

During the year the examination has been carried out of secondary-school pupils who intend entering the teaching profession at the end of their school career. The object of this is to give such of them as are physically unfit for the teaching profession an opportunity of preparing themselves during their school life for some other occupation. The following is an extract from a report of Dr. Bakewell's on the medical examination of teachers: "Few seem to realize the value of eyesight in everyday life. Numbers learn too late that a higher leaving certificate or a University scholarship may be obtained at too dear a price. Of seventy candidates 22 per cent. had eye-defect. Even though in the majority of cases a favourable enough specialist's report was given, one feels that the heavy strain of the next three years, which includes teaching as well as training-college and University work at the critical period of seventeen to twenty-one years, is going to make severe demands upon a delicate and already damaged organ, and consequently is bound to reflect upon the general mental and physical health of the individual."

Dr. Gunn reports on the examination of 208 candidates for entrance into the teaching profession. Among this number were twenty-four suffering from defective eyesight, twenty-six with dental caries; posture was poor in sixty-four, other defects also being found.