

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

The general health condition of the island has been good during the year, the only sickness of an epidemic nature being an outbreak of influenza during the months of July and August. The epidemic was of a fairly severe nature, and was in many cases complicated with attacks of bronchitis. Three hundred and fifteen cases were treated, but there is no doubt but that there were a great many more sufferers who received their drugs from the local supplies left specially for this purpose in the various villages and thus did not come under notice. The epidemic claimed twenty-six deaths, mostly amongst the aged.

Dr. K. H. Dean, M.B., from New Zealand, replaced Dr. E. F. Boyd in November last, and has already gained the confidence of these people.

During the year Miss T. Butler replaced Miss de Ridder as Matron of the Hospital. We are extremely fortunate in again obtaining the latter's services.

The following figures show the volume of work carried out during the year :—

European in-patients	..	..	..	..	..	1
Native in-patients (including twelve infants under one year)	..	..				141
Average duration of stay was 13 days.						
Patients treated at dispensary and out-patient department	..	..				2,937
Out-patients, dressings	..	..	..	..	..	5,434
Patients treated in their villages	..	..	..	..	..	1,498
Patients treated for gonorrhœa	..	..	..	..	..	45
Injections given (bicareol, 84 ; novarsenobillon, 20)	..	..				104
Yaws, cases treated	..	..	..	..	..	22
Operations—						
Major	..	..	..	..	..	1
Minor	..	..	..	..	..	15
Dental fillings	..	..	..	..	..	40
Dental extractions	..	..	..	..	..	90

The report of the Medical Officer, which deals in detail with the work of the year, together with returns showing classified admissions to hospital and all cases treated during the period, is attached hereto :—

“ *Medical.*—The work of the staff throughout the year has been highly satisfactory. An increase in the Native nursing staff has been found necessary.

“ *Epidemics.*—During the month of June there was an outbreak of severe colds with pulmonary complications. There were several cases of pneumonia. The Natives are extremely careless in changing from heavy European clothes to the Native dress when they return from church or village. The younger ones are inclined to remain in their wet clothes, with obvious results. When a cold snap comes along the medical staff is besieged for medicine and attention for the more or less grave chest complaints that invariably ensue. One makes a rule of advising the Natives on these matters at every opportunity, but it is felt that the school-children offer the best prospects. It is intended at an early date to print some pamphlets in the Native tongue on the more pressing health problems of Niue, and have instruction given on these matters by the educational staff. During July there was an epidemic of influenza. Pulmonary complications were marked. The majority of the people on the island contracted the infection more or less severely ; there were twenty-six deaths.

“ *Dental Clinic.*—The Dental Clinic had up to his transfer been continued by Dr. Boyd, and much good work has been done. The time that can be given by the Medical Officer to purely dental work is necessarily limited. A dental nurse is an urgent necessity. Since the Natives have taken to the European methods of living and eating, dental caries has become widely prevalent. Many of the older Natives are rapidly becoming edentulous. The provision of artificial sets, either free or on a sliding scale of fees according to income, will have to be seriously considered in the near future. It must be emphasized that dental fillings are only makeshifts at best. The education of school-children in benefits of mastication, suitable food, and the thorough cleansing of the mouth after meals is badly needed, and doubtless would have beneficial results.

“ The work for the year is as follows : Fillings, 40 ; extractions, 90 ; plaster impression, 1.