

Dr. A. B. Pearson, Pathologist at the Christchurch Hospital, in his report on the examination of the suspected brushes, comments as follows :—

“ Portions of the hair and glue from the shaving-brushes received on 27th July were inoculated into guinea-pigs. Two of the animals died within seventy-two hours of the time of inoculation and bacillus of anthrax was recovered from the heart, blood, and spleen of both animals. One of these animals was inoculated with the washing from the shaving-brush used by the patient, and the other animal was inoculated with the washing from a new and unused shaving-brush. The shaving-brushes were similar in make. They were stamped with the number 332, but did not show the name of the maker nor the country of origin. At the same time as the inoculations were carried out cultures were prepared from the shaving-brushes, but no bacilli of anthrax type could be detected. The cultures revealed numerous bacteria of saprophytic type, including such organisms as *Bacillus subtilis*.

“ On 30th July three more shaving-brushes were received and tested. These brushes were of a similar make to the first lot. They were stamped with the same number. They were rather larger in size. Similar tests were carried out with these brushes, and one animal died following inoculations of the washing. At the post-mortem examination bacilli of anthrax were recovered from this animal.”

Immediate action was taken by the Department to trace and destroy all stocks of brushes from suspected consignments which remained unsold. The public also were warned of the dangers and were advised to destroy all brushes with the distinguishing number which came into their possession. The steps taken proved adequate and no further cases have occurred.

Goitre.—The high incidence of goitre in New Zealand is a public-health problem of major importance. Sir Robert McCarrison, the well-known authority on goitre, had expressed his intention of visiting the Dominion, and it was hoped to get his advice and assistance in dealing with the matter. Unfortunately, his visit has been unavoidably postponed in the meantime, but he has forwarded a reasoned criticism of our past research work and has made some helpful suggestions for future inquiry. It is proposed to continue the investigations along the lines he suggests. These investigations will involve a considerable amount of field work in the way of survey of water-supplies, milk-supplies, sanitary conditions, &c., in the Taranaki and Palmerston North areas.

Cancer.—There was a rise in the mortality from cancer, the number of deaths showing an increase of 75, while the rate rose from 11.07 to 11.50 per 10,000.

The Cancer Clinics established under the auspices of the New Zealand Branch of the British Empire Cancer Campaign Society are fulfilling a useful service in providing better facilities for diagnosis and early treatment, and in gathering valuable statistical data.

REPORTS OF DIVISIONAL DIRECTORS.

Public Hygiene.—Dr. Ritchie, in his report, has made a feature of statistical tables showing the Dominion experience of some of the more important diseases. These should prove a useful source of reference for public-health workers.

School Hygiene.—The problem of the nutrition of our school-children has received close attention by the officers of this Division. The following special investigations have been carried out by school medical officers: The incidence of defective eyesight in children; a comparative study of defects found in medical examination of pakeha and Maori children; and (with the co-operation of the Government Statistician) the survey of physical measurements of 40,000 children from selected areas. These studies are included in Dr. Paterson's report.

Hospitals.—There has been an increase in the numbers of patients, and this fact, together with the rising prices of commodities, the restoration of salary and wage cuts, and the necessity for renewal of depleted stocks and for renovations of buildings, is responsible for increased expenditure of hospital maintenance generally. Added requirements for renewal of stocks and renovations of buildings is the result to a great extent of deferred expenditure in this direction during the recent depression years, and for this reason also it is now observed that the requirements for capital expenditure are showing an increase.

As regards patients' fees, it is worthy of note that revenue from this source shows an improvement, which is due in no small measure to the improved methods of collection. The position regarding this sphere of Hospital Board activities in the majority of cases is satisfactory, and the results have materially assisted in the recent difficult times in keeping the costs of hospital services within reasonable limits.

Full statistical and financial information in regard to hospitals is published as a special appendix to this report.

Nursing Division.—Among matters to which Miss Lambie draws attention in her report are the recently introduced system for the exchange of nurses between New Zealand and other countries; the development of tropical nursing service in the islands of the South Pacific; scholarships awarded by the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and the Florence Nightingale Foundations; the post-graduate course for nurses; and problems relating to the health and training of nurses.

Dental Hygiene.—One thousand five hundred and fifty-one schools are now under dental supervision representing an increase of 121 on the previous year. An experimental mobile clinic was also put into operation during the year. The number of children who received systematic treatment in 1934 was 83,433, in comparison with 78,391 in 1933. Among special matters reviewed in the Director's report are the prevention of caries by operative methods and dental-health education.