

permit of his admission to a special class calls for further consideration. In respect of this latter aspect, Dr. Anderson states : "The question of education and training especially adapted to the needs of the mentally backward has been causing us some anxiety in our district throughout the year. At the present time in my area there are two special classes to serve our needs, one at Napier and one at Masterton. All the children in the area between these two spots needing special tuition drag along yearly in the schools, and finally leave with no definite purpose in life, to alternate odd jobs with walking the street, hence their capacity for conduct disorders." Dr. Stevenson makes the following comment : "There is need for an occupational centre in this city for children unsuitable to attend the special classes : these children form an ever-growing class."

There are, of course, special schools at Otekaikae for boys and at Richmond for girls under the Education Department, and a farm at Templeton conducted by the Mental Hospitals Department for the mentally backward, but the question of uneducable children living in their own homes is always a problem. While they are young the parents are reluctant to part with them, and as the special schools are all in the South Island many parents keep these children much longer in their own homes, giving up their lives to their care, because they feel they cannot let them go so far away. A class for uneducable children held in the larger centres attached to a hospital or even attached to a school would certainly give the mothers a few hours rest each school-day from the unremitting care which these children require.

#### NATIVE SCHOOLS.

The medical supervision and examination of Native schools continues, the work of the District Nurses being of great value. The following extracts from the reports of School Medical Officers are of interest :—

Dr. Cook states : "The most important advance for the year was the recognition of the principle that in certain Native schools a hot midday meal is necessary. In Te Hapua School a meal of this nature is now being prepared, with excellent results. The nutrition of Native children has on the whole improved, but there are still far too many inadequately clothed and fed despite a sufficiency of money in the home."

Dr. Heycock, who was appointed to the East Cape district in April, 1936, remarks : "The work among the Maori population was an entirely new experience. The medical examination of the Maori school-children and the visits to their homes and pas has been very interesting and instructive. Of inestimable value is the presence of the District Nurse at the school inspection and when visiting the homes."

#### DENTAL CARIES.

The Division of Dental Hygiene is dealing with this problem in children up to the age of twelve years, but the question regarding treatment for older children is still causing concern. It is disappointing to find from the School Medical Officers' reports that there are so many children in New Zealand with dental caries ; the majority of these can be taken to be second teeth, as dental caries of first teeth are not reported upon by several of the officers.

Dr. McLagan remarks : "It is very satisfactory that the work of the Dental Division is extending, especially in the number of country schools it is bringing under its care. I have again to stress the necessity for providing facilities for dental treatment in older children. It is sad to see children whose molars are dentally sound, but whose incisors are decaying. Every hospital of any size should have a dental out-patients' department where incisors and the teeth of older children could be treated.

Dr. Dawson states : "Difficulty exists in obtaining treatment for the senior children. Extractions are done at New Plymouth Hospital. No conservative work is done. Other districts are not provided for in this respect. It would be a benefit to the people of New Zealand if the Dental Service could be extended to all pupils attending primary school."

Dr. Cook reports : "There is no change in this condition, the elimination of which is as urgent as ever."

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Mild epidemics of the following non-notifiable diseases have occurred during the year : Whooping-cough, chicken-pox, and mumps.

Dr. Wilson, in the Auckland District, carried out the immunization of certain children against diphtheria. In the East Cape district Dr. Heycock immunized 537 children, and in Hamilton Dr. Deem immunized 194 children against this disease.

#### SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

All School Medical Officers report on school buildings, environment, and furniture ; many of them draw attention to defects requiring remedy. Improvements are being made each year by the Education Department, and the country and town schools now being built are designed on the latest and most up-to-date lines. The environment of schools is receiving much more attention, and school gardens are now considered a necessity.

The Division of School Hygiene wishes to express appreciation to the Education Department, Mental Hospitals Department, various Education Boards, School Committees, and teachers for valuable co-operation.

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