

MAORI NURSES.

The arrangement whereby a Maori girl might win a nursing scholarship after two years' post-primary education, entitling her to £40 board allowance, which covered the cost of her board at a Maori secondary school while she attended a nearby hospital by the day for a year with the object of accommodating her to hospital life before commencing her training, has lapsed. In place of this agreement a new system of nursing scholarships has been created, whereby any outstanding Maori girl, after two years' post-primary education, can apply for a nursing scholarship which will entitle her to a further two years of post-primary education. The Health Department has undertaken, directly their school education is completed, to place these girls in maternity and general hospital training-schools, provided their record is satisfactory. This will enable them to proceed without any break. There is no doubt that this system will be much more satisfactory, ensuring as it will a good secondary education as the foundation on which to continue her further training. The Maori girl will enter the preliminary training-school in the usual manner, without a wasted period at home, and her instruction from the beginning will be properly supervised.

TROPICAL-NURSING SCHEME.

This year the nursing staff at the Government Hospital, Western Samoa, has been added to owing to the increase of work, and now consists of a Matron, 8 Sisters, and 40 Samoan nurses. A new Senior Sister—Miss V. Herdman—has been seconded from Waikato Hospital for service in Samoa to help with the training of the Samoan nurses in public-health nursing. A preliminary school is being developed, and this should make it possible to greatly improve the whole system of teaching.

An agreement has been entered into between the Administrations of Western Samoa and Niue Island so that, instead of attempting to train nurses in the hospital at Niue, two Niue girls are to be sent every year to Samoa for training as nurses.

At Rarotonga, in the Cook Islands, an experiment has been tried by placing at the hospital a well-qualified Maori nurse—Miss E. Paora—in charge of infant-welfare and district nursing on the island. This appointment has now been in existence for a year and is proving a success.

At Aitutaki, Miss Pierard, after a very busy two years, has been granted furlough to take her Plunket training in New Zealand.

In November, at the invitation of the Fiji Government, I paid a visit to the Fiji Islands. The purpose of my visit was to inspect the European School of Nursing at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, Suva, and to survey the nursing activities in the Fiji Islands as a basis for the establishment of a scheme of training Fijian girls as nurses, and perhaps Indian girls at a later date.

My itinerary also included a visit to the Leper Station at Makogai. This station serves the British Possessions in the South Pacific, and is staffed by nuns (of the Missionary Order of Mary), who are under the control of the Fiji Administration. The station is wonderfully organized, and nothing but praise can be given to the devoted service given to these patients.

The recommendations made are under consideration by the Fijian Government at present. Certain changes have already been made by increasing the number of European Sisters.

The New Zealand nurses serving on the staff of the Shanghai Municipal Council have written very interesting letters of their life and experiences in China, where the conditions are very different to those existing in New Zealand.

In September Miss E. Tennant, of the staff of the Rockefeller Foundation, who had been making a survey of nursing-conditions in the South Pacific, spent three weeks in New Zealand. Her visit was a definite inspiration to the many nurses she came in contact with, and as she was very generous in agreeing to address meetings, a large number throughout the Dominion were able to hear something of the more recent developments in nursing education in Europe, the United States, and Canada.

NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

The new Industrial and Conciliation Act passed in 1936 made it mandatory for different groups of individuals engaged in similar work to organize themselves into industrial unions, and gave power for these unions to apply to the Arbitration Court for an award governing the conditions of their work. Nurses in New Zealand have always realized that their association was the body through which reforms could be made, and the executive officers of the association are to be congratulated on the active steps they have taken during this year to organize their profession in such a way as will comply with the law, and at the same time protect their service to their patients. The action taken has been—

- (a) The organization of an associate group of members representing all pupil nurses and maternity trainees.
- (b) The voluntary reduction of hours of work in private hospitals.
- (c) The limiting of hours of work for "special nurses."

Each of these will have far-reaching effects. The organization of nurses in training with the formation of their own committees to manage their affairs should give the young nurses good experience in accepting responsibility, and will probably lead in the future to some modified form of student government within the institutions.

The voluntary reduction of hours of certain private hospitals has already meant increases of staff, as quite a lot has been done quietly, but it means that when regulations are enforced the adaptation will be much easier. A very large number of private hospitals are now giving a day off a week.

The introduction of national health insurance during the coming year is bound to affect the hospital and public-health policy of the Dominion, and, in consequence, the nursing service. The new emphasis on preventive medicine will be further stressed, and it is quite possible that this, together with the policy of shorter working-hours, will introduce far-reaching changes in the training and working-conditions of nurses.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the executive officers of the Hospital Boards, the voluntary nursing organizations, the New Zealand Registered Nurses' Association, and the officers of our own Department, both at Head Office and in the various districts, for their ready co-operation and assistance throughout the year.

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