

of the school-year, but the scheme is now operating in the main centres of population, and its extension is being undertaken as rapidly as possible. Approximately some 80,000 children at date of writing (June, 1937) are receiving milk under this scheme.

In view of the importance of ensuring that the milk-supply is safe, it has been laid down that the source of the supply must in all cases be approved by the Department of Agriculture and this Department. The treatment and distribution of the milk also is carried out under the strict supervision of the Department. Wherever possible pasteurization is being carried out, and the milk delivered in bottles, with straws for drinking.

A great deal of responsibility is being reposed in the various committees in opening up negotiations for reliable supplies, for proper treatment, and for distribution. The cost of the milk will be paid by the Government, and will be based on the butterfat value of milk plus adjustments for loss of by-products, cost of treatment and distribution, and the necessity for keeping up supplies over the winter months. These factors can be worked to a close figure, and in this connection an officer experienced in such work is engaged in visiting centres to assist in the negotiations and advise on the settling of agreements to local conditions. In view of the wealth of testimony as to the incalculable value of milk to the growing child the benefit of such a measure is most obvious.

*Health Camps.*—In July, 1936, a conference was held in Wellington which was attended by delegates representing health camp organizations in various parts of New Zealand. The meeting was held with the objects of organizing the various existing bodies on a proper basis, and of providing the necessary co-ordination between such bodies and the Central Government. A working-scheme was evolved and a foundation laid for future development of the work on sound lines.

Early in 1937 the Government decided that the New Zealand Memorial to King George V should be a national fund for the establishment of permanent health camps. The generous response of the public to this appeal, with the Government subsidy, has produced a sum of approximately £170,000 for this purpose. In 1936–37 the finances of the camps also benefited to the extent of some £14,000 by the sale of the Christmas health stamps and donations raised at the same time.

*Legislation.*—The Dentists Act, 1936, makes provision for the registration and control of dentists. For this purpose a Dental Council has been established, which will be the registering authority, and will exercise certain disciplinary powers for practising dentists.

The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Amendment Act, 1936, makes Hospital Boards liable in damages where there is negligence in the treatment of a patient, whether this negligence occurs in the course of purely professional or other duties of a medical practitioner, dentist, matron, nurse, midwife, attendant, or other person employed or engaged (whether in an honorary capacity or not) by the Board. In the absence of such provision a patient suffering from negligence on the part of a nurse or other person employed by the Hospital Board had in many cases no really effective remedy at law. This legislation does not affect the present right of a person to recover damages from the person primarily liable—namely, doctor or nurse—but provides an additional or alternate remedy only. The Act also gives Hospital Boards authority to make grants or allowances to persons who while employed in nursing duties, or within twelve months after being so employed, contract pulmonary tuberculosis. The number of cases in which it is found that nurses in general hospitals contract pulmonary tuberculosis points to the necessity for such a provision. Power is also given to control the hours of duty of nurses in private hospitals, and to make regulations for the protection of their interests.

*Biological Standardization.*—The increasing use of biological products in the prevention and treatment of disease, and the varying standards in use in different countries, led the League of Nations, through its Medical Committee, to investigate the position not only of biological products, but also of certain therapeutic substances, and where possible to adopt international standards, which it invited the competent authorities to make effective. New Zealand adopts these international standards immediately they are brought into force in Britain, by amending the regulations under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act so as to include any published alteration or additions to the British Pharmacopœia. The question of the provision of facilities for the biological testing of substances where the international standard has been adopted is at present under consideration in New Zealand.

*Health Education.*—This has been continued along similar lines to what was indicated in last year's report. The usual avenues of publicity—the press, public addresses, radio, &c.—were employed in acquainting the public with health matters. Inspectors of Health and School District and Dental Nurses touch a wide field in health educational work. Numerous leaflets have been distributed on such topics as Health Hints, Hints on Diet, Care of the Teeth, The School Lunch, &c. The booklet "The Expectant Mother and the Baby's First Month" was revised by officers of this Department and the Plunket Society and published for free distribution. Further reference to the subject of health education will be found in some of the divisional reports.

*Boards associated with the Department.*—The various Boards associated with the Department—namely, the Board of Health, Medical Council, Plumbers Board, Opticians Board, Masseurs Board, Nurses and Midwives Registration Board—have continued their work during the year. Reference to the work of the last-mentioned Board will be found in the report of the Director, Division of Nursing. The Department acknowledges its indebtedness to the members of these Boards for their able service.

*Staff.*—I regret to record the death of Mr. F. B. Gardiner, a Senior Inspector of Health, who rendered many years of loyal and capable service to the Department.

*Additions to Staff.*—Three School Medical Officers and five Dental Officers were appointed. In addition, five School Nurses, seven District Nurses, and six Health Inspectors joined the Department. In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks for support rendered me by officers during the year.

M. H. WATT, Director-General of Health.