

It is estimated that some 8,000 Maori children will receive malted milk in the near future. Within sixteen months of the inception of the scheme, then, milk should be available to approximately 183,000 children, or 64 per cent. of the total school population.

Medical Officers testify to the good effect of the milk upon children. Two typical statements are the following :—

“The school milk ration is proving popular amongst the children, and according to the reports of the School Medical Officer is of distinct benefit to the pupils, improving their physical condition and their general state of alertness.”—*Dr. Telford, Christchurch.*

“Many school-teachers report favourably upon the beneficial effect of the extra milk ration, and there is little doubt that much good will result from it.”—*Dr. Maclean, Wellington.*

Health Camps.—Last year the health-camp movement was placed on a firmer basis by the formation of a National Health Camp Federation. The four Central Councils of the Federation have been entrusted with the task of preliminary selection of suitable sites for the permanent health camps which are to be erected from the proceeds of the King George V Memorial appeal (approximately £176,000). Considerable progress has been made, and it is hoped that the matter will now have reached a stage when the Dominion Advisory Board can place its recommendations before the Hon. the Minister of Health and the trustees of the fund.

Health camps in the past have relied in great part for funds for maintenance upon moneys collected from the sale of health stamps. The annual campaign for this object last Christmas season realized only some £3,700. No doubt the result was affected by the outstanding success of the King George V Memorial appeal launched earlier in the year. The Government made an allocation of art-union moneys towards the funds for maintenance of the camps.

The health-camp movement has continued to show vigorous progress during the past year, and a number of successful camps were held throughout the summer.

Medical Research.—One of the functions of the Department is “to promote or carry out researches and investigations in relation to matters concerning the public health and the prevention or treatment of disease” (section 12 (*d*), Health Act, 1920).

Heretofore, however, medical research undertaken in New Zealand has been of a limited nature and has consisted of a few field studies carried out by departmental officers, of laboratory investigations carried out at the Otago Medical School, and of researches prosecuted by the New Zealand Branch of the British Empire Cancer Campaign Society.

There is growing appreciation of the fact that the time has arrived when we should take more active steps to investigate medical problems in which we are particularly interested or to contribute towards knowledge of problems not necessarily peculiar to ourselves. As a first step the Medical Research Council was set up early this year. This body is composed of the medical members of the Board of Health, to whom have been added two other medical practitioners—one nominated by the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association, the other by the Minister—and one lay member in the person of the Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. The full personnel is as follows :—

Sir James Elliott, Kt., M.D., Member of Board of Health, Government representative.
R. R. D. Milligan, M.B., Government representative.

Professor C. E. Hercus, O.B.E., D.S.O., M.D., representative of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Otago.

Muriel E. Bell, M.D., Member of Board of Health, Member of Staff Medical School, University of Otago.

Sir Donald McGavin, Kt., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.R.C.S., M.D., Member of Board of Health, representative of the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association.

P. P. Lynch, M.D., representative of the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association.

E. Marsden, C.B.E., M.C., D.Sc., F.R.S.N.Z., Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The Director-General of Health, Member of Board of Health, Chairman (*ex officio*).

The functions of the Council have been set out in the following terms :—

- (1) To correlate as far as may be practicable medical research work in New Zealand.
- (2) To recommend what researches and investigations should be undertaken.
- (3) To appoint separate *ad hoc* committees to take charge of each investigation.
- (4) To recommend what amount of money should be allocated for Medical research each year and to suggest an apportionment of the amount to separate investigations.

There is a large field for research in New Zealand. For the time being, however, the Council has decided to devote its attention mainly to nutrition, goitre, dental diseases, tuberculosis, and hydatid disease. Special Committees have already been appointed to deal with some of these matters, while others are in process of formation.

The Medical Research Council has a great task and great opportunities. It might be stressed, however, that brilliant “discoveries” are not to be expected, and a statement from the annual report of the Medical Research Council (Great Britain) bearing on this aspect may well be quoted here :—

“The lesson to be learnt is that before the practical fruit of research work in the shape of new powers of control of health and disease can be expected the tree providing it, which is the growing body of knowledge, must have been planted and tended and must have reached proper development. When and at what point the fruit is to be gathered can rarely, if ever, be foretold, and if it is to be obtained it can only be through steady cultivation of the growth from which it springs.”