

PART III.—SCHOOL HYGIENE.

I have the honour to report on the work of the Division of School Hygiene for the year ended 31st March, 1938.

OBITUARY.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Dr. Ada Paterson. Dr. Paterson was Director of the School Hygiene Division from 1923 until her death on the 26th August, 1937. She was born in Otago, and after a distinguished school and university career she graduated M.B. Ch.B. at the University of Otago in 1906. Subsequently she went to Great Britain for post-graduate study, taking additional qualifications at the Dublin University. On her return to the Dominion she practised her profession for some years at Picton. When the medical inspection of schools was undertaken in New Zealand in 1912 Dr. Paterson was one of the two Medical Inspectors appointed at that time, her headquarters being at Dunedin. In 1916 she was transferred to Wellington, and in 1923 was appointed Director of this Division, a position which she filled with distinction up to the time of her death. Her death at a comparatively early age is a great loss to the Department and this Division in particular.

STAFF.

The permanent staff consists of a Director, eleven School Medical Officers, and five Medical Officers of Health, who also act as School Medical Officers in their districts. There are twenty-five school nurses and forty-nine district health nurses who undertake school work in their areas. It is proposed to extend the scope of the work of school nurses to include district nursing as well as school work, and this will take place as opportunity is afforded school nurses of undergoing refresher courses.

Dr. Kathleen Abbott, for some years School Medical Officer at Invercargill, resigned during the year, her place being filled by the transfer of Dr. E. Irwin from Nelson.

Miss Wallace, school nurse, Wellington, retired on superannuation on the 16th May.

Owing to inability to fill the vacancies at Wanganui and Nelson, it was found necessary to ask Drs. Moir and Platts Mills to undertake itinerant duties in these districts. Although much good work was carried out by these officers, it is recognized that to secure good results and close co-operation of parents and teachers the presence of the School Medical Officer residing permanently in the district is an important factor in school medical inspection. She then knows the children, the teachers, and the parents, and takes a keen interest in the life of the community.

FIGURES RELATING TO WORK ACCOMPLISHED IN 1937.

The following summary serves to indicate the extent of work accomplished during the school period, February to December, 1937 :—

Schools inspected—						
Of roll under 100	..	..	..	..	..	754
Of roll 100 to 500	..	..	..	..	..	327
Of roll over 500	..	..	..	..	..	106
						— 1,187
Children examined—						
Complete examinations	..	..	..	..	..	67,197
Partial examinations	..	..	..	..	..	29,878
						— 97,075
Number of children notified as defective	..	..	..	..	..	35,649
Number of addresses to school-children	..	..	..	..	..	428
Number of parents interviewed	..	..	..	..	..	14,984
Number of lectures or addresses to parents	..	..	..	..	..	24
The figures for the work of the school nurses are as follows :—						
Number of days assisted Medical Officer in schools	..	..	..	..	..	1,699
Number of children examined for medical schedule (H. Sch. 14)	..	..	..	..	..	101,555
Number of days engaged wholly in clerical work	..	..	..	..	..	700½
Number of children re-examined after Medical Officer's inspection	..	..	..	..	..	25,361
Number of children examined by special request	..	..	..	..	..	7,966
Number of visits to homes in—						
Large towns	..	..	..	..	..	7,358
Small country towns	..	..	..	..	..	1,650
Scattered districts	..	..	..	..	..	1,826
						— 10,834
Number of children taken personally to hospital, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	292
Number of children taken personally to dental clinic	..	..	..	..	..	119
Number of health talks given	..	..	..	..	..	1,324