

EXCHANGE OF NURSES.

For some years the question of the exchange of nurses has been under discussion, and I have much pleasure in reporting that we have been able to conclude arrangements for the first exchange of a member of our district staff—Miss G. Uniacke, district nurse at Morrinsville—to go on exchange to the Metropolitan Health Board, Vancouver, British Columbia, for a year, and Miss D. Shields—who is a member of the staff of this controlling authority—is to be attached to our staff in New Zealand for the same period of time. The arrangements in connection with this exchange are similar to those which were made for the Sisters of the St. Helens Hospitals and the Melbourne Women's Hospital in that each nurse pays her own travelling-expenses, but remains on the pay roll of her controlling authority while abroad.

During the year a further exchange has also taken place between Wellington St. Helens Hospital and the Melbourne Women's Hospital, Miss B. Coutts, the Assistant Matron from Wellington, going to Melbourne, and Miss K. Stewart, from Melbourne, spending six months at Wellington St. Helens Hospital. The opportunity for this exchange has been of very definite benefit to members of our staff, as they have been able to gain experience in the larger institution where they are dealing with a large number of complicated and difficult obstetrical cases, and we hope that the Sisters from Melbourne appreciate what they see in New Zealand. Miss Stewart was a particularly fine woman who made a very favourable impression in Wellington.

POST-GRADUATE COURSE.

During 1938 and again in 1939 the Department granted leave on full pay to several members of the staff to enable them to take the post-graduate course. A large number of the Hospital Boards also granted bursaries. These, together with independent applicants, made it necessary this year, for the first time, to refuse candidates, as the facilities did not permit of larger classes.

The class-rooms have been improved, and, generally speaking, to look back ten years to the difficulties which were experienced when the course was first begun, it is most encouraging to see how it has become established and what the students are contributing to their profession in New Zealand.

In both the institutional and public-health aspects of field-work opportunity has been taken of giving the students wider and more varied experience. This has entailed making arrangements with various Hospital Boards, and the committee of management are very grateful for their co-operation and assistance.

TRAINING-SCHOOL MATRONS' CONFERENCE.

In February, at the time of the New Zealand Registered Nurses' Association Annual Conference, a meeting of the Matrons of all training-schools was held in Dunedin. The agenda included the nursing syllabus for the Preliminary State Examination; the proportion of nurses to patients as a basis of ward staffing; the health of nursing staffs; the work of the Students' Section of the Nurses' Association.

Very useful discussions took place, and in regard to the problem of ward staffing certain recommendations were made to the Department on the basis of a thirty-bed ward unit. Consideration has been given to these recommendations, and the following suggestions for ward staffing have been forwarded to all Hospital Boards as a basis for future requirements:—

Using as a basis a thirty-bed ward unit the nursing staff recommended will be as follows:—

Children's Ward—

Sister, 1.

Staff nurses, 2.

Nurses—M., 4; A., 4; N., $1\frac{1}{2}$; relief, $1\frac{1}{2}$.

Total, 14.

In children's wards it is considered this staff is required in view of the detailed technique necessary to prevent the spread of undiagnosed infections.

Infectious Disease Ward—

Sister, 1.

Staff nurses, 2.

Nurses—M., 4; A., 4; N., 2; relief, $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2.

Total, 15.

It is pointed out that much depends upon the type and number of infectious cases being nursed—i.e., typhoid patients require much more nursing care than some other infections.

Surgical Male Ward—

Sister, 1.

Staff nurses, 2.

Nurses—M., $3\frac{1}{2}$; A., $3\frac{1}{2}$; night, 1; relief, 1.

Total, 12.