

The value and popularity of this service continues to be stressed by medical officers and head teachers. The following from many favourable statements received from head teachers might well be quoted :—

Country Schools :—

“The milk is appreciated by all children, and a better standard of health is evident.”

“I consider the malted milk in schools a great success. Between 80 per cent. and 90 per cent. of the pupils eagerly anticipate the daily distribution of malted milk at lunch-time, and the improvement in response, especially of the Maori scholars, is, I think, largely due to the extra nourishment.”

“Even to a layman it is obvious that the children are deriving benefit. It is particularly beneficial to those children who have lunch at school, and to those who travel a long way.”

“Although the children are country children, many of them do not take milk at home, yet they seem to relish the school milk—a splendid scheme.”

City Schools :—

“The scheme is working satisfactorily, and an improvement in health and capacity for work is noticeable in the pupils accepting rations.”

“Believe that this daily supply of food to our congested area is of inestimable value to very many pupils. Believe, too, that this daily bottle of milk is an incentive to full attendance—at least we have noted a falling in attendance when the supply was cut off.”

Convent Schools :—

“The children love it, and the Sisters are very pleased with results.”

Maori Girls :—

“It has greatly assisted in the health of the girls.”

Nutrition.

The New Zealand Medical Research Council set up a special Committee under Dr. Malcolm, Professor of Physiology, Otago University, which is studying the subject of nutrition, with special reference to New Zealand foodstuffs and New Zealand conditions. A technical officer has been attached to the Committee on a full-time basis, and in addition a Medical Officer has just been appointed to the staff of the Department, who will carry out research in connection with infant nutrition. Dr. Turbott carried out some research work into the diet of Maoris, and an account of this appears in the Appendix.

A booklet entitled “Good Nutrition” was prepared under the auspices of the Otago Medical School, the Medical Research Council, and the Department. This booklet will form the basis of the Department’s teaching on the subject of diet and should be of distinct value towards the better education of the people in the matter of a healthy diet.

Health Camps.

This year considerable progress has been made with the establishment of both permanent and secondary health camps. At the 31st March, 1939, the King George V Memorial Fund amounted to a sum of £181,936 4s. 6d., and from this sum payments amounting to £16,020 14s. 1d. have been made. Further expenditure amounting to £75,683 4s. has been authorized for the erection of buildings or the purchase of land, while additional proposals, amounting to £19,600 are awaiting the consideration of the trustees. The finance of the camps for maintenance purposes benefited to the extent of some £2,000 by the sale of health stamps and a grant of £10,393 from the Christmas art-union proceeds. The Wellington camp at Otaki and the Wanganui camp are in full working-order. A suitable property has been purchased at Christchurch, and plans have been prepared for the Dunedin camp at Roxburgh. Approval has been granted for the establishment of secondary camps at Gisborne and Nelson.

Health Education.

A feature of the Department’s health educational work was the display in the Government Court at the Centennial Exhibition. The main exhibit was entitled “The Highway to Health and Happiness.” The subject demonstrated was the healthy family, and was worked out along two lines—(1) Good Health: How to develop it; and (2) Good Health: How to protect it. The theme was advanced progressively in successive bays arranged in the form of an irregular ellipse. The significance of the various parts of the display was explained through the use of a robot in the form of a walking and talking doctor. There were also smaller exhibits dealing with nutrition, goitre, and hydatid disease, prepared for the Department under the direction of officers of the Otago Medical School.

A wide range of pamphlets and other health literature was distributed. A selection of health posters was obtained from London, and some of these, as well as others presented to the Department by the Waikato Winter Show Association, were shown and attracted considerable attention.

The following films were produced and shown at the Exhibition: “School Dental Service”; “Coming Generation or School Medical Service Work”; “Day at a Health Camp”; “Health Activities in Secondary Schools”; “St. Helen’s Hospital”; “Kia Ora,” for use among the Maori people; “Hydatid,” produced by Hydatid Research and Prevention Department, Medical School, Otago University. In addition, the following films were obtained for the film library: “The Fly”; “Body Defence against Disease”; “Nutrition Cartoon,” and “The Filter.”