

Puerperal Fever. Notified cases following child-birth numbered 66 (Europeans, 65 ; Maoris, 1), while the figures for septic abortion were 73 (all Europeans). The continued fall in the incidence of puerperal fever, combined with a rising birth-rate, is very gratifying. The Maori statistics are particularly remarkable, as the following table will show :—

Table 8—Maori Puerperal Morbidity

Number of Births.	Birth-rate Per 1,000 Population.	Cases of Puerperal Sepsis.	Rate Per 1,000 Live Births.	Number of Septic Abortions.
4,956	46.86	3	0.6	0

Maori women are making increasing use of maternity hospitals, and this has probably helped towards the satisfactory results.

In 1937 the Maori death-rate from sepsis was 1.01 per 1,000 live births, compared with 0.54 for Europeans, and in the Department's annual report for 1938 the late Dr. T. L. Paget, Director of Maternal Welfare, wrote : " No material drop can be expected until more of the Maoris are admitted to hospital for their confinements, the housing conditions being quite unsuitable for domiciliary attendances."

In 1948 the corresponding maternal mortality figures were :—

Table 9

	Live Births.	Deaths from Puerperal Sepsis (Excluding Septic Abortion).	Puerperal Sepsis Rate Per 1,000 Live Births.
Europeans ..	44,193	4	0.09
Maoris ..	4,956	2	0.40

Bacillary Dysentery. Ninety-three cases were notified, as compared with 53 in 1947. The increase was largely explained by an outbreak of 53 cases in March and April in a large mental hospital. The disease was of a mild type and responded well to treatment with sulphaguanadine. Outbreaks of this disease are known to occur in mental hospitals with great frequency, and their control is difficult.

Amoebic Dysentery.—Sixty-one cases were reported, as compared with 21 and 31 in 1947 and 1946 respectively. The cases were well distributed throughout the year but the greatest numbers were reported in the Central Wellington and Christchurch districts. In nearly all cases the disease was contracted outside New Zealand and a very large proportion of those affected are ex-servicemen. During the year the War Pensions Branch of the Social Security Department reported a large number of applications for pensions on account of amoebiasis, and it would seem probable that there are still unsuspected cases among ex-servicemen.

Two cases are known where the disease was contracted in New Zealand. One was that of a woman of forty-four who had never left the country but had staying with her visitors who had suffered from the disease in India. The other case was that of a child of fourteen whose father had contracted dysentery in the Middle East and had returned to New Zealand in 1942.