

7. Q. Where the system has been extended to the more responsible officers, such as Sisters in charge of wards, the influence on their work as trainers of the probationers and as ward-managers. A. All agreed that if the Sisters and charge-nurses are no longer than eight hours with the patients for whom they are responsible, the patients suffer and the training of probationers must be neglected.

The backblocks nursing system, though it was accepted with enthusiasm by the delegates to the conference, has not progressed so fast as is desirable. Several Boards have decided to extend their work in this direction, but so far no new appointments have been made except in Stewart Island, where Mrs. Somerville is now district nurse.

The Wairarapa Board intends to appoint two nurses for country work, the Gisborne Hospital Board one for the Motu district.

At Seddon, Uruti, Waiapu, and Hastings the work is going on satisfactorily.

A dispensary nurse has been appointed by the Otago Board, who visits the tuberculosis cases in their homes after seeing them at the dispensary. There is a great deal to be developed in this work.

Maori nurses: Two nurses in training came up for examination during the year. One succeeded in passing and was registered; she was afterwards appointed assistant nurse under the Health Department. The second nurse will, it is hoped, pass her examination in June. The seven other Maori girls undergoing training are doing well at their respective schools.

#### NATIVE HEALTH NURSES.

In June, 1911, the care of the health of the Maoris was transferred from the Native Department to the Health Department, and a scheme was evolved to deal with the matter, in which the services of the nurse were especially required.

For a considerable time there had been some attempt to provide nursing treatment for the sick Maori—either through the Mission workers in different parts of the country (but unfortunately these nurses were seldom qualified), or by the detailing in times of epidemic of trained nurses to cope with the outbreak. These attempts, however, had no continuity, and it was frequently difficult to find suitable nurses for the work when they were wanted.

It was therefore decided to establish a special nursing service for work among the Natives, not only to attend them in actual illness, but to send nurses to live among them, help them with advice and example to live a more hygienic life and to bring up their children in a healthy manner. The nurse would detect illness and seek medical aid for it. She would largely prevent the spread of infection—now so common—by isolating the patients or by getting them into the local hospital, and by seeing that proper disinfection of premises and clothing is carried out. In this she would be aided by the Sanitary Inspector.

The scheme proposed was clearly put before the Hospital Boards at the conference in June, 1911, and was well received by the delegates.

*Ahipara.*—At the time of transfer of the care of the Maori health to this Department there was a serious outbreak of typhoid at Ahipara, in the far north, and Miss Bagley, a trained nurse of the Department, was sent to do what she could. A temporary hospital was established at a meeting-house, and patients brought in from the different pas. There was at one time sixteen patients in this extemporized place. A second nurse was sent by the Bay of Islands Board to assist Miss Bagley, and the outbreak was practically stamped out in the course of three months. In this Dr. Lunn, a subsidized medical officer under the Native Department, assisted, and the Sanitary Inspector of the district had the pas cleaned up and disinfected.

*Rotorua District.*—The first nurse directly appointed for this special work was Miss Purcell, a registered nurse and midwife. She first went to Ahipara, and when that outbreak was over took up her station at Rotorua, Miss Bagley having prepared the way in that district. For eight months Miss Purcell did excellent work—travelling from pa to pa in the Rotorua and Taupo districts. The work was carried on with a good deal of difficulty, as most pioneer work is—the difficulty of obtaining suitable quarters is very great. A Native nurse—Maud Mataira, trained at the Wanganui Hospital—was sent to assist Nurse Purcell, but, owing to an outbreak of typhoid, has been kept on duty in the isolation hospital.

Miss Purcell, owing to ill health, resigned her position after about seven months' work, and Miss Cora Anderson was then appointed to this district, and took up her work in March.

*Hawera District.*—The second nurse, appointed in August, was Miss Cicely Beetham, registered nurse and midwife. Miss Beetham has a wide range—from Hawera to Stratford—and there are a considerable number of pas. Her headquarters are at Okaiawa, and one of the chief difficulties is getting about from place to place. Miss Beetham uses a bicycle, but in the winter this will be difficult. Nurse Eva Wi Repa, trained at Napier Hospital, was appointed to assist Miss Beetham, but was not able to manage the work and was not in sympathy with the people. She resigned after a short trial. The cottage occupied by Miss Beetham is connected with the telephone, this being paid for by the Department.

In her reports Miss Beetham emphasizes the importance of a proper introduction by one of the chief men of the district, and a thorough explanation of the Native health scheme, as preparatory to commencing work of this kind. She says, "It proves the greatest help in working amongst the Maoris, and is always necessary as regards success; otherwise they will not receive me nor willingly accept nursing assistance. Some of the more enlightened of these people have received me well, but where superstition and bigotry exist, as in some parts of my district, my reception has been rather the contrary." On the suggestion of a Native clergyman a letter was afterwards sent from the Department, which was of assistance.