

"I have recorded 16 deaths, 4 of that number being unattended by doctor or nurse. Seven were incurable cases.

"After three years' work in the district one notices many improvements. Though slowly, progress is undoubtedly being made as regards sanitation. We cannot hurry these people—'Taihoa' will for ever be their watchword.

"Three years ago Kate Marae Pa was the dirtiest and most neglected pa in my district. To-day I compare the two in my mind's eye, and the improvements, I consider, are remarkably good, taking all into consideration.

"Each year brings a greater decrease in the number of pa inhabitants. They are becoming more enlightened, and leaving the pas. They build their own little European cottages, and work far more independently and with greater zeal."

Nurse Walker, of the Waiapu district, has also some interesting remarks to make on her work. Unfortunately, the remarks she makes as regards the sly grog-selling are applicable to other districts besides Waiapu:—

"During the year I have noticed a general improvement in sanitation. Mostly all the Natives in this district have their houses built in the European style, and those that have not are fast pulling down their old whares and rebuilding in the modern style. They are slowly getting into the way of keeping their houses clean. Some are more easily taught than others. As a rule, they have very little furniture, just the bare necessities. Their bedding has almost a daily airing in the sunshine.

"Consumption is a prevalent disease among them. They have been instructed to use antiseptics, and to expectorate into tins, which are afterwards burned.

"Typhoid fever has been much less during the year, strict instructions have been given to them regarding precautions.

"It is, of course, hard to deal with their superstitions, which they seem to cling to, especially the older ones. The younger generation seem to be forgetting it. In spite of it all, I try to meet them as much as I feel is right.

"Most mothers breast-feed their infants, the majority of whom get on exceedingly well. Those that are obliged to feed them artificially are usually mothers suffering from consumption. The chief ailment has been diarrhoea, and sometimes gastric trouble.

"I find that cows' milk suits them better than patent foods. They are not careful enough in the preparation of patent foods.

"The children, on the whole, are in better health in summer than in winter. They enjoy the open air, and indulge freely in both sea and river bathing. The skin-diseases are less, proving that cleanliness and fresh air is a good tonic.

"A great trouble here, or perhaps the greatest, is the drink question. This is a prohibited district for the Natives, but the amount of sly grog-selling that goes on is simply appalling. Useless pakeha men make quite a big living in this way, selling drink at twice its value. The Natives take it to their homes, and men, women, and children partake of it freely and become intoxicated. At all Maori settlements they have sheds in which to store it. At every funeral, tangi, or entertainment of any kind the majority are drunk. Three different school-teachers have told me of their pupils being drunk after attending a tangi. One small child of about five was seen by a teacher to be drunk, and carrying a bottle of liquor. This sort of indulgence must surely be injuring their health. The Natives while in this state become very savage, and it is not the nicest thing for me to be going among them while they are in this state."

The District Health Officer, Christchurch, reports:—

Medical attendance on Natives in all the principal pas in the district has now been arranged for.

Tuberculosis seems prevalent amongst the race, and this is especially noticeable at Tuahiwi, where tuberculin treatment is still largely carried out.

Three special health tents have been provided for special cases in this pa, and more will be sent up should occasion demand.

Taken as a whole, the conditions under which the Natives live in the pas in this district are fairly satisfactory as compared with some of the districts in the North Island, although there is considerable room for improvement.

The appointment of a District Nurse for Maoris will no doubt greatly assist in improving the general conditions.

(6.) SANITARY INSPECTION.

The District Health Officer, Auckland, reports:—

In the earlier part of the year the work in connection with the smallpox epidemic kept the country Inspectors very busy, and later the continual outbreaks of typhoid among the Natives kept them working at high pressure.

The Hamilton Borough, having decided to employ an Inspector who could devote himself to borough work only, relieved Mr. Bennett of this part of the work, but we lost the services of Mr. Furness from our Auckland staff, as he was appointed to the Hamilton Inspectorship. To take his place in the Hospital Board work Mr. Wilkinson was selected.

The division of the Marsden-Kaipara Hospital Board into two independent Boards upset the arrangement as regards the employment of Mr. Shenton in that district. The Kaipara Hospital Board elected to employ an Inspector independently of the Health Department. Mr. Shenton was transferred to the permanent staff of the Department, and an arrangement was made with the Whangarei Board to pay a subsidy for his services in their district.

With the outbreak of war we lost Mr. Grieve's services from our departmental staff, as he joined the Expeditionary Force for foreign service. His special work in connection with the Sale of Food and Drugs Act has been taken over so far as possible by Mr. Shenton.

The following tables indicate the work done by the Inspectors during the year:—