

Bacteriological Work.—All bacteriological assistants about to be appointed should be absolutely under the control of the Government Bacteriologist of the district concerned.

Medical and Dental Bursaries.—For last year eight medical bursaries were provided for fifth-year students, the conditions, in effect, being that the bursars are at the disposal of the Department for public-health or hospital work for two years after qualifying.

Up to the present ten dental bursaries have been granted, and the details of the scheme are now nearing completion. The objects and conditions are on lines similar to those for medical bursaries.

DEPARTMENTAL JOURNAL.

The *Journal*, which was inaugurated by the direction of the Hon. the Minister of Public Health in July, 1917, has proved an eminently successful venture, and congratulatory comments have been received from time to time, the information disseminated by this means having been highly appreciated. The publication has served as an excellent medium between the Department and Hospital Boards. The work is at present undertaken by the Secretary's branch of the Head Office, and at times articles have been contributed by medical officers of the Department. Each month a summary of the Department's activities as regards the administration of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act and inspections is published in the *Journal*. Other standing features are statistics of infectious diseases, summarized reports of Hospital Boards' meetings culled from various newspapers circulating in the Dominion, and particulars and costs, &c., of additions and alterations to public institutions approved by the Hon. the Minister under section 61 of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, and several valuable articles have been prepared on matters in relation to Hospital Boards' book-keeping and accounts.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT.

Infectious Diseases.

The following are extracts made from reports by District Health Officers:—

SCARLET FEVER.

Auckland.—“Scarlet fever was very much below the previous year, there being a decrease of 379 in the number of notifications.”

Wellington.—“The figures for the year show a most substantial reduction, only 287 cases being notified, as against 848 for 1917. The disease was fairly general in its distribution throughout the health district, although it was noticeably light in its incidence on the provinces of Marlborough and Taranaki and the hospital districts of Waiapu and Wairoa.”

Canterbury.—“The total number recorded (486) shows a decrease of 390 as compared with 1917. The highest incidence was recorded in May, and gradually declined towards the end of the year. In the previous year (1917) this disease was at its height in July. The disease was practically confined to the Canterbury portion of the district, very few cases having been reported from the West Coast; but this is probably due to the fact of more closely settled conditions in Canterbury, whereas on the West Coast the population is more scattered; also to the fact that Canterbury being a colder part of the district there is more tendency for people to box themselves up in ill-ventilated rooms. The disease was mostly of a mild type, six deaths being recorded, giving a percentage of 1.23.”

Otago.—“In Southland Hospital District the number of scarlet-fever cases was rather less than during the previous year. A small outbreak occurred in the Queenstown district in May and June, but the prompt removal to hospital of these cases apparently checked the disease. Otherwise the cases were of a sporadic nature and fairly widely scattered over the whole district. Three deaths occurred. This disease has been characterized by the mildness of the attacks. In some cases the history is as follows: A child first reports for medical attention owing to peeling of the skin. Investigation then shows that the child had a slight rash and was off-colour for a day or so, but was not sufficiently ill to remain away from school. It is possible that many cases of this type have escaped detection.”

DIPHTHERIA.

Wellington.—“Diphtheria was, next to influenza, the most widespread of the infectious diseases of 1918. No fewer than 2,919 cases were reported during the year, an increase of 378 over the figures for 1917. The disease was, fortunately, very mild in nature, and few fatalities resulted. In accordance with the usual experience that only one epidemic disease is widely prevalent at any one time, the advent of the influenzal wave of November caused a rapid diminution in the number of cases of diphtheria.”

Canterbury.—“The total number of cases recorded (879) shows a decrease on the last year's figures of 182. 690 of these cases occurred in the North Canterbury Hospital Board's district, the remainder being scattered over the rest of the district, more or less in proportion to population. Several instances come under notice where the disease was distinctly traceable to carriers who showed no symptoms or history of having had the disease. The greatest incidence was in May, and remained fairly high until August, with a slight drop in June and July. Last year May, June, July, and August also showed the highest rate of incidence. Thirty-six deaths occurred, giving a percentage of 4.”

Otago.—“Seven hundred and ninety-three cases of diphtheria occurred in this health district, and of this number 469 have occurred in the Southland District. The epidemic in the latter district appears to be now well under control, there being a decrease of 317 as compared with the