

New by-laws have been framed to meet the requirements of the Health Act and Maori Councils Act, and have been adopted so far by seven of these bodies; a further eight Councils have received them, and I only await their return to permit of proceeding with the gazetting. I had hoped to have had the whole of the by-laws distributed by the end of March, but, owing to Mr. Menzies' absence on leave, and the huge amount of typing and clerical work involved, will not be able to have these all distributed until the end of the current month, and by the end of May these should be in the hands of the Native Department for purposes of gazetting. I am making every effort to expedite this matter, but, again, in many instances the Natives must have their own particular methods of dealing with these by-laws and instructions, and a certain amount of delay in this direction is therefore unavoidable. I am pleased to state that the new work to be done is welcomed by these Councils, and the whole trend amongst them so far is to get to work and exercise authority over their own people in the interests of health and sanitary matters generally. When the whole of the Councils are in actual working-order I am convinced that with the co-ordination of our nurses and Inspectors a very great improvement in all matters incidental to Native health may be looked for. There are three Councils only in the South Island, and as these Natives are living under very fair conditions I shall not deal with them other than in a formal manner until I have completed the whole of the North Island.

NATIVE HEALTH.

The health of the Natives throughout the whole of the North Island, and the sanitary conditions generally, still show improvement over last year, these circumstances being brought about by the supervision exercised by our Native nurses and Sanitary Inspectors, together with the distribution of pamphlets incidental to Maori ailments and personal visits of myself amongst them. I expect still greater improvement when the various Health Councils are fully established. Thus the keynote in connection with the success of Native health matters may be summed up in the words "strict supervision" administered with firmness, yet kindness. We have had, of course, outbreaks of disease amongst them, typhoid fever being the most serious, but the spread has been more confined than in former years, and this fact can well be attributed to my former remarks.

The nurses and Inspectors are doing good work amongst these people, and are really the "watch-dogs" of the Department, and accordingly the buffers also between the Native people when ill and the public generally, owing to their watching and preventing the spread of disease by confining same to the particular settlements affected.

The sacrifices these officers make are many, the means of travelling in the backblock settlements during winter months being dreadful. However, they carry on and render most efficient service indeed. I cannot express fully my appreciation of their devoted services in the interests of health and otherwise of the Native people. I am also greatly indebted to all Native-school teachers, who deal with cases of sickness not only to the children within their schools, but to any and every Native requiring their services, and they are many. Stocks of medicine supplied gratis by the Department are held by the teachers and administered by them. The services of these good people are indeed a great comfort to the Natives and a most valuable asset to our Department.

SECTION 2.—MEDICAL ATTENDANCE AND SUPPLIES.

SUBSIDIZED MEDICAL OFFICERS.

As stated in my previous reports, I am not in a position to report favourably upon the work of some of these officers; and the time has arrived to review the whole question, as by what I gather the Natives are not receiving the attention they should, and accordingly the Department not getting value for the money so expended. Since writing the above I am in receipt of your memo. regarding the whole question, so will deal in detail with this matter in my reply to your communication.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO NATIVE SCHOOLS.

This service, as far as I can gather, is now going on satisfactorily, and, although I complained previously of the celerity compared with the old system, I find that in many cases the despatch of the supplies was delayed owing to transport arrangements or labour troubles over which the Assistant Director of Medical Services in Auckland had no control. On inquiry I am satisfied that the despatch of supplies is expedited all that is possible.

STAFF.

I have had every assistance from my officers, and the success of my work for the year just closed could not have been such had it not been for the loyal service rendered.

GENERAL.

I could have gone more into detail in connection with this report, but acting under your instruction to economize I have made same as brief as possible. However, my monthly reports show you progress from time to time, so that you are advised regarding the position in so far as Native health matters in the Dominion are concerned.

TE RANGI HIROA,
Director of Maori Hygiene.