

## RESEARCH.

Professor Hercus, under a special grant by the Department, is initiating research work at the Otago Medical School in regard to goitre in New Zealand. The Government Bacteriologist, Auckland, Mr. F. L. Armitage, is to be congratulated on his investigations into rosy bread, water-supplies, &c. I think this aspect of laboratory-work merits extension and support. At present, with our limited bacteriological staff, we are handicapped in this direction.

## SECTION 4.—DIVISIONAL REPORTS.

## CHILD WELFARE.

The report of Dr. Truby King, Director of Child Welfare, strikingly indicates the supreme value of the work carried out under his able administration in the interest of mother and child. The many branches of the Plunket Society throughout the Dominion are centres from which radiate social work of extreme importance to the community. Not only to city dwellers but to the country settlers it must be a consolation to know that a society exists to which they can look for guidance and assistance in the time of special need. Dr. King's remarks on maternal mortality and still-births should be of deep interest to those concerned in such important problems.

## NURSING.

The Council of the Otago University is to be congratulated on the institution of the Diploma of Nursing. It is to be hoped that legislation for the superannuation of nurses will be brought into operation at an early date. The St. Helens Maternity Hospitals continue to render a splendid service. The extent to which these institutions are used is a compliment to their administration, and the confidence the general public repose in those in charge. That this confidence is not misplaced is shown by the table below, giving the number of cases of and deaths from puerperal fever in these institutions for the five-year period ending 31st March, 1924, in comparison with New Zealand as a whole.

*Puerperal Fever in St. Helens Hospitals of New Zealand for Period 1920-24.*

St. Helens Hospitals.	Aggregate of Live Births for Period 1920-24.	Puerperal-fever Cases notified, 1920-24.		Puerperal-fever Deaths, 1920-24.	
		Notifications.	Rate per 1,000 Live Births.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 Live Births.
Auckland .. .. .	1,928	5	2.59	..	..
Gisborne .. .. .	476	1	2.10	..	..
Wanganui* .. .. .	336	..	..	..	..
Wellington .. .. .	1,497	3	2.00	1	0.67
Christchurch .. .. .	1,300	4	3.08	1	0.77
Dunedin .. .. .	717	7	9.76	2	2.79
Invercargill .. .. .	659	..	..	..	..
All St. Helens .. .. .	6,913	20	2.89	4	0.58
All New Zealand .. .. .	139,944	819	5.85	271	1.94

\* St. Helens Hospital, Wanganui, was opened at beginning of 1922.

NOTE i.—Figures for St. Helens Hospitals are quoted for year ending 31st March in each year of the period 1920-24.

NOTE ii.—Figures for all New Zealand are quoted for the calendar years 1919 to 1923 inclusive.

## SCHOOL HYGIENE.

The report of Dr. Ada Paterson, the Director of the Division of School Hygiene, shows a record of work achieved on behalf of the rising generation. One cannot sufficiently emphasize the value of the services performed by this Division of the Department. They represent preventive medicine in one of its best and most productive forms. The results outlined in this report reflect great credit on the school medical officers and their assistants. The problems before them are great, and so is their enthusiasm and loyalty. In view of the somewhat doleful statements one at times reads of the physique of the New Zealand children, it is reassuring to find, according to the Director's report, that it compares more than favourably with that of the children of Great Britain. This report should be read by all those actively concerned in the welfare of our school-children.

## DENTAL HYGIENE.

The work of this branch is still developing, as indicated in the brief but instructive report of the Director, and the comments of recognized authorities on the Department's scheme of dental hygiene signify its excellent basis.

A noteworthy event in the campaign against oral sepsis in New Zealand was the placing in the field of twenty-five dental nurses, trained at the Department's clinic. The Director must be congratulated on this achievement. It is gratifying to learn of the success of these nurses, and I feel sure that the probationers in training will in turn perform such an essential service to the community, according to the high traditions of their training-school. The readiness with which the people have helped the Department in providing surgeries at various centres is a pleasing feature of the report.