

## PART IV.—NURSING.

I have the honour to submit my annual report for the year ending 31st December, 1923.

## SECTION 1.—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT.

Two examinations were held during the year—in June and December—when 256 candidates presented themselves, of whom 243 were successful and are now registered. Thirty nurses from overseas have also been admitted to the register.

By arrangement with the Council of the Otago University, a Diploma of Nursing has been instituted, which it is hoped will bridge over the period between a girl's leaving school and entering into a hospital for training. The course will be of five years' duration, and will include the statutory term of three years' training in a hospital. Better-educated girls who are desirous of taking administrative or other responsible posts in their profession should take advantage of this course. It should be possible, also, to combine with the diploma course post-graduate instructions for registered nurses who may wish to take up some special branch of nursing or administrative work.

While in England I found that such courses in connection with various universities were open to nurses, and the time seems ripe for New Zealand nurses to have similar advantages placed at their disposal in their own country to enable them to keep pace with the trend of modern progress.

Our nurses have an excellent reputation among the nurses of other countries, as I found when attending the meeting of the International Council of Nurses in Copenhagen in August. It would be deplorable if, through lack of opportunity, they were allowed to remain stationary while others advanced.

During my absence of eight months in England Miss Maclean continued in office, so that on my return it was possible to take up the threads more easily than would otherwise have been the case. The nurses of New Zealand owe much to her devotion to their interests and to the work she has accomplished on their behalf during her long term of office.

*Nurses in Government Positions.*—No new appointments of Nurse Inspectors have yet been made, though the need for these officers is great if the inspection of private hospitals and midwives is to be carried out efficiently. At present it is only possible to touch the fringe of the work with the staff available, and it is to be hoped that the recommendation of the Maternal Mortality Commission with regard to these officers may be shortly carried out.

There have been few changes in the personnel of the staffs of Government hospitals during the year. It is suggested that the three Matrons of the King George V Hospital, Rotorua, Pukeora Sanatorium, Waipukurau, and Queen Mary Hospital, Hanmer, should be interchanged, in order that each may have an insight into the administration of a different hospital for special cases, and incidentally be relieved of the monotony inseparable, in the case of Hanmer and Pukeora, from a somewhat isolated position. This change it is proposed to effect at an early date.

*District Health Nurses for Natives.*—One or two changes have taken place in this service. Nurse Crawford, Tauranga, having met with an accident in the course of her duty, was granted extended leave, and, later, treatment at Rotorua, Nurse Whitaker taking her place. Two new nurses are to be appointed, one being a Maori nurse trained in Palmerston North Hospital and St. Helens Hospital, Wellington. Another Maori nurse will probably be appointed later as assistant to a pakeha nurse, as in most cases it is found better to arrange in this way until the necessary experience to manage a district successfully has been gained.

There are at present two nurses at Napier Hospital and one at Hamilton in training for work among their own people.

*School Nurses and Plunket Nurses* will be fully reported on by the heads of their respective divisions.

*Superannuation for Nurses.*—It is hoped that during next session, some scheme may be adopted whereby nurses may be enabled to make provision for their old age. Fortunately, Hospital Boards are usually ready to take advantage of the power given them under the Hospitals Amendment Act, 1920, to provide pensions for Matrons of ten years' service, but these form a very small proportion of those in need of some assistance when their days of active work must cease.

## SECTION 2.—MIDWIVES ACT.

At the two examinations held during the year under the Midwives Act 150 candidates presented themselves, of whom 136 were successful and are now registered. Twenty-one midwives from overseas were registered.

Reciprocity of registration with the Central Midwives Board has not been accomplished, the Board still requiring that our midwives shall sit for the Board's examination, though recognizing the New Zealand course of training as sufficient. On the other hand, the term of training in the Dominion is longer than that laid down by the Central Midwives Board, so that overseas midwives may only be registered on showing proof of additional training to bring it up to the time required here.

While in London I interviewed the Central Midwives Board with a view to arrange a basis of reciprocity of registration, but was unable to convince the Board that the New Zealand qualifying examination was practically of as high a standard as that held by them. Later I attended an oral examination under the Board, which appeared to be similar to ours except that very little practical work was done and there were no nurse-examiners—a feature strongly insisted upon in our State Midwifery Examinations.