

MAORI HEALTH COUNCILS.

These Councils continue to do good work. In some cases they are not so active as others, but the very fact of their existence is a potential factor that can be turned into an active force when special need arises. They form an organization which can be mobilized to deal with urgent circumstances in the way of assistance in epidemics. Council members and Village Committees render the greatest assistance in isolating epidemics by discouraging and opposing travelling to or from infected areas.

The administration of sanitary by-laws is carried on automatically by Village Committees. In cases of doubt and difficulty the advice of the Division of Maori Hygiene is always sought. The inauguration by my office of a system of supply of quarterly returns by the Chairman of these Councils has resulted in a proper supervision of their accounts, and thereby eliminated the haphazard methods of the past.

A conference of the Chairmen of all the northern Councils was held at Whangarei. It was unanimously held that the present by-laws met all requirements for the betterment of the health of the people. Further additions were discussed, and by-laws are being framed to give effect to them.

WATER-SUPPLIES.

The inauguration of water-supplies has been receiving the attention of my division. The success attending the Maketu water-supply has led to the framing of special by-laws dealing with the maintenance and extension of the system. This further stimulated the villages in the district, which collected money and applied for £1-for-£1 subsidies, which were granted by the State. These subsidies were in most cases met by the Native Department, who so far have never declined assistance, and the gratitude of the Maori people is due to that Department for their recognition of the importance of good water-supplies in bettering the condition of the Native people.

A few items in this direction are appended :—Te Paamu Village : Bore, 170 ft. ; subsidy, £48. Te Matai Village : Well and pump ; subsidy, £23 19s. 3d. Manoeka No. 1 Village : Well and pump ; subsidy, £24 1s. 3d. Manoeka No. 2 Village : Well and pump ; subsidy, £22 2s. 8d. Te Kahika Village : Well and pump ; subsidy, £17. Waitangi Village : Bore, 35 ft. ; subsidy, £10.

In all the above settlements the question of water-supplies has been a difficult problem. Since installation, the Maoris themselves are well satisfied with the improved conditions. Details in connection with the location, ordering of material, and supervision of the work were controlled by my division.

The Tauranga Council, with £80 to credit of its own account, is going ahead with a water-supply scheme under my direction. The Matatua Council has spent £68 of its own money on installation of water-supplies. The Wairoa Council has installed two water-supplies at a cost of £40, and is proceeding with another.

In the far-north village of Te Hapua the Natives have collected £35, being half-cost of installing a central-tank system. The Department of Health has subsidized this amount £1 for £1, and a contract has been let for the completion of the work, amounting in all to £70, details of which are : six 600-gallon tanks, covers, &c., £28 10s. ; spouting and plumbing, £4 ; timber for stands, £12 ; freight, £7 ; cartage and labour, £18 10s. : total, £70.

These various items show that the Natives are themselves helping to improve their condition, with the assistance of the Health Councils and the State Departments.

SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS.

Attention has been directed to improving the sanitation of the villages, especially towards providing latrine accommodation for both sexes at the communal meeting-houses where tribal gatherings are held. The Councils which have funds are able to make these most necessary improvements, but a few of these bodies have insufficient funds to carry on. If a fund of £500 per annum could be devoted to assist the Councils in carrying out such sanitary improvement as this Department directed much good would result, and subsequent expense in dealing with epidemics such as typhoid would be greatly minimized.

INOCULATION.

Anti-typhoid inoculation is carried out as a routine procedure in districts where typhoid fever occurs. Already the improvement in the lessened incidence of the disease is marked. Districts that were previously rife with the disease season after season now give little trouble. Cases do occur, but never spread as in the past. The total inoculations done during the last year numbered 2,000, making the total for the last two years 4,317.

TANGIS AND HUIS.

We have very little reason to fear any ill results from these gatherings, owing to strict attention to sanitary detail having now become a routine matter. Extra latrine accommodation, disposal of rubbish and food-refuse is organized by the people themselves, and Village Committees realize their responsibility. Inspectors of Health, instead of meeting with passive indifference on the part of the Natives as in the past, now find the people ready to carry out any suggestions that will lead to the healthy conduct of the gathering. District nurses are also in attendance whenever possible, to deal with cases of illness that may arise. At the large gathering held in Wairoa in January to unveil a war memorial everything was conducted to my entire satisfaction, and the people are to be congratulated on the sanitary organization that prevailed.

MAORI HEALTH NURSES.

I cannot speak too highly of the good work being done by this branch of the service. Though some of the followers of Ratana are averse to accepting skilled treatment, the nurses have earned the confidence and respect of the people. It may interest some of the conscientious objectors to know that Ratana in a public speech to me stated that he had not only no objections to the use of medicines,