

NURSING.

Among the important matters mentioned in Miss Bicknell's final report before retiring from the post of Director, Division of Nursing, are the classification of training schools into two grades; the lengthened course of training of nurses and untrained women to qualify as maternity nurses and midwives, and the review of the post-graduate course for nurses.

By the retirement of Miss Bicknell, after twenty-five years' service, during eight of which she occupied the responsible position as Director of this Division, the Department has lost an officer who has rendered signal service to the Department and the nursing profession.

MAORI HYGIENE.

From motives of economy it is not proposed to include in this report detailed statistics in reference to the Maori race. It is interesting to note, however, that, in spite of the increased death-rate and decreased birth-rate, the percentage increase of the Maori race is still higher than that of the European—namely, 1.75 per cent., as compared with 1.0 per cent. The infantile-mortality rate of 88.51 per 1,000 live births is an increase on the previous year's rate. In this connection special endeavours are being made to reduce deaths of infants to a figure more approaching the European rate. Tuberculosis is still responsible for an unduly large number of deaths, the rate for all forms being 34.03 per 10,000 of mean population. The report of the Director of School Hygiene gives some interesting information regarding the physical condition of Native-school children.

BOARDS ASSOCIATED WITH DEPARTMENTS.

The various Boards associated with the Department have continued their work during the year under review. I refer to the Board of Health, the Medical Council, Plumbers Board, the Masseurs Registration Board, the Opticians Board, and the Nurses and Midwives Registration Board.

Reference to the work of the last-mentioned Board will be found in the report of the Director, Division of Nursing.

Following the usual practice, quarterly meetings of each of these bodies were held, and in each case good work is being performed. The Government has been fortunate in securing on these various Boards public-spirited members imbued with the ideal of forwarding the best interests of the Dominion. On some future occasion I hope to record in greater detail the work of each of the Boards referred to.

HOSPITAL BOARDS.

Financial information and general statistics with regard to hospitals and institutions under control of Boards will be given in the appendix to this report to be issued after Secretaries' returns come to hand.

STAFF.

I regret to record the deaths of Dr. H. J. McLean, Port Health Officer, Wellington, Mr. J. L. Bruce, Inspector of Farms, and Mr. P. Mahony, Officer in Charge of Sera and Dental Stores. These officers most ably and loyally served the Department.

Dr. Ellison who recently left the services of the Department to take over the important duties of Chief Medical Officer, Rarotonga, proved a worthy successor to Dr. Buck, and did much good work as Director of the Division of Maori Hygiene. He has the good wishes of his former colleagues in his new sphere of activities.

It is only fitting that I should conclude this report with a brief expression of the Department's sincere appreciation and esteem of Dr. Valintine, who, after many years of onerous and faithful service, has retired from the position of Director-General of Health. To him is due a great deal of the credit for the marked development which has taken place in public-health administration in this country. He has been a true pioneer, with the necessary vision to recognize the problems confronting him, the special knowledge to grapple with these problems, and the will and determination to carry him through to successful achievement. He carries with him into his well-earned retirement the good wishes of one and all of his former staff.

In conclusion, I wish to thank officers for loyal and efficient service during a period requiring unrelenting vigilance and economic administration.

M. H. WATT, Director-General of Health.