

PART VI.—NURSING.

I beg to submit my annual report for the year ending 31st March, 1931.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES REGISTRATION ACT, 1925.

The two general nursing examinations held in June and December resulted in 325 out of 382 candidates being successful. From overseas nineteen nurses were admitted to the register.

The system of affiliation between large and small institutions foreshadowed in my last year's report is now happily an established fact, amending regulations having given the Board power to classify the training-school into two grades—Grade A, being competent to undertake the complete course of training, and Grade B, which may give a partial training, the remaining portion to be carried out in an improved Grade A hospital. Already several Hospital Boards have arranged affiliation along these lines, and the result should be a more uniform standard of nursing throughout the country.

In the four examinations held during the year for the State registration of midwives, 128 were successful while four were admitted from overseas. At the same time examinations for maternity nurses resulted in 177 being added to the register.

The new regulations requiring a lengthened period of training for midwives and maternity nurses have caused considerable difficulty of adjustment in the various training-schools, but these are being gradually overcome.

The work in the office has been enormously increased owing to the large amount of correspondence and also to the fact that an extra examination had to be arranged in order to lessen any undue hardship during the transition period. It is hoped, however, that at the end of 1931 it will be possible to hold two examinations only—in June and December.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES REGISTRATION BOARD.

There were four Board meetings held during the year.

Personnel.—The personnel of the Board has been increased by the Nurses and Midwives Registration Amendment Act, 1930, to include a representative of the Hospital Boards and an additional representative of the nursing profession, the members now being, Dr. M. H. Watt (Chairman), Dr. W. Young, Miss E. P. Tennent, Miss H. Newman, Miss R. Muir, Mr. W. Wallace, and Miss J. Bicknell (Registrar).

TRAINING OF MIDWIVES AND MATERNITY NURSES.

Training-schools.—During the year the Board decided to restrict the training of midwives entirely to the St. Helens Hospitals in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Invercargill, and to approve of all other training-schools which had previously trained midwives as training-schools for maternity nurses only.

Course of Training.—It was also decided to lengthen the course of training required of both nurses and untrained women undergoing training as maternity nurses and midwives; and, as a result of this decision, the regulations were amended to provide that (a) the course for general trained nurses training as maternity nurses shall be six months; (b) for untrained women training as maternity nurses, eighteen months; (c) for all registered maternity nurses training as midwives, six months.

Training-schools for Nurses.—During the year the Board has given lengthy consideration to the qualifications of the various training-schools for nurses, and, as an amendment to the regulations allowed the Board to stipulate the period of training which could be given in Grade B training-schools (instead of limiting it to twelve months as previously), the Board has regraded a considerable number of hospitals as B grade training-schools, therefore requiring any trainees in these schools to spend a certain amount of time in larger training-schools, thus generally improving the practical experience obtained by trainees in some of the smaller training-schools.

Appointment of Examiners.—The list of medical practitioners and nurses appointed as examiners under the Nurses and Midwives Registration Act, 1925, was considerably added to during the year.

Inspection of Training-schools.—The Board obtained the service of an officer of the Department to make an inspection of a number of the training-schools for nurses, and to report direct to the Board from the standpoint of the institutions as training-schools; the result of which has been that in several of the hospitals the teaching equipment is being largely augmented and other improvements made.