

The system of control through district dental superintendents continues to be satisfactory as regards supervision over the work of the clinics and for economical administration.

The co-operation received from the Dental Clinic Committees has contributed much to the successful operation of this branch of the Department's work.

*Hospitals.*—Hospital Boards have continued to co-operate with the Department with a view to effecting economies, and hospital maintenance expenditure for the past year shows a further reduction of approximately £75,000 compared with the previous year.

The collection of patients' fees has grown more difficult owing to the prevailing financial position, and the drop in receipts under this heading largely accounted for Boards as a whole incurring a net deficit of approximately £42,000.

The Department is, however, keeping a close watch on the expenditure of Boards by reviewing quarterly budget statements, which all Boards are now required to submit.

It will be observed from the report of the Director, Division of Hospitals, that as an economy measure a number of Boards have leased their smaller hospitals. Many of these institutions are, by reason of the low number of patients treated, very costly to maintain, and in view of the present means of transport it is often doubtful whether their continuance is merited.

Full statistical and financial information with regard to hospitals and institutions under the control of Boards will be published as a special appendix to this report at a later date when the returns from Boards' secretaries are all to hand.

*Maori Hygiene.*—The death-rate amongst Maoris was 17·06, as compared with 14·81 in 1931. There was a slight fall in infant-mortality, the rate being 95·45 per 1,000 live births. In this connection special educational endeavours are being made to reduce deaths of infants to a figure more in line with the European rate. Suitable pamphlets have been issued on the proper methods of feeding and clothing of infants.

The birth-rate of 39·28 represents a substantial rise in this rate. The excess of births over deaths continues to give the Maori a highly satisfactory natural increase. The death-rate for puerperal causes was 7·29 per 1,000 live births, five of the twenty deaths recorded being due to puerperal septicæmia. Respiratory diseases were responsible for 46·29 per cent. of the total deaths. A large number of deaths still occur from tuberculosis, the rate for all forms of this disease being 41·65 per 10,000. As a result of the co-ordination of school medical inspection work and district nursing referred to in the report of the Director, Division of Nursing, closer supervision is being given to the health of the Maori people. The statistical summary relating to the work of district nurses included in the same report shows that 2,759 visits were paid to patients. Towards the end of 1932 the term of office of the majority of Maori Councils expired, and the new Councils appointed are working well on behalf of the Maori race.

*Health Education.*—During the year the work of health education has been continued on the lines described in previous reports. This work has included articles supplied to the press, educational talks broadcast through courtesy of the Radio Broadcasting Board, and addresses delivered to various organizations. In addition, information has been supplied from time to time to the health organization of the League of Nations, the International Union against Tuberculosis, the Social Hygiene Council, &c. On request from the New Zealand Institute papers on public-health problems relating to New Zealand were prepared by Dr. Duncan Cook, Dr. F. S. Maclean, and Dr. H. B. Turbott for presentation to the Fifth Pacific Science Congress, Canada, 1933.

*Boards Associated with Department.*—The various Boards associated with the Department have continued their work during the year—namely, the Board of Health, Medical Council, Plumbers Board, Masseurs Registration Board, Opticians Board, and Nurses and Midwives Registration Board. Reference to the work of the last-mentioned body will be found in the report of the Director, Division of Nursing.

During the year legislation was passed requiring medical practitioners, plumbers, masseurs, and opticians to obtain annual practising certificates, it being necessary to increase the revenue in each case to cover the costs of administering the governing law.

The Department acknowledges its indebtedness to the members of these Boards for their able services.

*Staff.*—During the year several officers retired from the Department on superannuation. In particular, I would refer to Mr. K. Cameron and Mr. M. Kershaw, Senior Inspectors of Health at Dunedin and Christchurch respectively, who had been associated with the Department for many years. Both had proved themselves able officers.

I have also to record with regret the death during the year of Miss Hester Maclean, R.R.C., Florence Nightingale Medallist, who had lived in retirement in Wellington for some years past, and who was formerly Director, Division of Nursing. Miss Lambie in her report refers more fully to Miss Maclean's distinguished career.

The Department also lost the services of a number of officers who had been associated with it for a number of years through the transfer of the Otaki Sanatorium and the Bacteriological Laboratories at Whangarei, Gisborne, and Invercargill to local Hospital Board control.

In conclusion, I wish to express thanks for the support given me by officers of the Department throughout the year.

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