

The Medical Officer of Health, Hamilton, states that the district nurses continue to spread the gospel of good health amongst the Maori people wherever possible, and to attend to the greater part, at any rate, of their medical needs. He reports a considerable improvement in the general sanitary conditions of the Maori people. That there were only three Maori cases of typhoid in his district for the year, the lowest figure recorded, is a tribute to this improvement.

The Medical Officer of Health, Gisborne, reports that the housing conditions of many of the Maoris cause great anxiety. The spread of disease, and particularly tuberculosis, the prevalence of scabies and other similar conditions, are maintained by the poor circumstances in which people have to live. He is convinced, by personally visiting the Maoris in their homes, that given decent facilities they can maintain as high a proportion of satisfactory houses as Europeans of equal economic status.

Nutrition.—Dr. Muriel Bell has maintained close collaboration with other Departments interested in nutrition and the food-supply of our people. The booklet, "Good Nutrition," has been revised, and a wartime edition is now in course of printing. The services of Dr. Bell and Miss Frengley, Dietitian, have been used for advice on dietaries of various institutions and authorities, and for teaching dietetics in training colleges. Nutrition charts were designed and made available to nursing training-schools, district health nurses, and others concerned in the teaching of dietetics.

Industrial Hygiene.—Dr. J. M. Davidson, on loan from the Ministry of Labour and National Service, London, arrived to take up duty as Industrial Hygienist to the Department. He is now engaged in making a survey of industry and their possible hazards.

Health Benefits.—No new health benefits were introduced during the year under the Social Security Act.

Cost of Benefits: The following is a statement of the expenditure on the various classes of benefits during the year, the figures for the previous year being shown in parentheses:—

Maternity benefit	£	
Hospitals	324,769	
Medical practitioners	167,272	
Nurses	12,027	
St. Helens hospitals	9,870	
Total	£513,938	(£505,224)
Medical practitioner services—	£	
Capitation fees	55,612	
General medical services	1,026,449	
Special arrangements	32,669	
Mileage	60,391	
Total	£1,175,121	(£1,016,052)
Hospital benefits—	£	
Public hospitals—		
In-patients	1,571,192	
Out-patients	73,138	
Private hospitals and approved institutions	283,065	
Mental hospitals	182,829	
Other institutions	55,184	
Total	£2,165,408	(£1,546,959)
Pharmaceutical supplies benefits	£	
Chemists and medical practitioners	722,172	
Institutions	40,027	
Total	£762,199	(£563,247)
X-ray diagnostic services	£109,435	(£88,588)
Massage benefits	£27,333	(£8,836 ; 6 months only)

Maternity Benefits: The existing scale of fees agreed to between the Hon. the Minister and the British Medical Association was intended to remain in force for two years. It has now been operative for four and a half years, and it was felt that a revision was expedient. Discussions are taking place between the representatives of the British Medical Association and officers of the Department.

General Practitioner Services: There has been a slight reduction in the number of persons receiving medical benefits (capitation scheme), but in general the medical practitioners who undertook to supply medical benefits have continued to do so in spite of the introduction of the fee-for-service scheme. Inquiry from capitation practitioners shows that individually they consider this type of medical practice to be superior to any other, and patients generally do not abuse their right to receive free medical attention on request.