

VI. MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

In accordance with the provisions of the Cook Islands Act, 1915, all Cook Islanders receive free medical and surgical treatment, both in their villages and in the hospital and the sanatorium. Native patients in the hospital and the sanatorium and all school-children receive free dental treatment.

The following summary shows the amounts expended on health services in recent years :—

—	1941-42.	1942-43.	1943-44.	1944-45.	1945-46.
Amount expended	£10,795	£10,370	£10,116	£12,724	£14,535
Population	13,962	14,079	14,150	14,506	15,005
Amount per head	15s. 5d.	14s. 9d.	14s. 4d.	17s. 6d.	19s. 4d.

Hospital statistics are tabulated hereunder :—

—	1941-42.	1942-43.	1943-44.	1944-45.	1945-46.
In-patients	355	405	570	446	469
Out-patients	4,556	12,541	8,574	8,603	6,895
Visits	1,020	1,915	1,382	1,374	1,145
Injections, all types	596	438	360	577	453
Anaesthetics—					
General	46	64	42	52	30
Local	184	340	152	336	377
Operations—					
Major	27	9	9	101	26
Minor	261	464	254	467	440
Confinements	42	24	30	63	43
Artificial pneumothorax	8	16
X-rays	68	173	31	39	77
Dental extractions	128	89	63	91	95

The Dental Department has treated patients as follows :—

—	1941-42.	1942-43.	1943-44.	1944-45.	1945-46.
Extractions	1,339	953	1,130	1,533	1,713
Fillings	157	935	1,964	1,382	915
Cleaning, &c.	235	157	37	38	239

General health throughout the group has been good. In February and March, 1946, there was an outbreak of cerebro-spinal fever at Atiu; fifteen cases had occurred, and there had been eight deaths up to the 31st March. Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro also suffered epidemics of trachoma in February and March, 1946. The regular R.N.Z.A.F. plane made a special trip in March to drop medical supplies by parachute at Atiu and Mauke. In March, also, the Acting Chief Medical Officer made a special trip by launch to Atiu, where he advised regarding the treatment of the cases of cerebro-spinal fever, and a Native medical practitioner was left there till the outbreak had subsided.

Poliomyelitis made its first recorded appearance in the Group with four cases in Rarotonga; no deaths occurred, and in two cases slight paralysis resulted. Strict quarantine precautions prevented the spread of the disease to other islands of the Group. Ten cases of Weil's disease were reported in Rarotonga in April, 1945, and many cases of pneumonia occurred during the months of December, 1945, and January and February, 1946.