

VI. MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The staff of this Department consists of two European Medical Officers, seven Native medical practitioners, a Hospital Matron, three European Sisters, 26 Native nurses, a European Dental Officer, and two Native Dental Nurses. Six Native Inspectors are also employed on mosquito-control.

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

The following summary shows the amount expended on health services during the past five years :—

—	1942-43.	1943-44.	1944-45.	1945-46.	1946-47.
Amount expended	£10,370	£10,116	£16,202	£24,535	£25,295
Population	14,079	14,150	14,506	15,005	14,821
Amount per head	14s. 9d.	14s. 4d.	£1 2s. 4d.	£1 12s. 8d.	£1 14s. 2d.

Hospital statistics for the same period are tabulated hereunder :—

—	1942-43.	1943-44.	1944-45.	1945-46.	1946-47.
In-patients	405	570	446	469	638
Out-patients	12,541	8,574	8,603	6,895	9,029
Visits	1,915	1,382	1,374	1,145	2,016
Injections, all types	438	360	577	453	348
Anæsthetics—					
General	64	42	52	30	99
Local	340	152	336	377	53
Operations—					
Major	9	9	101	26	43
Minor	464	254	467	440	109
Confinements	24	30	63	43	29
Artificial pneumothorax	16	12
X-rays	173	31	39	77	248
Dental extractions	89	63	91	95	32

The Dental Department has treated patients as follows :—

—	1942-43.	1943-44.	1944-45.	1945-46.	1946-47.
Extractions	953	1,130	1,533	1,713	828
Fillings	935	1,964	1,382	915	489
Cleaning, &c.	157	37	38	239	1,622

General health throughout the Group has been good. The outbreaks of poliomyelitis in Rarotonga, cerebro-spinal fever in Atiu, and trachoma in Atiu, Mauke, and Mitiaro mentioned in the last report died down early in the year under review. In June and July, 1946, influenza became epidemic in Rarotonga, and there were also some cases of chicken-pox and meningitis. A second wave of influenza occurred in August and a third wave in October, but neither of these was as severe as the first wave. In February and March, 1947, there was an epidemic of Bornholm disease or epidemic pleurodynia; the number of cases is not known, but it was widespread, and, fortunately, there was no mortality.

The Director, Division of Public Hygiene, New Zealand Department of Health, inspected Rarotonga and all other islands of the Lower Group in September.

Tuberculosis continues to be the main medical problem. The new sanatorium is in full operation and provides valuable training for Native nurses in the proper methods of handling tuberculosis cases. Patients themselves are taught how to live in their