

hospitals, and ignorance as to their causation, disappointment with the results of treatment, and the fact that these diseases (not being killing diseases) have no dramatic appeal has led to lack of interest being taken in them by hospitals and medical practitioners.

The economic loss to the country produced by these diseases is enormous. Not only do they cause diminished production as far as labour is concerned, but they also lead to a heavy demand on social security funds, and to considerable diversion of other labour to look after the sufferers. Finally they constitute a formidable incubus on the hospitals.

In 1947 the Sanatorium at Rotorua and the Bathhouse were transferred from the Tourist and Health Resorts Department to the Health Department, and this necessitated a re-orientation of ideas. The old-fashioned spa conception—a conception of treatment which has been responsible for the delayed knowledge of the treatment and causes of the rheumatic diseases—had to be abandoned, and the further exploitation of the mineral waters of Rotorua as miraculous cure-alls could not be condoned by the Health Department. A more rational and scientific outlook required to be developed.

On appointment, the Director of Physical Medicine inspected the resources of Rotorua and submitted a report to the Director-General in which he made the following recommendations :—

- (1) A centre should be established at Rotorua for the treatment of remedial cases of rheumatic diseases by every known method of treatment.
- (2) A residential school should be set up for the treatment, education, and training of cerebral palsy cases.
- (3) A hospital school should be incorporated for poliomyelitis cases.
- (4) A rehabilitation centre should be established for other physical disabilities.

After due consideration, these proposals were agreed to, and Cabinet gave formal approval to the expenditure upon the alterations, new buildings, and purchase of equipment. They authorized in principle the appointment of extra medical and nursing staff.

From 1st June, 1948, until 31st March, 1949, plans were discussed to give effect to these proposals. At the end of June, 1948, there were 36 servicemen in the hospital, and 18 male and 21 female patients were brought over from the old Sanatorium.

On the 30th December, 1948, the Services Convalescent Hospital received Royal permission to be renamed the "Queen Elizabeth Hospital." The admission of female patients to a building which had been designed for and used hitherto exclusively by males presented problems of organization, and some reconstruction was immediately necessary.

The new policy with regard to the treatment of rheumatic diseases and other disorders of the locomotor system was brought to the notice of medical practitioners and hospitals in the four main centres by addresses given by the Director. The proposals were well received by the hospitals and the B.M.A., and in November the inaugural meeting of the New Zealand Branch of the Empire Rheumatism Council was held at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Rotorua.

In co-operation with the various branches of the Crippled Children Society, clinics to examine cerebral palsy cases have been held at Dunedin, Invercargill, Nelson, and Wellington, and talks were given to the parents of these children at Christchurch and Wellington. The Director also examined some of these cases at the Wilson Home, Auckland. These examinations led to the somewhat unexpected discovery that only about 20 per cent. of the total number of cases were suitable for or required treatment at special residential training-schools. Taking the Crippled Children Society's figure of 500 as the number of cerebral palsy cases in New Zealand, this would mean that only about 100 need treatment in a residential training-school. The proposed school at Rotorua would have a maximum of 30 beds, while the Wilson Home will probably accommodate 20. New schools at Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, each of about