

An attempt has been made to have a more accurate issue of Practising Certificates, and with this object in view all practising nurses, as well as all public and private hospitals and Medical Officers of Health, were circularized. Notifications were also inserted in *Kai Tiaki*, the New Zealand nursing journal. The result was gratifying, although there are still many nurses who will not recognize their responsibility in this matter. For the current year ending 28th February, 1950, the number of Practising Certificates issued or renewed was 5,841, as against 3,612 last year. Approximately eighty per cent. of the nurses in practice hold both general and obstetric qualifications.

HOSPITAL STAFFING

The past year has been one of continued difficulties in regard to the number of registered nurses available for the many and constantly expanding services. This aspect of staffing has been more acute than that of applicants for training, largely for two reasons: firstly, the very high marriage rate, and, secondly, the large number of nurses proceeding abroad for further experience.

In regard to the first point, while young girls are trained to enter the nursing profession it is natural that there should be a high wastage by virtue of marriage. Very few continue to practise after marriage, and when they do, it is generally only on an hourly basis, without week-end duties.

In regard to the second point, there is throughout the world a general spirit of restlessness, and the fact that nurses may readily find work wherever they go makes travel attractive.

During the past two years almost the same number of overseas nurses have registered for work in New Zealand as New Zealand nurses have gone overseas. The majority of those coming to New Zealand have been Australians, but there are also a large number of British immigrants, in addition to Anglo-Indians, Anglo-Burmese, Dutch, Danish, Polish, and American nurses. In fact, never has there been so many overseas nurses practising in New Zealand as at present; however, the majority wish to see the country and do not stay long in any position. This, from the point of view of the stability of staff, is not satisfactory.

The placement and follow-up of the immigrant and overseas nurses has entailed a great deal of work for the Nursing Division. However, the result has been that many hospitals have been helped with staff.

A review of the hospital staffing situation shows that the training-schools have been able to maintain their position satisfactorily, and, in fact, slightly improve upon the position obtaining during the previous year. The small country hospitals were not so fortunate, but by the end of the year their position had improved also.

The following table, giving the occupied-bed rate of the training-schools during the past five years, shows a decrease in occupied beds for the last three years; this may be due to a decrease in Service patients:—

	1945.	1946.	1947.	1948.	1949.
General hospitals—					
Number of daily occupied beds ..	8,493	8,550	7,812.1	7,352.5	7,667.6
Number of registered nurses ..	1,500	1,347	1,199	1,221	1,428
Number of pupil-nurses ..	3,390	3,280	3,203	3,138	3,317

(For the year 1949 the number of nurses is taken as the average number employed during the year.)