

(5.) SANITARY CONDITION OF THE MAORIS.

The District Health Officer, Auckland, reports:—

The smallpox epidemic and the very widely diffused typhoid outbreaks among Natives have made the work of this branch exceptionally heavy. The number of smallpox cases dealt with was not great, but the method adopted—fortunately with great success—for stamping out the disease by means of universal vaccination entailed much detailed work, as shown in the section of this report dealing with smallpox.

Typhoid proved a much more difficult disease to combat. Some 250 cases are known to have occurred, and probably there were many others the existence of which, in accordance with Native custom, were concealed. At the following Native settlements outbreaks were dealt with:—

| | | |
|----------------|--|--------------------|
| Tauranga | .. Judea | January. |
| Upper Wanganui | .. Taumarunui, Manunui, and Kakahi | January–October. |
| Mangonui | .. Sweetwater and Awanui Dis- trict | July–October. |
| | Mangonui | November–December. |
| Whakatane | .. Poroporo | April–July. |
| Whangaroa | .. Matauri Bay | May–June. |
| Lower Waikato | .. Kohunga | July. |
| Hokianga | .. Waima | September. |
| Bay of Islands | .. Matarawa | October. |
| | Kaikohe | April. |
| Rotorua .. | .. Rotoiti-Ngongotohi and Ohi- nemutu | July–December. |
| Matamata | .. Okoroire and Putaruru | November–December. |

Thus the whole year round typhoid was epidemic. Eight temporary camps were established to deal with typhoid cases as follows:—

| | Cases. | |
|----------------|--------|-----------------|
| Judea .. | 5 | Nurse Anderson. |
| Poroporo .. | 10 | „ North. |
| Manunui .. | 5 | „ Moore. |
| Kakahi .. | 8 | „ Moore. |
| Rawene .. | 4 | „ Byrn. |
| Kaikohe .. | 4 | „ Byrn. |
| Kohunga .. | 6 | „ Grigor. |
| Matauri Bay .. | 5 | „ Byrn. |
| Matarawa .. | 20 | Miss Bagley. |

A camp hospital for the treatment of smallpox cases was established at Waimana in January, in charge of Nurse Taare.

A severe outbreak of measles accompanied with pneumonia occurred at Parenga in December.

As usual, a great deal of difficulty arose in getting the Natives to bring their sick into these camps, and still more when it was proposed to take the cases to general hospitals. This feeling was especially strong in the Taumarunui district, in which the Natives are particularly backward and ignorant. They even assaulted Nurse Moore on one occasion when the cases from the temporary camps at Manunui were being transferred to the Hamilton Hospital. The principal assailants contracted typhoid, and one of them subsequently died, so no legal action was taken in this instance; but two Natives who obstructed Inspector Calderwood were prosecuted and fined £1 5s. each.

The legislation requiring the registration of deaths among Natives is now in force, but permits of too much time elapsing between the death and the date of registration to be of any value for preventative purposes. A number of deaths probably are still unregistered.

Some apprehension was felt when recruiting for the Native Expeditionary Force began, owing to the spread of typhoid involving practically all Native settlements. A warning was issued, however, and the recruiting officers endeavoured to avoid drawing troops from the areas most in danger, and it served also to discourage Natives from crowding into the township.

Tohungaism is still widely practised, and often greatly hampers the work of the Department. Two cases were dealt with, both being Europeans. One, a Mrs. Hill, had for years practised exclusively among Maoris, and as a result certain cases of typhoid had not received proper attention. She was prosecuted under the Tohunga Suppression Act, and sentenced to six months imprisonment. The other case was that of a man named Hogg, who practised among the Natives in the Rotorua district and gave much trouble during the typhoid epidemics. He was prosecuted for representing himself to be a medical practitioner, and was fined £25 or given three months' imprisonment.

A good many changes and new appointments were made in the Native nursing staff during the year. Nurse McKinven, who succeeded Nurse Dawson, took up work in the Thames district, Nurse Moore was appointed to Upper Wanganui district, and Nurse Grigor to the Waikato district. Nurses Byrn, Taare, and Mataira resigned towards the end of the year, Nurse Ferguson taking up the work of the former at Bay of Islands in December. Nurse Stephenson's health unfortunately broke down in December, and Nurse Wright took her place at Rotorua. Nurse Grigor had the misfortune to contract first measles and then typhoid fever during the period she was dealing with the hospital camp at Kohunga, but fortunately made an excellent recovery.

The work performed by these nurses is often very trying, and, owing to the difficult conditions they have to nurse under, there is a certain amount of danger. They have to face long wearisome journeys, and often active opposition from the older type of Native. Even the younger and better educated Natives learn but slowly and uncertainly to adopt sanitary methods, so the nurses have