

On a beautiful site on Pukeroa Hill, commanding a fine view of the historic lake and surrounding country, stands the King George V Hospital, which has been erected on lines similar to the hospitals at Trentham, Featherston, and Hanmer. To this institution are sent the more convalescent of our sick and wounded. The Native as well as the European has tried to make the surroundings for our Empire defenders as congenial as possible, and billiard, recreation, and work rooms have been erected from subscriptions received from members of both races. It is hoped that the addition of workrooms may induce some of the more industriously inclined patients to acquire the rudiments of crafts and arts under the guidance of teachers from our technical schools, whose directors have generously placed their services at the disposal of the soldiers. It is indeed a somewhat non-exacting system under which the soldiers are housed, but nevertheless there is comparatively little tendency on the part of the soldier patients to abuse the privileges afforded them, and much are to be regretted the exaggerated reports that have appeared in the public Press as to the loose conduct of the men. Hard indeed would it be to the men if in their convalescence they had to submit to the exacting discipline that a certain section of the public appear to desire. The main thing is to get the men well, and so long as they conduct themselves as is to be expected of men of their stamp, who is to grudge the freedom allowed them?

That they are benefiting by the rest and general medical regime there is no shadow of a doubt; indeed, many of Dr. Herbert's results border on the miraculous. The decision of the Minister of Public Health to acquire these thermal resorts for our sick and wounded has been more than justified, and the expenditure may be regarded as a bagatelle to the results achieved under the care of Dr. Herbert and his devoted staff. Nor will the building be wasted, for we trust that in happier and more peaceful times these new structures at Rotorua and Hanmer will be used for "topping off" many a patient who might otherwise remain a very long time on his bed in a distant general hospital. Nevertheless it is with a feeling akin to relief that we turn our backs on Rotorua. Though the results of the treatment surpass belief, it is sad to see so many young lives crippled physically and mentally, and to hear from the nurses that robust as some of their patients may appear it often happens that in the dark watches of the night they cry out in their agony on account of dreams associated with their awful experiences of the past on that far-away and blood-stained peninsula.

A visit to these hospitals and a talk with the medical officers and nurses—aye, and with the patients themselves—will soon satisfy those interested that, though the discipline of this institution may seem somewhat lax to those accustomed to the discipline of ordinary hospitals, the medical authorities are nevertheless acting on sound grounds in their endeavour to remove from the minds of their men anything calculated even in the smallest degree to bring back the awful experiences and horrors of the past.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH GENERALLY.

##### *Births.*

The number of births registered during 1915 was 27,850, or 25·33 in every 1,000 persons living. The number is 488 less than for the year 1914, and the rate less than for the year 1914 by 0·66 per thousand. This reduction in the birth-rate, small as it may be, must be regarded as serious, especially in these momentous times. The number of male children born during 1915 was 14,415, and of female children 13,435.

##### *Deaths.*

Despite an unusual number of epidemics the general health of the Dominion has been good, the death-rate being 9·06 per 1,000 in 1915, as against 9·31 in 1914. The infantile mortality rate for New Zealand was 50·05 deaths per 1,000 births, the lowest hitherto recorded. The following table shows the rate of infantile mortality in New Zealand and four chief centres each year from 1905–1915:—

*Rates of Infantile Mortality in New Zealand and Four Chief Centres (Deaths under 1 Year of Age per 1,000 Births) each Year 1905–1915.*

| Year.      | New Zealand. | Auckland and Suburban Boroughs. | Wellington and Suburban Boroughs. | Christchurch and Suburban Boroughs. | Dunedin and Suburban Boroughs. |
|------------|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1905 .. .. | 67·52        | 91·52                           | 96·21                             | 88·99                               | 67·13                          |
| 1906 .. .. | 62·10        | 85·80                           | 71·88                             | 74·37                               | 72·60                          |
| 1907 .. .. | 88·79        | 97·19                           | 117·80                            | 126·16                              | 95·36                          |
| 1908 .. .. | 67·89        | 81·87                           | 81·67                             | 67·82                               | 74·54                          |
| 1909 .. .. | 61·60        | 61·85                           | 84·21                             | 62·78                               | 48·52                          |
| 1910 .. .. | 67·73        | 79·02                           | 84·59                             | 69·40                               | 79·08                          |
| 1911 .. .. | 56·31        | 63·02                           | 73·36                             | 62·90                               | 43·42                          |
| 1912 .. .. | 51·22        | 56·95                           | 61·32                             | 60·03                               | 38·11                          |
| 1913 .. .. | 59·17        | 80·81                           | 60·23                             | 63·49                               | 73·42                          |
| 1914 .. .. | 51·38        | 57·62                           | 82·57                             | 68·15                               | 54·28                          |
| 1915 .. .. | 50·05        | 71·67                           | 57·17                             | 54·24                               | 72·26                          |