

### MENTAL HOSPITALS.

The total expenditure for the year under this heading was £377,643, but the credits, mainly receipts for maintenance and sales of produce and stock, amounted to £115,905, leaving a net expenditure of £261,738, an increase of £70,934 over the previous year. Of this increase £31,721 was due to the advance in salaries and wages, and £39,213 is accounted for by the increased cost of supplies.

The average number of patients was one hundred more than for the previous year, and the last item divided by the average number in residence gives a cost-of-living increase of £8 8s. 5d. per head.

### PUBLIC HEALTH, HOSPITALS, AND CHARITABLE AID.

#### CHILD WELFARE.

An important step has been taken in the creation of the Division of Child Welfare. This branch has mainly for its object the dissemination of useful information regarding the health of the community, by means of suitable propaganda, lectures, and demonstrations. It will enforce the lessons of preventive medicine. So many diseases and physical ills may be avoided by early knowledge and simple treatment that it is obvious that the new division has a wide and important field of endeavour before it. Already 35,000 copies of a pamphlet containing instructions to prospective mothers have been distributed throughout the Dominion, and lectures, having for their object the instruction in mothercraft and child welfare, are being given in all the principal centres and in the schools.

Closely related to the work of the new division are the activities of the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children. This society has been substantially assisted by the Government, the grant for 1920-21 amounting to £10,920, as against £4,774 in 1918-19.

Under the provisions of the Health Act of 1920 the Division of School Hygiene and the Division of Dental Hygiene have been brought within the Department's activities.

The Act provides for the co-ordination of the Department and the local authorities in sanitary inspection and the prevention of infectious diseases. The quarantine stations have been put upon a much more efficient basis during the past year, and only a small expenditure will now be required for upkeep.

#### MEDICAL AND NURSING SERVICES FOR THE BACKBLOCKS.

Hospital Boards are being urged to make better provision for maternity work for the outlying portions of their districts, and to provide facilities in connection with cottage hospitals for maternity patients. The Act of last session gives the power to call upon Hospital Boards to provide the necessary medical and nursing services in the outlying portions of their districts, a matter which many Boards were inclined to neglect. Any expenditure in the above direction is contributed to by way of subsidy.

The better co-ordination of the nursing services, which are undertaken by various departmental, Hospital Board, or voluntary organizations is receiving attention. Such co-ordination is required to prevent overlapping of functions, particularly in the larger towns, also to enable nurses to be spared for outlying country districts where they are needed.

The necessity of securing a substantial decrease in the figures of maternity mortality is fully recognized, and measures are being undertaken in this direction.

#### CONSUMPTIVE SANATORIA.

The Pukeora Military Sanatorium has been taken over by this Department, and will provide ample accommodation for all male cases in the North Island. Steps are accordingly being taken to close Te Waikato Sanatorium, which is badly situated and expensive to administer. The Otaki Sanatorium has for some time been devoted to the treatment of female patients. In the South Island the North Canterbury Hospital Board Sanatorium can accommodate all cases from Canterbury and the northern parts of the South Island; and an endeavour is being made to establish, with the co-operation of the various Boards concerned, a sanatorium in Central Otago for the southern part of the Island.