

PART IV.—DENTAL HYGIENE.

In connection with the work of my Division I beg to submit a report for the year ending the 31st March, 1928.

SECTION 1.—STAFF, CLINICS, ETC.

Staff.—The allocation of the Staff of the Division is as follows: Wellington—Mr. J. L. Saunders, B.D.S., Deputy Director, Division of Dental Hygiene; Mr. R. D. Elliott, Inspecting Dental Officer; Mr. J. B. Bibby, Clinical Demonstrator; Mr. A. D. Brice, B.D.S., Clinical Demonstrator; Miss E. M. Haines, Senior Dental Nurse.

In the field ten dental officers and sixty-one dental nurses, stationed as follows: Dental officers—One at North Auckland, one at Edendale, one at Nelson, one at Motueka, one at Christchurch, one at Timaru, one at Hokitika, one at Oamaru, one at Dunedin, one at Rarotonga. Dental nurses—two at Auckland, one at Ponsonby, one at Avondale, two at Grey Lynn, one at Dargaville, one at Whangarei, one at Papakura, one at Paeroa, one at Tauranga, one at Huntly, two at Hamilton, one at Cambridge, one at Te Awamutu, one at Te Kuiti, one at Ohakune, one at Wanganui, two at Palmerston North, one at Dannevirke, two at New Plymouth, one at Eltham, one at Feilding, two at Napier, one at Gisborne, one at Waipukurau, one at Hastings, one at Hawera, one at Pahiataua, two at Masterton, one at Lower Hutt, one at Nelson, two at Blenheim, one at Christchurch, one at Beckenham, one at Christchurch East, one at Woolston, one at St. Albans, two at Westport, one at Greymouth, one at Temuka, one at Timaru, one at Ashburton, one at Oamaru, one at Mosgiel, one at Dunedin Central, one at Dunedin South, two at Invercargill, one at Balclutha, one at Gore, one at Tapanui, one at Clyde, one at Otautau.

Staff in Training.—There are at the 31st March, 1928, sixty-seven probationer dental nurses undergoing training at the Department's training-school in Wellington. Of these, thirty-two are in the second year of their training, and thirty-five are new appointees who have only recently taken up duty. Twenty-five dental nurses who completed their training during March have all been allocated to school dental clinics in various parts of the Dominion, and will have left the training-school within the next few weeks. In accordance with the usual custom, the final examination of these twenty-five dental nurses was conducted by an outside examiner, Mr. Millen Paulin, B.D.S., of Wellington, acting on this occasion. The examination was held on the 5th, 6th, and 7th March. That the standard of training is being maintained at a satisfactory level is shown by the following extract from the examiner's report: "Having acted in the capacity of examiner for the probationers at the Dental Clinic in their final year, I wish to put on record my appreciation of the very high standard of their work, especially so the practical side. Those responsible for so high a standard of excellence are to be congratulated."

The primary examination (first-year probationers) was held on the 16th and 17th November, 1927, Dr. M. H. Watt and Dr. Ada Paterson being the examiners. There were thirty-one candidates, of whom twenty-nine were successful. The remaining two have since passed a special examination.

New Clinics.—Since the 31st March, 1927, new clinics have been established at the following places: Grey Lynn, Paeroa, Tauranga, Cambridge, Te Kuiti, Eltham, Feilding, St. Albans, Ashburton, Dunedin South, Otautau. During the next few weeks clinics will be opened at Henderson, Onehunga, Morrinsville, Thames, Marton, Greytown, New Brighton, Lyttelton, Waimate, Takaka, Reefton, Palmerston South, and Winton. The new clinics will be situated in buildings built or altered according to plans drawn up by the Education Department in consultation with this Division.

Treatment performed during 1927.—The following is a summary of the operations performed from the 1st January to the 31st December, 1927, by dental officers, dental nurses, and probationers in training: Fillings, 116,916; extractions, 66,523; minor operations, 76,656; total operations, 260,095. Of the above treatment the dental nurses in the field, now numbering sixty-one, have performed the following: Fillings, 79,517; extractions, 78,230; minor operations, 51,802; total operations, 179,549. The total treatment performed by dental nurses since first nurses qualified in May, 1923, is as follows: Fillings, 164,332; extractions, 106,309; minor operations, 119,397; total operations, 390,038.

SECTION 2.—PROPAGANDA, ETC.

I am pleased to be able to report that there are signs of good results accruing from our efforts in the past with regard to the above. From time to time letters are being received on the subject stating the benefit that has been derived from carrying out the Department's advice. Letters of inquiry, too, are being received, indicating that the public are becoming more alive to the question of prevention of disease. There is still much to be desired, however, in this direction, as the amount of recurrent treatment clearly indicates. There can be no doubt that the majority of parents do not sufficiently realize their responsibilities in this connection, and would seem to place the whole onus of caring for the teeth of their children on the State. The result of this, of course, means that the service cannot be extended so widely or so rapidly as it otherwise would. Along with myself, the members of the staff take every opportunity of addressing meetings of parents, School Committees, and other organizations, whilst the dental nurses are urged in the course of their daily work to impart to children and parents the elements of prevention.

Inspection.—I should like to record my appreciation of the manner in which Mr. Elliott, Inspecting Dental Officer, has carried out his arduous duties during the year.

Equipment.—During my visit to England I spent a considerable amount of time with manufacturers and dental-supply houses in an endeavour to standardize our equipment, and in this effort I was successful. I am pleased to be able to say that a considerable saving has been effected thereby.