

TABLE D.—VENEREAL-DISEASES CLINICS.—CASES TREATED DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1931.

	Auckland.		Wellington.		Christchurch.		Dunedin.		Totals.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Number of persons dealt with at or in connection with the out-patient clinic for the first time and found to be suffering from—										
Syphilis	167	62	75	44	22	9	26	13	290	128
Soft sore	9	..	17	..	4	..	..	..	30	..
Gonorrhœa	572	137	335	86	279	88	78	52	1,264	363
No venereal disease	118	47	66	42	25	9	14	9	223	107
Total attendance of all persons at the out-patient clinics who were suffering from—										
Syphilis	2,236	1,113	2,516	1,209	1,002	713	1,076	773	6,830	3,808
Soft sore	131	..	74	..	36	..	..	..	241	..
Gonorrhœa	18,385	1,678	16,650	2,561	8,466	4,389	4,332	3,172	47,833	11,800
No venereal disease .. .. .	..	..	174	72	85	21	21	7	280	100
Aggregate number of in-patient days of treatment given to persons suffering from—										
Syphilis	694	341	370	..	..	..	..	..	1,064	341
Gonorrhœa	1,451	456	2,519	..	..	..	..	..	3,970	456

A comparison of this table with that for last year (1930) shows that at the Auckland clinic there was an increase in new cases of syphilis of seventy-eight for the year and at the Wellington clinic seventy. This is an unpleasant fact, and the Medical Officers of Health are endeavouring to ascertain the cause of this increase. As conjectures it is possible that owing to straightened circumstances a greater proportion of sufferers, some of whom formerly went to private practitioners, &c., now attend the public clinics, or it may be that one of the effects of the depression is to increase the incidence of venereal disease. These clinics commenced operations in 1919. In an endeavour to gauge the significance of this apparent increase I have tabulated hereunder the annual attendances at public clinics (whole Dominion) of new cases of syphilis and of gonorrhœa commencing with the year 1922, by which time these public clinics were in full swing and the immediate effects of the war may be said to have passed.

Year.	Persons attending Public Clinics in New Zealand for the first time, and found to be suffering from			
	Gonorrhœa.		Syphilis.	
	Number.	Rate per 1,000 of Mean Population.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 of Mean Population.
1922	1,039	0·83	399	0·32
1923	986	0·77	323	0·25
1924	1,129	0·87	240	0·18
1925	1,176	0·88	255	0·19
1926	1,454	1·07	268	0·20
1927	1,584	1·15	245	0·18
1928	1,617	1·16	220	0·16
1929	1,855	1·32	308	0·22
1930	1,789	1·26	269	0·19
1931	1,617	1·12	418	0·29

This table shows for new cases of syphilis that expressed as a rate per 1,000 of mean population the peak year was 1922, but last year there was a sharp rise in incidence. In respect of gonorrhœa there has been a progressive increase from 1922, reaching its peak in 1929, since when the position has eased somewhat. The social conditions of the people (late marriages, &c.), and the serious effects of these two diseases are such that neither the Department nor the Hospital Boards can afford to view an increase in incidence with equanimity.