

## PART V.—DENTAL HYGIENE.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the work of the Dental Division for the year ending 31st March, 1936:—

The work of the School Dental Service has been maintained with some difficulty during the year. The reduced numbers entered for training during the last few years have made it increasingly difficult to maintain the staff in the field at the necessary strength, and had not several married ex-dental nurses been available to assist the Department, there would have been no option but to abandon the work in certain districts until such time as more staff was available. As it is, the work at several centres is tending to fall into arrears.

The situation has been further complicated by the decision to re-admit five-year-old children to the primary schools this year. Consequent on the large influx of these children at all centres when the schools reopened in February, 1936, the dental nurses are working under high pressure, and it will be some time before the initial treatment is completed for all this year's new entrants. Many centres require assistance, but this cannot be given until more staff is available. The problem is a serious one, for the reason that the longer revision is delayed, the greater is the amount of treatment required. Dental defects are found to develop to an extent out of all proportion to the time involved. Since the number of patients allotted to each dental nurse is based on revision at six-monthly intervals, the position of the work becomes progressively worse if, through reason of excessive numbers of patients, the revision falls into arrears, and no assistance is forthcoming. Thus the necessity for building up an adequate reserve of dental nurses is apparent. When not required in the field, the nurses comprising the reserve would be stationed at the Wellington Clinic, and their services utilized with advantage for the treatment of Wellington patients. The position will be relieved in due course by the decision to appoint an increased number of student dental nurses in April, 1936. Fifty-one nurses, including two specially selected Maoris, will enter the training-school then, but their services will not, of course, be available in the field before April, 1938.

The service is now in operation at 252 centres, of which 144 are main centres and 108 are sub-bases. A list of treatment centres is included in this report. No new districts have been opened up during the year, but a certain amount of local extension and reorganization has been carried out in connection with established clinics. Sub-bases have been established at Glen Eden and Mamaku, and are treated by the officers in charge of Henderson and Rotorua Clinics respectively. For convenience of operation, the main treatment centre at Te Kopuru and its sub-base at Ruawai are now organized as sub-bases of Dargaville, which has been raised to the status of a double clinic. Shirley, which was previously the sub-base of St. Albans, is now operated as a main treatment centre. To further facilitate the work, a regrouping of schools under treatment has been carried out at Palmerston North, a new clinic having been established at Terrace End School for the treatment of schools in that district which were formerly treated at the Palmerston North City clinics. No increase of staff was involved in any of these reorganizations.

## STAFF OF DENTAL DIVISION.

On the 31st March, 1936, the staff, disposed as under, numbered fourteen dental officers, 219 dental nurses, and one dental attendant:—

	Dental Officers.	School Dental Nurses.	Dental Attendant.
Director .. .. .	1	..	..
District Dental Superintendents .. .. .	4*	..	..
Administrative and training staff, Wellington Clinic ..	5	2	..
Staff of school dental clinics—			
Auckland District .. .. .	2†	50	..
Wellington District .. .. .	2	48	..
Canterbury District .. .. .	..	38	..
Otago District .. .. .	..	24	1
In training .. .. .	..	53‡	..
On extended leave .. .. .	..	4	..
	14	219	1

\* The Dental Superintendent of the Otago District is also in charge of the Central Clinic, Dunedin.

† Includes two Native Dental Officers working among Native schools in Bay of Plenty and East Coast districts.

‡ Of this number, twenty-four will shortly complete their training and will be drafted for service in the field. The appointment of fifty-one additional student dental nurses has been authorized and is being proceeded with.