

New Zealand Nurses' Christian Union

TRAVELLING SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Leaving Wellington on October 15th I visited twenty-one Hospitals in the North Island, as well as many other institutions. In many places I was the guest of the Hospital, a privilege which was invaluable for the opportunity it gave of getting into touch.

Matrons and staff everywhere were most kind, but the interest in the Nurses' Christian Union was very varied. In some places there seems no interest whatever in the ideals of N.C.U., but such apathy was easily outweighed by the warm welcome extended by the Branches already established, while there are still other Hospitals where, though there is undoubtedly much interest, no one apparently cared to take the lead.

All Branches hold a weekly meeting, mostly for Bible Study, some for intercession. Also they have used various books, and methods of study.

I wish I could give exact numbers of members, but I find these, nearly everywhere, extremely difficult to get. So often nurses attend meetings more or less regularly without becoming members, and probably these include many the Union would seek to influence. I give approximate figures, less, I think, than the correct ones. Of the North Island Branches, which have been carrying on since Nurse Laurenson's pioneer visits two years ago, there are seven:—Dannevirke (12), Hamilton (19), Thames (16), Waikato (6), Wellington (25), Auckland (7), Napier (Private Nurses) (12), Wanganui (individual members) (8), Stratford (3), Hawera (5), Whangarei (new branch) (12). Besides these Hospital groups there are about 70 individual members—Matrons, retired and married nurses, Sisters in private work or with private hospitals, Plunket Nurses.

In the South Island there are fourteen training schools; of these Dunedin has a very old-established Bible Class

dating back twelve or fourteen years at least, under various leaders and affiliated (until last year) with the Australian Nurses' Christian Movement to which we owe much.

Christchurch Hospital also has had various Study Groups for a number of years past, the present one placing more emphasis on intercessory prayer. Of the other Hospitals ten formed Study Circles after Miss Laurenson's visits.

Invercargill (6), Riverton (6) have carried on ever since, whilst Timaru (12), Oamaru (9), Westport (5), Nelson (12) are making fresh starts this year. Three others have lapsed entirely, but it is on account of the very great difficulty of getting regular meetings in the smaller Hospitals, where the staff is always on call for emergency work.

For some reason which I have not been able to discover for myself, there has been very little response in the South Island in the matter of individual membership.

The above gives the Union a membership of about 240 (at the least), but I am sure the number interested is much larger than that. None can deny that the difficulties to be overcome are great, and few outside Hospital life could value how much enthusiasm and dogged perseverance and unwavering faith have gone to the building up of our Branches.

Even in the big centres the changes of duty make attendance uncertain. This is also an obstacle in the way of having outside leaders; for anyone hesitates to ask the time and interest of some busy person for a gathering that may almost vanish any time. Another difficulty much more marked in the big hospitals is the difference between Seniors, Juniors, Probationers, and so on. This difference does not exist for the "outside leader," but it is a very real obstacle for the members to