

Some Remarks on the Treatment of Tuberculosis Amongst the Maoris at Tuahiwi Park.

(Read at the Canterbury Division's Meeting.)

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In 1912, on account of the prevalence of phthisis amongst the Maoris at Tuahiwi, it was deemed advisable to try and do something for the native race. Accordingly, at the instigation of the Health Department, Drs. Blackmore and Pearson were deputed to examine the Maoris, and, having done that, to report as to what, in their opinion, was the best course to pursue. These gentlemen examined the Maoris in June, 1912, and they found phthisis very rampant. They found practically the whole number of the children were affected, viz., 37 boys and 30 girls. *Inter alia*, they recommended that a trained nurse should be appointed to the pah. The Health Department carried this recommendation into effect, and a trained nurse was appointed, and took up her duties in July, 1912. This was followed immediately by better hygienic conditions. For instance, with regard to sleeping accommodation, the parents were made to understand they could not be allowed to have three and four of their children sleeping in one bed, as had been the habit heretofore. The filthy habits of chewing gum, and then passing it on from mouth to mouth, and also passing cigarettes from mouth to mouth, were stopped. They were also given instructions in feeding their babies. The children attending school were provided with a place out-of-doors, so that they could be taught in the fresh air. I might mention, incidentally, that this latter is not taken advantage of as it ought to be. The injection of tuberculin was strongly recommended. This was provided by the Health Department, and the injections have taken place practically once a week since July, 1912.

Although it is stated that tuberculin is not so effectual in pulmonary phthisis as in other forms of tuberculosis, I am strongly of opinion that the injections of tuberculin have been beneficial to the Maori race at Tuahiwi, and I feel that, if we are really sincere about preserving the Maori race, this injection of tuberculin will be found to be one of the factors at our disposal. Of course, it might be said that the other precautions we have taken have been beneficial. No doubt they have. It might, however, be said that the question of living under proper hygienic conditions, under the supervision of trained nursing, has been tried before at Tuahiwi, but the results have not been so encouraging as they have been with the addition of the tuberculin treatment.

Where enlarged tonsils and adenoids have been found to exist, these have been removed, and these cases have been found to do remarkably well after the removal of the tonsils and adenoids.

It behoves us very seriously to try and stamp out this disease amongst the Maori race, because by so doing we are removing a disease that is a menace to the white race in New Zealand. I feel sure we are on right lines in the treatment that has been adopted, as is well exemplified in the last examination of the Maoris by Dr. Blackmore on April 17th, 1914.

Let us compare the results of Dr. Blackmore's examination in June, 1912, and those of his examination in April, 1914.

In June, 1912, 37 boys and 30 girls examined; all affected.

In April, 1914, 19 boys and 17 girls examined. Out of these, 12 boys and 11 girls were declared to be quite well. The rest were improving.