



HISTORICAL STORY

In 1923, in the last years of her life, Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert established a Nurses Training School at Our Lady's Home of Compassion, Island Bay, Wellington. Prior to this Suzanne and the sisters had completed a course with the newly formed St John Ambulance Association. Suzanne was determined that her sisters receive the best possible training to care for those in need. It was important to her that the training was recognised by the State. In that year, 12 sisters passed, two with honours. This year we celebrate the 100-Year Anniversary of the first nurses training class.

The following are excerpts from 'The Story of Suzanne Aubert' by Jesse Munro:

From Chapter 20, page 385:

"She had the backing of lay and medical officialdom. On 11 April 1922, Suzanne had written a long letter to the Minister of Health, C.J. Parr, asking for the Home of Compassion to be recognised as a training hospital:

In order to ensure the efficiency and permanence of the Institution, it is absolutely necessary to train its Sisters for the present and the future. We therefore, humbly beg you, Sir for your benevolent consideration of our petition to be allowed to give our own Sisters only (that is to say, only the members of our Institute) the hospital training without which it is impossible to carry on efficiently or extend our own special work'.⁶⁸

Footnote 68: 13 April 1921, Hospital Training School Correspondence, 1910-59 HOC A

And from Chapter 20, page 386:

"Sister Clotilde as matron began giving regular lectures. Doctors came free of charge to give lectures more formally than before. There was now an 'Honorary Medical Staff': Drs Whyte, Corkill, Lynch, Hardwick-Smith, Shirer, Roche-Kelly, Rhind, and several others. Unofficial exams, similar to the national ones were set and marked on a volunteer basis by Edith Sealy, former matron of Otaki hospital, helped by Cecilia McKenny. Like the working bees, it was once more a case of people wanting something and making it happen.

Dr Thomas Valentine, the Director- General of Health, supported the experiment and helped work out the details."