NURSES STAY CLOSE TO HOME

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The trend for large numbers of New Zealand nurses to travel overseas has reversed, according to the latest analysis of statistics.

Fewer registered nurses and midwives left New Zealand in the 12 months to the end of June than in the previous year. The net migration loss to June 30, 1982, was 93 compared with 479 in the previous 12 month period.

For the year to the end of June, 990 registered nurses and midwives arrived in New Zealand and 1083 departed. The figures are for nurses who expressed their wish to settle in or to leave New Zealand for 12 months or more.

The executive director of the New Zealand Nurses' Association, Miss Shona Carey, said nurses were just like any other group in the community wanting to see the world.

Coming Back

But, she added, fewer were leaving while the numbers returning were about the same.

Most registered nurses arriving in the country would be New Zealand nurses re-entering, as overseas qualified registered nurses now required Health Department support before they were permitted to enter New Zealand to practise as nurses.

That requirement has led to a reduction in numbers gaining New Zealand registration. In the year ending March 31, 1982, 372 overseas registered nurses were granted registration in New Zealand — 82 fewer than in the previous 12 months.

Of the 912 New Zealand nurses who had applied for registration overseas to the year ending March 31, almost 70 per cent were going to practise in the United Kingdom.

Seven Left

"There has been much public debate on the shortage of practising midwives in New Zealand, which appears to be more of a geographical or maldistribution problem than anything else," said Miss Carey.

"It would seem from the statistical figures that overseas registered midwives have been coming to work in New Zealand.

"In the 12 months to June, 1982, 22 midwives arrived while seven departed, compared with the previous year when 26 midwives entered New Zealand while 15 departed."