

Blame has been cast on us for not quarantining the whole of the troops; however, we had no accommodation left on the island, and in view of the outcry elsewhere when the men were placed in temporary accommodation it is evident that dissatisfaction would have arisen whatever course was pursued. Had they been strictly confined to the vessel a very much wider outbreak of the disease would have occurred amongst them, and in view of the insanitary conditions many serious developments were likely to have arisen, all of which would have been laid at our door. Measles was already present in Auckland, and, all things considered, I do not think we should have been justified in taking so unusual a step as to enforce the strictest quarantine regulations for such a disease. Had strict discipline obtained we should have been in a better position to deal with the emergency. Great difficulty was experienced in finding accommodation for the sick troopers who had landed either as belonging to Auckland or who were there without leave. Arrangements were made with some of the private hospitals to receive the non-infectious cases when the District Hospital was unable to receive more. In one case a bed was purchased by the Department and sent to the hospital to enable them to accommodate a case of pneumonia. Some of the hospital cases were very severe, and three deaths occurred from pneumonia. On Motuihi we were more fortunate, and all the sixty cases treated there made a good recovery.

Feeling dissatisfied after a few days with the management of affairs at Motuihi, I obtained permission to replace the military staff by a civilian one. Accordingly, Dr. Swale and four nurses were appointed, as also a clerk, dispenser, cook, wardman, and laundress. The greatest watchfulness had to be taken to preserve discipline with the troopers, many of whom had the most primitive notions of order and cleanliness, and soon altered the faultless state in which the caretaker had kept the building prior to their arrival. As the cases were discharged the staff was reduced from time to time, but it was not till the end of September that the island was finally evacuated.

The resources of our office were strained to the uttermost by the extra work caused by the arrival of these troops. Hundreds of telegrams were sent in reply to inquiries from friends; stores had to be arranged for and sent to the island, letters forwarded, also a generous supply of books and periodicals supplied by sympathisers in Auckland. The Quarantine Station was visited at first daily by Dr. Sharman or myself. Later the visits were reduced to once or twice a week. The accounts for stores, drugs, salaries, and so forth, occupied and kept the office busy till well on into November.

The lack of wharfage accommodation at the Quarantine Station is a matter for serious consideration, as also the need for a steam disinfecting plant. One lesson learned from our experiences at the island was that such a site would be useless for the treatment of infectious diseases arriving from the mainland, as at many times days would elapse before sick persons could be conveyed there with any safety.

Owing to small-pox, one vessel, the "Wakanui," was placed in quarantine for a short time; but on visiting the vessel we found that quarantine had already been performed at Sydney, where most of those on board had been vaccinated. After the remainder were vaccinated by Dr. Sharman pratique was given.

Owing to small-pox arising in Melbourne and Sydney, special precautions were taken during October, November, and December as regards vessels from those ports.

Sanitary Inspection.

It is unnecessary to enlarge on the need for better inspection. In the country districts generally there is none. In some instances the County Engineer acts in this capacity; but naturally his time is much occupied with other matters. In Waitemata County residents were appointed in various districts to assume the duties when required. In the suburbs and small country boroughs the clerk or roadman has the billet of Inspector of Nuisances tacked on to his other duties. Nowhere but in the city is there proper inspection by a man specially trained in the work. Few districts could afford it.

With a view to overcoming this latter difficulty, an effort was made to get the immediate suburbs of the city to combine into one district, and the Road Boards forming the remainder of Eden County into another district, for the purpose of obtaining such inspection. The scheme met with no support, however. The suburban bodies would not consider it, being quite satisfied with present arrangements. At a meeting of the outlying Boards called for the purpose of considering the scheme only five of the thirteen were represented; some did not even reply to my letter. Those willing to join were too few to be able to offer pay sufficient to attract the class of man required. The scheme therefore had to be abandoned.

It is greatly to be regretted that there is so much ignorance as to the functions and uses of sanitary inspection. The public do not realise how much depends on having drains laid properly, plumbing done according to a standard, water-supplies protected, and so forth. It is annoying to find all over the district, in town and country, new houses being built with the faults of the Middle Ages reproduced. In this connection, however, it is satisfactory to record one advance which may have a wide influence for good. I refer to the classes at the Technical Institute, reorganized and modernised by the Director, Mr. George. Classes for plumbing—practical and theoretical—have now been started. In Mr. Haynes, City Sanitary Inspector, an able instructor has been found, and when the civic by-laws make it necessary for plumbers wishing to register, and applicants for the post of Inspector, to show certificates of having passed examinations of this and kindred institutions we shall have a very different class of work from the present.

It is, I think, a matter worthy of consideration whether the Government should not establish a State examination in sanitation, which applicants for Sanitary-Inspectorship would be required to pass, after attending a specified course of instruction in such an institution as the Technical School. Holders of recognised English and colonial certificates would, of course, be exempt. A State qualification in plumbing would also be valuable.