

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE BY THE OFFICE.

Office-work.

I cannot but feel that an undue proportion of my time is taken up in the office, while much practical work has to go untouched. It is difficult to see how this can be avoided, since reports have to be written and letters answered, and a considerable portion of the day taken up with interviews. Were it not for the able assistance of Mr. Lepplatrier in the routine work of the office—the notices to local bodies *re* disinfection, the keeping of accounts, distribution of vaccine, and so forth—the work could not be overtaken. Could one feel that the energy expended was producing practical results in like proportion, there would be less reason for dissatisfaction. The following matters occupied a large share of attention, and may be specially mentioned:—

Plague Precautions.—Examination of passengers, collection of deposits, and other matters connected with shipping. On shore suspected cases had to be investigated and precautions taken.

Infectious Diseases.—Notices to local bodies issued, 605.

Accounts for medical men re notifications, 449.

The *correspondence over the Infectious Diseases Hospital* scheme was enormous. Meetings had to be attended, plans and sites inspected, and so on.

The handing-over of the care of infectious diseases to this Department has naturally resulted in a great increase of work, though this has been greatly lightened by the able efforts of Dr. Woodward, Medical Officer in charge.

The *Sanatorium at Cambridge* in itself causes a formidable amount of work—applicants for treatment to be written to or examined, the domestic staff to be advertised for, and applicants interviewed, goods ordered, and so forth.

The *invalid troopers* at the Quarantine Station occupied most of our energies for many weeks, and doubled our correspondence; while the accounts to be kept alone formed a large item.

Special investigations were made on the following subjects:—

Plague Suspects.—Fifteen cases examined, three proving to be true plague; and a case of mortality among rats and mice was inquired into.

The *epidemic of gastro-enteritis* necessitated an extensive correspondence. Foodstuffs were examined, sufferers questioned, and medical men interviewed.

Outbreaks of typhoid at Wairangi and Hamilton and Bay of Islands were specially investigated, and of *scarlet fever* at Kawakawa.

In addition to this 279 case of typhoid, scarlet fever, and diphtheria were inquired into.

The *leper case* at Wairangi was visited several times, and his movements traced, and efforts made to provide for his safe accommodation. Several suspected cases were visited by Dr. Pomare.

Inspection of Food.—This subject has not received the attention it deserves. The methods employed in the conveyance and storage of meat leave much room for improvement. My attention was drawn to the dirty habit of many butchers of using old newspapers to wrap the meat, sausages, &c., delivered to customers.

Milk-inspection remains unsatisfactory, as the action of the Stock Department has been limited to dairy-farms, while the powers of local bodies as to the retail trade require defining. The better disposal of the wastings from creameries should be attempted, as a nuisance is often produced. Two dairymen were examined at the instance of the Dairy Inspector in Auckland on account of suspected tuberculosis.

Samples of foods suspected of adulteration, taken at our instance by the police, and submitted to Mr. Pond for analysis, were,—Cream of tartar, 3; flour, 3.

Foodstuffs condemned as unfit for food and destroyed:—Salt fish, 20 kegs; fowls exposed for sale, 8.

Prosecutions were undertaken on behalf of the Department as follows:—Infringement of quarantine regulations, 2; unlicensed establishment of an offensive trade, 1 (in another case the proprietor removed his premises to avoid prosecution); orders to remove insanitary dwellings, 2; insanitary premises, 1.

Notices re suggested sanitary improvements have been issued as follows: To private individuals, 132; to local authorities—General 158, *re* disinfection 605.

Special reports on the following subjects have been prepared:—

Sanitary Inspections.—I have not had time to make as many personal visits to the various districts or to individual cases as I should wish. Exclusive of Inspector Winstanley's work, the following inspections have been made during the year: Private houses, 90; houses inspected and condemned, 34; house-drainage, 30; *re* drainage of districts, &c., 12; *re* water-supply, 4; nuisances, refuse-tips, &c., 12; offensive trades, 2; insanitary stables, 13; piggeries, 2; dairies, creameries, &c., 12; shops, 4; slaughterhouses, 3; *re* infectious disease, 10 houses; schools, colleges, &c., 10; hotels and boardinghouses, 12.

Special inspections have been made as follows:—

Twelve *workshops, factories, and bikehouses* have been visited. This has been chiefly at the instance of Mr. Ferguson, Inspector of Factories, whose supervision of sanitary matters in this connection is admirable. One could wish in other matters for the direct powers over factories given to the Health Department through the Inspector.

A complaint *re* dust from the emery wheel at the Newmarket Railway Workshop was inquired into.

The *sanitary condition* of the Auckland Gaol; the Costley Home; the Maori Hostelry, Parnell; the Old Persons' Refuge, Thames; the Costley Institute; the Orphanage, Parnell; and the Mount Albert Industrial School, formed subjects of investigation.

The *sanitary aspect* of Otorohanga Township was inquired into and reported on.