

cannot be properly cleansed; the milk is carried in ordinary luggage-vans, and very often manipulated on the open station or public road. Assuredly we are very far from perfect in our handling of milk. To supply a city like London with clean, fresh milk, when it has sometimes to be carried hundreds of miles, may offer a task of some difficulty, but surely we could manage it in New Zealand. If the people would only withdraw their eyes from Timbuctoo and cease the manufacture of flannel waistcoats for people who can never wear them, they would see in the Present treatment of milk a most important work. It is idle to fight for theoretical excellence while those who should be our future citizens are poisoned through carelessness. To see, as can be seen any day at Thorndon Station, milk being transferred from can to can, open to all the dust and dirt that blows about, to witness the feeble efforts made to wash the cans with a quart or so of water tumbled from one can to another, ought to be enough to touch the heart of every father and mother. Children depend, or ought to depend, almost entirely upon milk for their food. Milk, of all foodstuffs, is the most susceptible of deterioration, and yet the conditions under which a large quantity of the milk is handled are such as to prevent any possibility of its reaching the consumer in anything like a pure state.

I am glad to say that many public men are beginning to take an interest in this matter. The Christchurch City Council went to great trouble to consider the question of establishing a municipal clearing-house or the vesting of the control in the hands of a company such as I advocated in a previous report. But for the fact that they considered that fresh legislation was necessary in order to make the scheme a success, the first municipally controlled milk-supply would have been an accomplished fact. It is idle for a municipality to erect cool-chambers, screening, filtering, and pasteurising apparatus, if any milkman is permitted to sell within the municipal area. Power ought to be given to municipalities to say that no milk can be sold in their districts unless it has passed through the appointed conduit.

The Mayor of Auckland, Mr. A. M. Myers, has gone carefully into this matter, and I anticipate that great good will result. His Worship the Mayor of Wellington and his Councillors have been considering, along with the question of a municipal market for perishable foodstuffs, the matter of establishing the municipal control of the sale of milk. If I may be permitted, I would like to mention the names of Councillors Murdoch, Frost, and Godber in this relation. My idea would be, as I set out in a previous report, that in all towns of, say, 4,000 inhabitants or over the municipality itself should set up a clearing-house for milk or hand over their power to a company, and should prohibit any milk being sold in their district which had not passed through the clearing-house. I see no reason why the procedure so ably carried out by the Stock Department with respect to meat should not obtain with respect to the milk consumed by us in New Zealand. Why should not every town large enough to have a market for perishable foodstuffs not do as is done on the Continent? Let fish, fruit, milk, vegetables, &c., be sold only from properly constructed buildings and under proper supervision.

Last year 70 out of every 1,000 male children born, and 54 out of every 1,000 female children died before attaining the age of one year. That is, 1 in every 14 boys born, and 1 in every 18 girls died within twelve months of their birth. Now, though this infant-mortality is low compared with England and Wales (138 per 1,000), France (144 per 1,000), Italy (168 per 1,000), or Hungary (with 212 per 1,000), yet an analysis of the ailments which bring about the deaths of these seventy boys shows clearly that ill feeding is at the bottom of a large majority. Diarrhoea, convulsions, enteritis, and marasmus accounted for 589 deaths amongst children. With a pure milk-supply and proper care on the part of the parents most of these deaths would have been averted.

The scheme of supplying humanised milk in Dunedin, which has been brought about by the enthusiasm and agency of Dr. Truby King, has been productive of very great good. I hope to see companies, if not municipalities, in each of the large centres take up this work pending the adoption of a scheme which would embrace the whole milk-supply.

PURE FOOD BILL.

The necessity for bringing the laws regulating the sale of foods and drugs into accordance with the standards set by other countries, such as Great Britain, America, Germany, France, and Belgium, and some of the States of the Commonwealth, has been obvious to all interested in this most important matter. The draft Bill submitted is the result of the careful consideration of several recent Acts passed in various parts of the world. Special use has been made of the excellent Act passed by Victoria last year. While no honest trader should be hampered or interfered with, the safety and interest of the consumer must be conserved. If a tin of alleged "Finest Pepper" con-