

CLIVE, MEEANEE, AND TARADALE.

These townships are progressing in every way, both in size and cleanliness. In the latter there was much room for improvement in the first-named of these places, and perhaps a little less in the second. Taradale has always been a neat and reputable-looking little township, and it has been improved by the efforts of the Department, seconded by the intelligence of the Town Board. Its pretty suburb, Greenmeadows, is rapidly increasing in size and importance, and finds more and more favour with people who desire pleasant suburban residences, and pretty villas and cottages *ornées* are springing up everywhere.

HAVELOCK.

This township continues to improve, and owing to the fact that the hills at the back form a protection from the cold southerly winds, coupled with the excellent climate that Hawke's Bay is to be congratulated on, Havelock should in time become a favourite health resort. Land is rapidly being acquired on these hills, and buildings are being erected everywhere. The town is still without water or drainage; no effect has yet been given to the scheme for both prepared some years back by Mr. C. D. Kennedy. The residents on the hills have their own water-supply from the numerous springs about, and have sufficient land round their houses for the disposal of their drainage. It is probable that in a short time a Town Board will be formed, and some movement in the direction of water and drainage be given effect to.

HASTINGS.

(Population, 4,500.)

This town is increasing by leaps and bounds, but owing to the large size of the borough (nearly 6,000 acres) it is free from congestion. Even close to the centre of the town there are many open spaces, and the private residences have plenty of air-space.

Hastings is fast outgrowing the sanitary arrangements that were provided some twenty years ago. The extension of the sewer is urgently needed, and I am glad to report that the Council seem inclined to consider the matter. I fear, nevertheless, that there may be some difficulty in getting the ratepayers to consent to a loan for the purpose. Those ratepayers who have now the sewer in proximity to their premises will oppose taxation that will not directly benefit them, but will give others the convenience that they at present enjoy, and residents outside the proposed extension will be in the same boat.

Some persons residing or having business premises in the sewer area have not taken advantage of the convenience; but during the past year, as a consequence of my representations, connection is being enforced on those situated within a reasonable distance, with the result that there have been sixty connections made during the past year, twenty-four being private houses, and the rest business premises.

Hastings runs neck-and-neck with Gisborne in the number of cases of diphtheria—fourteen for the one and fifteen for the other. As Gisborne has the larger population, the number of cases in Hastings is in greater proportion.

Hastings lies in the centre of the Heretaunga Plains. The land around is practically flat for miles, and in many places the subsoil is clay, hence many of the houses are situated on damp ground in wet weather. Unfortunately, the majority of the older houses are built with the ground floor in too close proximity to the surface of the soil, precluding sufficient ventilation beneath, and facilitating the ingress to the building of ground-air, which is always foul air. Ever since I have held this appointment I have consistently preached that the floors of the houses should be raised well above the surface—a minimum of 2 ft., and 4 ft. if possible. I am glad to say that my efforts are beginning to bear fruit, and that most of the houses that are now being built or have been built lately are in accordance with my recommendations. As the poison of diphtheria seems to hang about damp soil, I am led to hope that when the more sensibly built houses are in the majority the number of sufferers from this complaint will be greatly curtailed.

Hastings has now increased to such an extent that the duties of Borough Engineer and Inspector of Nuisances, which have hitherto been combined under one head, have become too arduous for one person to carry out effectively, and the necessity of appointing some suitable person to give his whole time to the inspection and reporting of nuisances is becoming acute. One of the Councillors proposed that the Council should find the remuneration for such an official, who should be appointed by and responsible to the District Health Officer, but the suggestion did not find favour with the majority of the Council. This is much to be regretted, for it is to the interests of the inhabitants of Hastings that such an appointment should be made. An Inspector of Nuisances was temporarily appointed by the Council, and he sent in several adverse reports concerning many residences and business premises; but his services were soon dispensed with. In the opinion of a large number of the ratepayers, *trop de zèle* on the part of the Inspector was the mainspring of the Council's action in dispensing with his services. His short reign was not without its beneficial effect.

Hastings is much in need of a high-pressure water-supply for fire-extinguishing purposes. Here again a difficulty arises in obtaining the money to defray the cost. Each house has its own supply of excellent water from an artesian well, and the individual ratepayer will not interest or tax himself for what may never concern him. A scheme has lately been brought forward by one of the Councillors, but very little interest was taken in it, and when the poll was taken only a few of those who were adverse to the scheme took the trouble to vote. It may seem to be a far cry from public health to water for fire-extinguishing purposes, but not so in Hastings, as in the absence