

their control. The Drainage Board agreed that they would grant no permission in future for the installation of any septic tank unless the person to whom leave was granted undertook that the effluent should be up to a standard of purity to be fixed by the Health Department.

The fixing of the standard of purity presents some difficulties, and is still under consideration, as the results of analyses of effluents from septic tanks in other parts of New Zealand, which you instructed to be taken, are not yet to hand. The chief difficulty in fixing a standard is not to make it so lax that it will still allow of considerable pollution of the river, at the same time not to exclude the installation of septic tanks which are put in on the best known modern principles. If the attention which has been drawn to the matter continues to have the effect which it is having at present, of preventing all sorts of differently constructed septic tanks being put in by irresponsible persons, the chief object will have been obtained.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS.

Two persons were examined for other Government Departments, and 9 for admission to Cambridge Sanatorium.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS.

Licenses were granted to 16 new applicants to carry on private hospitals, and 40 licenses were renewed. As the Hospitals Department became responsible for the inspection and licensing of these hospitals on the 1st January, 1907, applications for new licenses were held over towards the latter part of the year to be dealt with by the Hospitals Department.

PROSECUTIONS.

A medical practitioner was fined £2 and costs for failing to comply with the provisions of section 26, regarding the notification of infectious disease. Two owners of private hospitals were convicted and fined 2s. 6d. and costs for carrying on a private hospital without having obtained a license. A conviction was obtained against the owner and occupier of a dwellinghouse for failing to provide a proper privy, and he was fined £5 and costs. The owner of a dwellinghouse was also fined £1 10s. and costs for failing to provide a proper privy.

BUILDINGS UNFIT FOR OCCUPATION.

Two certificates were issued under section 11 of "The Public Health Amendment Act, 1903," and 31 under section 349 of "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1900," that buildings were unfit for occupation. In several other cases repairs and improvements were effected to houses by more indirect methods.

GENERAL SANITATION OF THE DISTRICT.

CHRISTCHURCH

Water-supply.

The City Council is again tackling this important question. Four schemes have been submitted by Mr. Dobson, the City Engineer. The first is a complete scheme for providing a water-supply to the whole city by pumping water from wells near the foot of the Port Hills into a reservoir situated on the hills, from which the water will be supplied to the city. The estimated cost is £132,662, and the working-expenses, including interest and sinking fund, £9,736. The second scheme, which deals only with the Central Ward, is to obtain the water in a similar way from wells at the foot of the hills and pump into a reservoir on the hills. The cost is estimated at £63,550, and the working-expenses £5,360. The two other schemes deal with the supply of St. Albans and Linwood Wards respectively. In each of these two schemes the water-supply would be entirely separate from each other and from the Central Ward and Sydenham, except that the power for pumping will probably be from the destructor plant. Each scheme will comprise separate wells, reservoir, tower, and pumping machinery. The estimated cost for St. Albans Ward is £28,408, and the annual cost £2,148; the estimated cost for Linwood is £18,408, and the annual expense £1,612. It must be remembered that a complete water-carriage system for nightsoil, &c., is impossible without a high-pressure water-supply. It is therefore fair argument, assuming the existence of the sewers, to put the present annual cost for removal of nightsoil against the annual cost of these different schemes. For instance, the annual cost of the removal of nightsoil in the whole city (excluding Sydenham) is about £4,500, and this deducted from the annual cost of the complete water-supply scheme (excluding Sydenham)—viz., £9,736—leaves £5,236. Similarly the scheme for the Central Ward would cost £5,360—£3,000 = £2,360; St. Albans, £2,148—£680 = £1,468; and Linwood, £1,612—£781 = £841. There must also be reckoned the cost of sinking new wells, keeping old wells in repair, and the cost of the installation of windmills, rams, pumps, &c., and the annual cost of keeping these in repair. The greater facilities in providing water for street-watering and for fire-prevention, with the possibility of lower insurance rate, must also be reckoned.

The above deals only with the economical and financial side of the question, which will doubtless be fully presented to the ratepayers by the City Council. The advantages from a sanitary point of view are no doubt generally recognised even by those who have voted against a water-supply scheme in the past, and will again in the future; but it might be advisable to again emphasize the point for the benefit of the waverers, that the universal experience and opinion of those who have made a special study of public health is that, apart from the obvious sanitary advantages of being able to abolish the present insanitary method of nightsoil-removal, and having ample supply for water-closets, baths, &c., the existence of an abundant water-supply has an indirect influence for good on the death-rate and sickness-rate of a town in many ways which are not usually considered.