

BLOOD-POISONING.

Twenty cases have been reported; of these 3 are known to have been puerperal septicæmia—Mangonui County, 1; Manukau County, 1; Waitemata County, 1. Of the city cases 1 was eventually diagnosed as acute pulmonary tuberculosis, 1 resulted from a mosquito-bite and dirty surroundings, and 1 from a cut at engineering-work.

PLAGUE.

There is no case of plague to record. The returns show 3 cases, these being cases of which there was a reasonable suspicion. In two instances the patients were removed to the observation cottage at the Hospital, and every precaution was taken as though the cases were bubonic plague. Fortunately, the eventual diagnosis did not support the earlier suspicions.

The suspected cases, of which one occurred in May, one in August, 1906, and one in March, 1907, were all within the City of Auckland.

LOCAL SANITATION.

AUCKLAND CITY.

The appearance of last year's report was followed by some necessary attention being devoted to the sanitary delinquencies of the city. Little result has, however, been obtained, as the following will show:—

Last year I reported on the absence of any effort to deal with the housing question. A scheme for the provision of workmen's dwellings was put before the City Council and the public by His Worship the Mayor, but failed to receive favourable recognition, and was allowed to drop.

The Ponsonby reservoir has now been renovated, and altered so as to exclude dust as much as possible. Everywhere surprise was expressed that so manifestly necessary a precaution was not taken as far back as 1902, when it was first brought under the notice of the City Council by my predecessor.

No further action has been taken to insure the "cleanest salt water possible," as stipulated by me, being obtained for the city baths. Frequenters have still to be satisfied with an intake than which few worse places exist in the harbour.

Smoke nuisance: The City Solicitor has, I understand, received instructions from the City Council to proceed against offenders, and no doubt prosecutions will result should the nuisance continue unabated.

Sanitary service: Every adverse criticism made in past years might perhaps be repeated again. The system seems to go from bad to worse. The terms of the contract are sound enough, but the City Council appears powerless to enforce compliance. The City Engineer now suggests that the City Council shall exercise direct control over the cleaning-works and disposal-ground at Hawkins Point. This was the outcome of a conference between the City Council's committee, the contractor, and myself, consequent upon my having taken legal action against the contractor, the result of which is tabled below.

Beyond further deferring, nothing has been done to insure a steam disinfector for the city.

While I have to report an increased use being made of properly covered metal dustbins, yet the collecting-carts still perambulate the city with a pretence for a proper covering in the form of old tarpaulin, scrim, or some such material. I am informed that a sample cart, devoid of this and other defects, is in process of building.

The drainage scheme has been advanced a stage by the issuing of a general report on the main drainage of the City of Auckland by the City Engineer. The Engineer safeguards the possibility of a nuisance arising from direct discharging of sewage into the harbour, and subsequent depositions on the foreshore, by advising the City Council to acquire 60–80 acres of land near the proposed point of discharge at Okahu Point, "in order to allow, if it ever becomes necessary, of the construction of tanks and bacteria-beds for the partial purification of the effluent before discharge into the sea, and of sufficient capacity for an ultimate population of 200,000 persons." An aspect which does not appear to have received equal attention is the, to my mind, urgent necessity of ascertaining the condition of all drains and sewers put down in the olden days. Observations such as have been made of these ancient fitments draw one to conclude that most are in a condition far from according with public safety, not to mention modern sanitary requirements.

The abattoir in course of erection at Otahuhu is nearing completion. The question of the water-supply was under reconsideration this year. Ultimately a source of supply was obtained which should leave no doubt as to the buildings having good, uncontaminated water, ample in quantity.

My hopes as to the erection of a proper morgue, containing a *post-mortem* room, mortuary, coroner's-inquest room, waiting-room and accessories, were doomed to non-fulfilment. Last year I wrote, "The site selected and approved is at the corner of Union and Patterson Streets." In accordance with the provisions of the Public Health Act, this site was approved by me, and in the belief that it had already received the sanction of the City Council. At the eleventh hour, however, it was found that some informality had arisen while the matter was before the Council, necessitating and resulting in a seemingly endless endeavour to obtain a site which shall satisfy all whom it may concern. While the construction and sanitation of the proposed building remove any possible risk to public health, and its architecture incites no harrowing memories, it is beyond me to explain why the harmless dead, at temporary rest in that building, should be an object of so much dread, and of so much desire for its relegation to a place out of sight and out of mind.

Little advance has been made as regards a crematorium for Auckland. Its votaries are, however slowly, quietly advancing their cause.