

Mere inspection of nuisances, involving the ready removal of obvious offences to the visual and olfactory senses, did not appear to me to receive adequate attention. I consequently advised His Worship the Mayor of this need, and offered my support of the City Engineer's request for an additional Inspector. The terms of the new appointment, since made, do not, however, satisfy me that the object in view will be obtained. Actual experiences during the year show me that a little of the attention given to the—shall I say, "nicer" parts of the city inspectorial work, might well be devoted to plain and simple nuisance-removal.

Food-inspections.

Inspector Grieve has made detailed reports on the butchers', pork-butchers', and fish shops in the city; also restaurants and eating-houses, apart from licensed hotels. The latter report shows, generally speaking, very unsatisfactory and primitive conditions. In the absence of any legal powers as regards these establishments, beyond the removal of obvious nuisances, I do not anticipate many beneficial results being obtained by mere inspection.

As regards the butchers' establishments, I made recommendation to the City Council under the heads—(1) exposure of meat, (2) opportunity of washing hands, (3) conveyance to and from shops, (4) wrappings used, (5) preservatives, (6) general sanitary condition. The Council was unable to support my contention that the system of open dust-catching shop-fronts was antiquated. I note, however, that in Wellington District the newer principle—the glazed front—is gaining ground.

AUCKLAND SUBURBS.

The "Greater Auckland" scheme has been rejected; the sewerage scheme for the city is still in the report stage; the city sanitary service is manifestly far from satisfactory. Whether as a consequence of these three points or not, it has to be reported that little or no advance from the sanitary standpoint has been made by the suburban bodies immediately adjoining the city, with the exception of Parnell. These local authorities urgently require the efficient and satisfactory removal of all household waste waters and proper means for the removal of nightsoil, be it by the water-carriage system or the sealed-pan system. As long, therefore, as there is a hope, possible of fulfilment, of a Greater Auckland, or other means by which these wants may be jointly secured, so long will there be delay in the improvement of the sanitary standard of the suburban boroughs and road districts.

Country Districts.

Thames.—A curious anomaly in the attitude of local authorities towards drainage schemes may here be noted. In Cambridge one saw the Council rejecting lines of pipes, because joints were not properly cemented, the concrete bed was not according to specification, and because the drain so formed did not stand a "water" test. In Thames, incredible though it may seem in a borough, and in the year 1906, one saw pipes in one of the main streets, intended to carry all household-waste waters, including kitchen-sink filth and bedroom-slops, being laid with "clay" joints, and on a "made-up" bed of mullock. I drew the Borough Engineer's attention to this now, fortunately, unusual method of sanitary engineering, and understood that he would abide by your decision, which on receipt was that cement joints should be used. I am informed, however, I was under a misapprehension in this regard. Later I reported to the Borough Council at length, suggesting obtaining the opinion of a consulting engineer, or an appeal to the Supreme Court, under section 80 of the Public Health Act, and subsequently that the District Engineer of the Public Works Department (Mr. Vickerman) be asked to advise. The Borough Council decided to remain satisfied with the opinion of its Engineer. Briefly, the latter holds that the method—joints caulked with tarred hemp and then closed with clay, so as to insure a perfectly watertight joint—is eminently satisfactory; and, further, that no "sewage" enters the pipe-line, because nothing conveyed by underground pipes is "sewage" unless it contains nightsoil. The latter point is ingenious, if not convincing, as no dictionary and no authority has previously propounded this notion; further, the River-pollution Commissioners, England, have made it clear by elaborate investigation that the addition of nightsoil does not appreciably affect the nuisance-content of sewage. The first point is utterly untenable from a sanitary-engineering standpoint.

The urgent need for the Government exercising some supervision and control over sewerage or drainage schemes is here shown. Until a nuisance is clearly demonstrable nothing can now be done. It has, however, to be noted that two cases of enteric have occurred in establishments fronting the street where this dangerous work has been established.

Waihi.—Enteric fever is here far too rampant. No steps have been taken to remove this stigma by the installation of a modern sewerage system.

Hamilton.—The services of Inspector Middleton, of this Department, have been retained for the borough by a contribution on a basis of £15 per thousand of population. The Inspector in return devotes a definite amount of time per month to the borough's interests. So far nothing but satisfaction with the system has been expressed.

Rapid progress is being made with the sewerage scheme.

Cambridge.—As already stated, in contrast to Thames, the Borough Council is here desirous of having only the best work in its scheme. The unscrupulous action of a Clerk of Works caused much annoyance to both Council and ratepayers, and brought upon the scheme a needless amount of odium.

Inspector Middleton gives a portion of his time to this borough, as for Hamilton.

Rotorua.—I have submitted a draft of drainage by-laws to the Town Board, and the Town Solicitor has read and put this in proper legal form. Pending the decision as to the control of the town by the Tourist Department, the Board seems in some doubt as to the advisability of incurring expense in this regard.