

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Two-thirds of the samples examined in the laboratory came through the Public Health Department. They consisted of bacon, beer, non-intoxicating beverages, brandy, butter, cider, coffee, coffee and chicory, cocoa, cordials, cream, cream of tartar, curry-powder, egg-preservers, fish, flour, food-preservatives, canned fruit, gelatine, honey, ice-cream, infant and invalid foods, jam, lysol, margarine, milk, olive-oil, patent medicine, pepper, pork and beans, sago, sausages, sugar of milk, water, whisky, wine tonics.

Three of the butters contained an excess of water. Several cordials were coloured contrary to regulations, and three samples of lime-juice were below the required strength. The examination of several parcels of smoked fish revealed that it is a common practice to smoke the fish in a very perfunctory way, and then wash with a solution of annatto to give the appearance of a thoroughly cured article. This constitutes a fraud on the public, and, in my opinion, should not be allowed.

A sample of flour sold for use by the troops was evidently bleached with nitrogen peroxide. Bleaching is contrary to regulations, being both unwholesome and unnecessary. An inspection of the mill disclosed the usual apparatus for the purpose, and confirmed the chemical evidence.

Very few infants' and invalids' foods were examined during the year. The labels on such foods are in many cases misleading, and a thorough investigation of all on the market would appear to be warranted.

MILK.

The number of milk-samples taken under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1908, was 2,222—almost exactly double that of the previous year.

Wellington City.—The milk inspector appointed by the City Council has been active during the year, and 1,771 samples were taken during the period covered by this report. Of these, twenty were watered, twenty-seven seriously skimmed, three preservatized, thirty-three contained excessive amounts of dirt, seventy-four were decidedly stale, and thirty-nine slightly under the standard. Constant inspection, and the imposition of salutary fines for breaches of the regulations, have checked watering and skimming, as compared with former years. It would also appear that more care is exercised in handling milk, for although the present proportion of milks with excessive dirt—2 per cent.—is still high, last year over 7 per cent. of the samples submitted were unsatisfactory in this respect. Stale milks are in much the same proportion as in other years, indicating insufficient cooling directly after milking and during conveyance, and also undue delay in distribution. From a health standpoint staleness and dirt constitute the most serious defects in the city supply.

Other Districts.—There was a high percentage of watered samples in the milk received from Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, and the country towns of Wellington Province. The following table summarizes the results from these districts:—

	Samples received.	Seriously skimmed.	Watered.	Slightly below Standard.	Dirt.
Awapuni Camp	1	..	..	..	..
Blenheim	13	..	..	1	1
Carterton	11	..	..	..	..
Clive	1	..	..	..	..
Dannevirke	22	..	..	1	1
Eltham	2	..	..	..	..
Featherston	11	1	..	1	..
Featherston Camp	48	1	2	3	1
Feilding	4	..	1	..	..
Greytown	5	..	..	..	..
Gisborne	27	..	..	..	6
Hutt (Lower)	26	..	..	3	..
Hawera	11	..	..	3	..
Hastings	15	1	4	..	1
Masterton	9	..	..	..	..
Marton	3	..	..	..	..
Nelson District	35	1	1	2	..
Napier	37	2	5	..	4
Petone	41	2	4	3	1
Papakura, Hawke's Bay	2	1	..	..	..
Patea	2	..	..	..	..
Palmerston North	24	1	3	3	2
Stratford	8	..	3	..	..
Taihape	3	..	..	..	..
Trentham Camp	4	..	..	..	..
Taranaki Hospital District	50	1	1	..	3
Wairoa	3	..	..	1	..
Woodville	10	..	..	2	2
Waipukurau	5	..	..	..	2
Waipawa	3	..	..	..	..
Wanganui	16	1	2	..	..
	451	12	26	23	24