

Rates of Infantile Mortality in New Zealand and Four Chief Centres (Deaths under One Year of Age per 1,000 Births), each Year 1908-17.

Year.	New Zealand.	Auckland and Suburban Boroughs.	Wellington and Suburban Boroughs.	Christchurch and Suburban Boroughs.	Dunedin and Suburban Boroughs.
1908 ..	67.89	81.87	81.67	67.82	74.54
1909 ..	61.60	61.85	84.21	62.78	48.52
1910 ..	67.73	79.02	84.59	69.40	79.08
1911 ..	56.31	63.02	73.36	62.90	43.42
1912 ..	51.22	56.95	61.32	60.03	38.11
1913 ..	59.17	80.81	60.23	63.49	73.42
1914 ..	51.38	57.62	82.57	68.15	54.28
1915 ..	50.05	71.67	57.17	54.24	72.26
1916 ..	50.70	59.21	65.13	66.71	54.74
1917 ..	48.16	60.96	56.55	49.32	40.16

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT.

Infectious Diseases.

The following table shows the number of cases of infectious diseases notified throughout the Dominion during the year 1917 in comparison with the two previous years:—

Disease.	Number of Cases.			Rate of Incidence per 10,000 of the Population.		
	1917.	1916.	1915.	1917.	1916.	1915.
Scarlet fever	2,755	4,278	2,301	25.06	39.45	20.91
Diphtheria	5,458	2,376	1,404	49.65	21.86	12.76
Enteric	653	806	820	5.94	7.42	7.45
Tuberculosis	1,521	950	1,001	13.83	8.73	9.10
Cerebro-spinal meningitis	42	135	85	0.39	1.24	0.77
Poliomyelitis	54	1,018	10	0.49	9.37	0.09
Ophthalmia neonatorum	25	17	*	0.23	0.16	..
Actinomycosis	2	..	..	0.01	..	..
Trachoma	10	†	†	0.09	..	..
Puerperal fever	81	} 174	} 140	0.73	1.60	1.27
Erysipelas	112			1.01	..	..
Tetanus	5			0.04	..	..
Unclassified septicæmia	10			0.09	..	..
Hydatids	27	25	17	0.24	0.23	0.15
Smallpox .. .. .	..	..	1	..	..	..
Chicken-pox	‡	‡	354	..	..	3.22
	10,755	9,779	6,133	97.80	90.06	55.72

* Not notifiable prior to 1916.

† Not notifiable prior to 1917.

*‡ Not now notifiable.

During the year, by direction of the Hon. the Minister of Public Health, the Department commenced the publication monthly of the *Journal of Public Health*. The *Journal* is intended chiefly for the benefit of Hospital Boards, and is much appreciated. It is also circulated to the Health authorities of other countries. This publication, together with the issue of a weekly Bulletin of Infectious Diseases, gives those interested or responsible for needful measures for checking the spread of infectious diseases full particulars as to the incidence of these diseases in the Dominion. Full details as to the incidence of infectious diseases for the year 1917 appeared in the January and February numbers of the *Journal*.

Diphtheria.

The figures disclose a widespread epidemic. The science of hygiene is as yet unable to explain why epidemics are at times suddenly revived, and why infections always present in a community—perhaps but a few cases at any one time—assume unusual gravity or exceptional mildness. Enthusiastic hygienists of thirty years ago—and the young medical officers of health of to-day—maintain that the outcome of public health precautions in their widest sense would be to entirely eliminate those cyclical changes—that is, a wave of diminishing cases of infection followed after a lapse of some years by a pronounced rise—which the historical past discloses. New Zealand, in the matter of diphtheria, has again experienced one of those cyclical exacerbations—unexplainable and despite the undoubtedly advanced position she holds in so far as generally sound and effective sanitation is concerned.