

Section 132 gives power to make regulations for (*inter alia*) the isolation, disinfection, and treatment of persons suffering from any infectious disease, for the isolation or medical observation and surveillance of persons suspected to be suffering from any infectious disease, of persons in attendance on such persons, and of persons who have been exposed to infection, for the prevention of the spread of infectious disease by contacts or carriers, and generally for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of the section, and for the conservation and promotion of the public health.

(2.) *Regulations under the Health Act, 1920, as to Infectious and Notifiable Diseases.*—Such of these regulations as are applicable to this branch of the inquiry provide (*inter alia*) that the form of notification required by section 79 shall be that in the schedule, and that—

Every Inspector charged with the investigation and control of cases of infectious disease—

- (a.) Shall forthwith on becoming aware in any way of a case or suspected case of notifiable infectious disease visit the infected premises and inquire into the causes and circumstances of the case, and take such steps as are necessary or desirable for preventing the spread of infection and for removing conditions favourable to infection.
- (b.) Shall forthwith report to the Medical Officer of Health, in such form as the Director-General of Health may require, the results of the investigation of every case or suspected case of notifiable infectious disease.
- (d.) Shall attend to the removal to hospital of any person suffering from any notifiable infectious disease if and when such is required.
- (e.) Shall, if such person is not removed to hospital, from time to time visit the premises and see that the necessary precautions for the prevention of the spread of infection are carried out.
- (g.) Shall, upon termination of the case by recovery, removal to hospital, or death, disinfect any premises in which any notifiable infectious disease has occurred; and also disinfect any bedding, clothing, or other things which have been exposed to infection from any notifiable infectious disease.
- (h.) Shall carry out all disinfecting-work in accordance with instructions to be from time to time issued by the Medical Officer of Health.
- (j.) Shall duly notify the Medical Officer of Health when disinfection has been carried out.
- (k.) Shall enter from day to day, in a book provided by the Department, such particulars regarding cases of infectious disease as may be required.
- (l.) Shall, at all reasonable hours, when applied to by the Medical Officer of Health, produce to him his books, or any of them, and render to him such information as he may be able to furnish with regard to his duties under these regulations.
- (m.) Generally shall, in all circumstances, be guided by and carry out the instructions of the Medical Officer of Health with respect to any measures which can be lawfully taken by an Inspector for preventing the outbreak or checking the spread of any infectious disease.

It has been explained by Dr. M. H. Watt, Director of Hygiene in the Department of Health, that the usual procedure under the foregoing regulations is that the Inspector of the local authority, upon receipt of notification, visits the premises concerned, investigates the circumstances of the case, and carries out the several duties imposed upon him. In certain areas (of which the City of Auckland is one) the local authority, instead of appointing its own Inspector, contributes to the salary and expenses of a departmental Inspector, the latter officer in such cases having all the powers and performing all the functions and duties of the local-body officer.

Dr. Watt further reports the departmental practice to be as follows:—

The Medical Officer of Health receives all notices and reports in regard to cases of notifiable infectious disease, and it is his duty to take all steps in his power to prevent, limit, and suppress the disease.

Where cases of puerperal sepsis are notified, the Medical Officers of Health make special investigation into the origin of the disease, either personally or by deputy (Nurse Inspector).

Where cases of puerperal sepsis are notified from maternity hospitals, special inquiry is made into the technique, facilities for carrying out disinfection and the practice in this respect, sufficiency or otherwise of staff, and accommodation, &c.

No specific regulations have been issued or specific instructions laid down by the Department with regard to the circumstances under which closure of maternity hospitals shall be enforced on account of sepsis, or the length of such closure. It is obvious this must depend upon the needs of the special case. The departmental view is that where only a single case has been reported from a maternity hospital, and other cases in the institution are normal, closure is not indicated provided the case is immediately isolated, the room, bedding, and equipment disinfected, and the nurse attendants abstain from duty for a period to enable adequate personal disinfection and elimination of any focus of infection in hands, throat, nose, &c.