

Ventilation of Theatres.—Attention was paid to the ventilation of theatres in the city, more especially picture-theatres. In two cases up-to-date plants were installed for cleaning, heating, and cooling the air before it passed into the ducts leading to the inlets throughout the theatre. Other theatres requiring improvements are receiving attention.

Smoke Nuisance.—Improvements have been made in respect of smoke nuisances in the city and suburbs during the year. In three instances "Iron Fireman" furnaces have been installed, with very satisfactory results.

Refuse-disposal.—All tips in the district have been carefully supervised by the Department during the year. The improvements carried out in the city and suburbs in connection with refuse-disposal are very satisfactory. The capacity of the city destructor has been increased to such an extent that all refuse in the City Council's area can be burnt, and steps were taken for the two tips formerly used by the city to be closed.

The use by the Onehunga Borough Council of a destructor has been a great advance on their old method of disposal.

During the year Mount Eden, Mount Roskill, and Mount Albert have maintained their tips in an excellent condition, and the two former stand out as examples of what can be accomplished with proper care and attention to details in running a refuse-tip.

Mosquito-control.—Through the Mosquito-control Committee, investigations were continued and carried out throughout the health district, and typing of the mosquitos completed. Special investigations were made in connection with ships arriving from overseas, especially from the East and Australia. The various creeks running throughout the city continue to be the breeding-ground of millions of larvæ, especially during dry, hot spells in the summer. It is hoped that the Auckland Drainage Board will be enabled to undertake the responsibility of dealing with all such streams running throughout the metropolitan area, and in the meantime local bodies will accept their responsibilities in dealing with the mosquito nuisance.

All ships have been specially inspected for mosquitoes or larvæ by the Department's Shipping Inspector, and special provisions for the prevention of the importation of mosquitoes from overseas have been enforced by him.

Disposal of Factory Wastes.—The disposal of milk wastes from butter-factories, &c., still continues to give rise to difficulty by causing nuisance. Companies have gone to large expense in endeavouring to deal with this matter, and it appears that best results are obtained by discharging the factory effluent, whilst fresh, into streams. The passage of the milk-factory effluent, without the septic-tank treatment, over deep percolating filters with a good supply of air from the bottom of the filter appears to be finding favour in America.

Maori-Asiatic Inquiry.—Some weeks were spent by the Medical Officer of Health acting as Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry into the living-conditions of Maoris and Asiatics. There is no doubt that the standard allowed by local bodies in regard to Chinese dwellings requires raising, and steps have been taken for the improvement of the conditions existing, also for improvement in the condition of temporary accommodation for Maoris working during the season in Chinese gardens.

WATER-SUPPLIES.

Consistent effort has been given to the supervision of public water-supplies, and in consequence the condition of most of the supplies has shown improvement during the year. The watersheds and catchment areas have been safeguarded from pollution as far as possible, and advice in regard to methods of purification and the establishing of new supplies given from time to time. A great number of samples have been obtained for chemical and bacteriological examination, and the results, with observations thereon, communicated to the responsible local authorities. Incidents of note have been the bursting of the Auckland City reservoir on Mount Eden subsequent to alterations, and the establishing of new supplies at Howick and Papatoetoe.

FOOD AND DRUGS.

Much consideration and effort has been given to improving the conditions under which foodstuffs and drugs are sold, and to the maintenance of a high standard in their quality. In collaboration with the Customs Department, the labelling of incoming goods has received much attention, as well as the handling and unloading of same on the wharves, as it has been found, for instance, that dates have been contaminated by basic-slag dust. Constant inspection of markets and food-sellers' premises, tea-rooms, &c., has been made, with good results as to their general condition and cleanliness.

Many samples of foods, principally those of the staple diet, have been obtained for analysis, and in quite a number of instances it was found necessary to institute legal proceedings for breaches of the Acts and regulations. Substantial fines have been imposed in many instances, prominent among which were fines and costs totalling over £100 against an hotel-proprietor for the sale of samples of gin and whisky which were not true to their labelled description. A case was also taken against a wholesale chemist for supplying a drug wrongly labelled, and fines and costs were imposed totalling £21 11s.

The Dangerous Drugs Act and Regulations have been brought into force during the year, and any illicit use of these drugs is now rendered very difficult. Extra work and supervision in conjunction with the Customs and Police Departments have been necessitated in this matter. Legal proceedings were instituted by the Department against the owner of a chemist's shop for supplying Indian hemp to a person not licensed to receive same, and fines and costs imposed totalled £8 8s.