

scribed. As a result of these activities the Otaki Health Camp has been well established, and at present is doing excellent work. Dr. Ada Paterson in her report deals more fully with this important aspect of preventive work.

Influenza.—There was a sharp outbreak of influenza during the winter months, and, as a result, the death-rate per 10,000 of mean population rose to 1.53 (221 deaths) in comparison with 0.92 (131 deaths) for the previous year. This disease was very general throughout the Dominion. Dr. Turbott, Medical Officer of Health, East Cape District, supplies some interesting comments upon the effect of school closure for influenza, a proceeding adopted by various School Committees in an endeavour to prevent spread of the epidemic. This measure apparently was of no avail, as the time elapsing before normality was regained was 3.6 weeks where schools remained opened as against 4.1 weeks where schools had been closed.

Trichiniasis.—A case of trichiniasis, a disease produced by eating infested pork, was reported by Dr. P. P. Lynch, Pathologist to the Wellington Hospital. The Department of Agriculture made a systematic inspection of the pig-farms of the North Island, and examined in all the muscles of 20,000 carcasses with the satisfactory result that not a single infested animal was found. This appears to be the first recorded case of trichiniasis contracted in New Zealand. Dr. Lynch, in a report on this interesting case appearing in the June, 1932, issue of the *New Zealand Medical Journal*, mentions that Dr. Pearson, Pathologist at the Christchurch Hospital, encountered some years ago an encysted trichinella larva in the thigh muscles of a patient, but in that case there was no clinical evidence of the disease, and it was believed that the actual infestation occurred abroad while the patient was on active service.

Cancer.—There was a slight rise in the mortality from cancer, the number of deaths showing an increase of forty-one, while the death-rate rose from 10.19 per 10,000 to 10.33.

The New Zealand Branch of the British Empire Cancer Campaign Society, now placed on a firm financial basis, is endeavouring through its activities to fight this menace. Dr. A. M. Begg, director of research for the society, in collaboration with his assistant, Mr. Aitken, chemist, has undertaken research work of a varied nature. The reports from the society's four large cancer clinics in the chief centres provide a mass of information, which should in time lead to important conclusions. In the treatment of cancer by specialists, the compilation of information regarding special methods of using radium in certain cases, the education of the public as to value of early treatment, and the following-up of cases, these clinics are performing most valuable functions. It can be definitely said that cancer research in New Zealand is now firmly established.

Venereal Diseases.—The Department occasionally receives requests for an amendment of the Social Hygiene Act and Regulations so as to provide for the compulsory notification by name of all cases of venereal diseases. These requests have not been acceded to, for it is believed that the present law, if fully observed by the medical profession and strictly enforced by the Department, gives all the control over these diseases which is necessary. The present legal provisions briefly are that where a person suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form has failed to attend for treatment as required by his medical attendant the latter must report the facts to the Director-General of Health, giving the full name and address of his patient. The Director-General upon receipt of such notice is then in a position to invoke powers with which he has been armed so as to ensure adequate treatment.

It can be definitely said that the present law has proved equal to the situation in cases where medical practitioners have reported patients as defaulting in treatment. Thus during 1931 forty-two cases were reported to the Department, and of these there was only one instance in which owing to inability to trace the individual concerned, the Department was unable to enforce treatment.

There would be a distinct danger in attempting to exercise such drastic powers as have been suggested. The effect of compulsory notification by name of all cases of venereal disease would be to drive patients to give false names and addresses or to seek treatment at the hands of chemists and unqualified persons. It is to educative rather than to repressive measures we must look for the control of what constitutes as much a social as a medical problem.

Fuller comments on many of the causes of mortality and morbidity will be found in the report of the Director, Division of Public Hygiene.

ADMINISTRATION.

Administration in 1931 was dominated by the need for economy in both national and local government. For some years now the Department has been exercising a close watch over expenditure. As a result, it has been possible to bring about substantial reductions, but it is obvious this process cannot continue indefinitely without endangering the public health. What has been achieved is perhaps best shown in the following table which sets out the net expenditure from vote Health in successive years since 1925–26 :—

Vote Health.	Net Expenditure.	Vote Health.	Net Expenditure.
	£		£
1925–26 ..	264,000	1929–30 ..	247,250
1926–27 ..	251,001	1930–31 ..	244,671
1927–28 ..	246,903	1931–32 ..	199,388
1928–29 ..	239,757		

Public Hygiene.—The most important duties cast upon the Division of Public Hygiene were in connection with the reconstruction work arising out of the earthquake of February, 1931. Problems of magnitude were encountered and successfully solved in respect of water-supplies and drainage in the afflicted areas. It is satisfactory that no serious outbreaks of disease occurred in Napier or Hastings subsequent to the earthquake. Fuller details of the reconstruction work are given in a report by Dr. F. S. Maclean appearing in the Appendix.