

*Housing.*—The housing question is one of paramount importance when dealing with the community health in general and the problem of tuberculosis in particular. There undoubtedly exist, particularly in our city areas, many conditions which call for amelioration. Thus Dr. Hughes, Medical Officer of Health, Auckland, instituted a survey of the poorer quarters of Auckland City; on which he reports as follows:—

“With a view to checking off the present condition of housing in the poorer portion of the city, a survey was carried out by officers of this Department. This house-to-house inspection revealed the necessity for a more rigid inspection by the City Sanitary Department. Several premises were found to be in a condition which justified their demolition, many others required structural repairs and improvements, and two areas were in such a condition as to justify their reference to the City Council with a view to action being taken under powers conferred by section 305 of the Municipal Corporations Act. The results of these inspections have been submitted to the City Council and their Sanitary Department with the result that the premises recommended for demolition have now been pulled down and a house-to-house inspection of the area by the Council’s inspectors is now in progress.”

Again, Dr. Maclean, Medical Officer of Health, Wellington, writes as follows:—

“The problem of housing appears likely to occupy a very prominent position during the coming years, and there can be little doubt that there is a considerable deficiency to be made up. In Wellington City, owing to lack of space and the resultant high purchase and rental value of land, the question of housing always presents difficulties, and this has been further aggravated by the financial difficulties in which many people have been placed during the past few years. There is a considerable amount of land, at present occupied by old and unsatisfactory dwellings, which might be required in the future for industrial and commercial purposes, and this possibility prevents the owners themselves from erecting suitable dwellings or selling the land at a price which is economic for residential purposes. As a result a larger area than will ever be required for business purposes is withheld from fulfilling its proper function. There are difficulties involved in defining clearly what land may be used only for residential purposes, but if it were achieved it would liberate a considerable area at a greatly reduced cost to the eventual householders.”

*Pollution of Streams.*—The growth of population and the establishment of industries will require, in the near future, measures for guarding against pollution of rivers and streams. New Zealand is fortunate in the abundance of pure rivers and streams with which the country is watered, but watchfulness will be required to preserve them from contamination dangerous to public health. A report on this problem received from Dr. Maclean, Medical Officer of Health, Wellington, states:—

“Some investigation has been made regarding the pollution of rivers. Up to the present fortunately few of our rivers are badly polluted, but with increasing population the problem cannot be left to look after itself. The Manawatu River is an example of the surprising amount of pollution that a large river can absorb without harmful effect, but this does not lessen the necessity of keeping as much as possible of our industrial wastes out of our rivers. For dairy factories and freezing works, land treatment offers a cheap and satisfactory alternative method of disposing of waste waters, and, if carefully controlled, increases the grazing value of the land used. In time to come the adoption of more scientific methods of sewage treatment by large inland towns will become a necessity.”

*Provision of Milk for School-children.*—The Department has co-operated with various efforts for increased consumption of milk among school-children. Dr. Hughes, Medical Officer of Health, Auckland, has submitted a report on this work, from which the following extract is taken:—

“During the year, the Milk Committee of the City Council undertook the distribution of free milk to a number of city schools. The scheme was put into operation hurriedly, without proper facilities being made at the schools for storage and distribution of the milk. Numerous inspections have been made of the methods employed in distribution and storage, and recommendations made to schoolmasters and the Education Board with a view of improvements being carried out. Samples of the milk were periodically taken for chemical and bacteriological examination. The various defects in the distribution and storage were discussed with the Milk Committee of the City Council Committee, representatives of school committees, and headmasters, and this year arrangements were made for the distribution of milk in bottles as far as possible, with the aim of extending this as soon as practicable.

“It is estimated that the cost of the scheme was a half-penny per day per child.