SECTION 2.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

Attached are four tables showing the notifications of infectious and other notifiable diseases in the Dominion for the year 1935. Tables A, B, and C, and unless otherwise stated, the comments and tables in this section deal with Europeans only.

General.

Except for epidemics of measles and whooping-cough, which are not included in the list of notifiable diseases, New Zealand has been remarkably free from epidemics during the past four years, the total number of notifications received being in each year less than 4,000. In 1935 the notifications numbered 3,349, an increase of 327 over those of the previous year. Increases occurred in the following common infectious diseases: Scarlet fever (101), diphtheria (311), enteric fever (36), and to a less extent, in the cases of erysipelas, trachoma, ophthalmia neonatorum, actinomycosis, chronic lead poisoning, and puerperal fever following abortion or miscarriage.

Tables and comments regarding certain of the more common infectious and notifiable diseases are given below:—

(a) Scarlet Fever.

Year.	Number of Notifications.	Deaths.		
		Number.	Rates per 10,000 of Mean Population.	Case-fatality Rate per Cent.
1928	6,127	57	0·40	0·93
1929	4,848	27	0·19	0·56
1930	2,244	16	0·11	0·71
1931	1,304	11	0·08	0·84
1932	829	6	0·04	0·72
1933	783	4	0·03	0·51
1934	762	8	0·05	1·05
1935	863	8	0·05	0·93

The year 1928 was the " peak " year of the last epidemic experienced. It will be noticed that the incidence rapidly declined until 1934, but that it rose in 1935. Although the incidence is still low, other indications point to the probability of a further increase occurring, with the possibility of the disease becoming epidemic within the next year or so.

The number of deaths for the year was 8, giving a case-fatality rate of 0·93 per cent.

(b) Diphtheria.

Year.	Number of Notifications.	Deaths.		
		Number.	Rates per 10,000 of Mean Population.	Case-fatality Rate per Cent.
1930	1,440	58	0·41	4·03
1931	1,327	55	0·38	4·14
1932	802	40	0·27	4·99
1933	963	27	0·18	2·80
1934	436	26	0·18	5·96
1935	747	33	0·22	4·42

The remarkable drop in the number of notifications in 1934 was followed by a rise of 311 to a total of 747 in 1935, which total is, however, the second lowest recorded since the epidemic of 1917–19, and the incidence per 10,000 of mean population is the lowest except for 1934, since 1902, the earliest year for which records are available. The period for which records of notifications are available is not sufficiently long for any deductions to be drawn as to the periodicity of epidemics of this disease in New Zealand, only the one epidemic of 1917–19 having been experienced during that time. A study of the death-rate prior to 1902 shows that the rate was very high prior to 1895, with a marked peak in 1874, and smaller peaks in 1882 and 1892. Treatment of the disease by the use of anti-diphtheric serum was first introduced into New Zealand in March, 1895, and the rapid drop in the death-rate between that date and 1903 may have been due to the success of the new method of treatment in spite of a high incidence of the disease or to that cause combined with the declining portion of an epidemic wave.