

Six new drainage connections were made to septic tanks and several service drainage connections were renewed. The usual difficulties consequent on sulphur deposits in the main sewage system were attended to.

The usual maintenance work has been carried out on mains, plant, pumps, and reservoir, in addition to work on departmental buildings and gardens. The long dry spell experienced up to February caused considerable anxiety.

Owing to the growth of the borough it is now apparent that steps will have to be taken, as soon as it is possible to do so, to provide an alternative and supplementary water-supply, as the existing service is inadequate, particularly during dry spells. The reservoir provided some years ago improved the supply, but the storage is insufficient over an extended period of dry weather.

It is with great regret that the Department records the death of overseer plumber H. E. Fitzgerald during February last. Mr. Fitzgerald had been with the Department for forty years, and was fully conversant with the Department's activities and its difficulties in so far as they applied to the work of this section. He was an authority on these matters, and his passing is a great loss to the Department.

(c) Baths and Sanatorium: Free treatment to all patients was provided under the social security scheme to the capacity of the accommodation, staff, and facilities available. The staff had a particularly strenuous year. The free service has been extended to include x-ray treatments.

A new boiler-house was erected in concrete to replace the structure destroyed by fire, and a new workshop for the baths mechanic constructed.

The supply of Rachel water to the main building is causing concern. Water is drawn from the spring to supply the main building, and, in addition, it supplies in part the Ward Bath swimming-pool and the Blue Bath. The supply of water from Whakarewarewa has been variable of late, owing to a fall in the level of the lake adjacent to the pool which supplies the water. When this occurs, the Rachel Spring is called upon to supply the whole amount of water for the swimming-pools, in addition to the private baths and douches in all the buildings. When water is being drawn off to this extent it is not possible to keep up an adequate supply for the Aix douches and other treatments in the main buildings or for the warm douches in the Ward Baths, and it will probably be necessary to draw off the supply for the Aix douches, &c., by a separate pipe and pump.

The drop in the level of Lake Roto-a-tamaheke resulted in a serious shortage for a time of hot mineral water for the baths, and in order to remedy this state of affairs a booster pump was installed at the edge of the spring.

In order that information may be accumulated and made available for the proper economic utilization, conservation, and development of the thermal resources of the Dominion, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research appointed an officer at Rotorua during the year for this purpose.

The members of the staff of the massage and physiotherapy section, which is the keystone to the whole establishment, worked extremely well and carried out their duties efficiently. The number of patients admitted to the Sanatorium and the number of out-patients treated is dependent on the number of massage staff available, and cannot be increased greatly unless more staff can be provided. Owing to the war it is impossible to get masseurs, and all masseuses qualifying are taken for general hospitals and for work for the Armed Services. The addition of even one masseur and one masseuse would make a great reduction in the delay in providing treatment for those requiring it.

During the year 14,923 massage and special treatments were given to male patients and 14,056 treatments to female patients. The average daily number of patients at the Sanatorium was 40.

The payment of out-patients' fees and Sanatorium patients' fees from the Social Security Fund has led to a considerable increase in the number of patients in both classes applying for treatment. Up to the present there has been difficulty in adding to the number of treatments given, as the staff have been fully occupied, and the equipment and accommodation at the Bathhouse do not allow of much additional treatment being given. It is hoped to increase this at an early date by installing a new pyretic bath on each side, as this would enable about 20 more patients to be treated daily.

A number of patients at the Returned Services' Hospital attend regularly for swimming-baths, special baths, and pyretics. Members of the Air Force recuperating at their recently-established convalescent depot, after active service, are also attending regularly for baths.

(d) Gardens and Reserves: A good sequence of plants has been raised throughout the year. Owing to war conditions the Department has had to rely chiefly on seed collected from plants by its own staff. The borders, beds, &c., have been maintained as usual. Miss M. L. Darling, of Auckland, kindly donated two trees to the gardens.

Playing areas have been maintained in good order and were patronized to a great extent by the personnel of the R.N.Z.A.F.

The reserves under departmental control have been kept free of noxious weeds and the fences kept in order.

(e) Round Trip: The revenue earned showed an increase on the takings for the previous year.

During the year a large fire occurred at Te Wairoa, but with the assistance of staff from other Departments and the personnel of the Maori Training Unit the Department's buildings were saved, but unfortunately a considerable area of bush was destroyed.

Waitomo.—Business during the year showed a marked improvement, approximately 6,500 people visiting the caves, the majority of whom were residents from the Auckland District and American servicemen.