

It has been asserted that this spring could not be contaminated by surface-water by reason of the nature of the strata. This I do not believe. The whole of the catchment area of which this spring is the central and nearly the lowest point consists of rough scoria, with wide intervals between the blocks. Into this area until lately a portion of a cemetery drained. An open sewer, which was choked up with filth, encircles more than half the catchment area. Draining into this creek was a considerable number of piggeries and Chinamen's houses of the usual unsavoury description that obtains in most large towns.

An absolutely new source of supply must at once be obtained in order to insure that the people of Auckland may be provided with an ample supply of pure and wholesome water. Even should an empowering Act be obtained, giving full control of the catchment area to the City Council, the gathering-shed has already been so polluted that I consider it would be unsafe, even should all these nuisances be at once removed.

I am glad to be able to inform you that tenders have been let for portions of a new scheme. The Council has decided to bring water from the hills. A considerable portion of this work has been done, but I would urge most firmly that all despatch be taken in this most important work. It has been suggested that the new supply should be used to augment the present supply. I think this would be a most unfortunate and unsafe plan. Looking to the amount of possible pollution with which the present water-supply is surrounded, and granting that the Nihotapu water is absolutely pure, the mixing of it with the old supply would in no wise decrease the danger of pollution which at present exists.

It is only fair to state that there are great difficulties, both financial and engineering, in the way of the projected new scheme; but, unless strenuous and continuous effort be made in the direction of supplying Auckland with water from this projected new source, the City Council are incurring a responsibility which I suggest no local authority should be allowed to do.

Wellington.—The water-supply of this city is of good quality, if not quite adequate in quantity during the drier parts of the year. It has been alleged that owing to the non-supply of the higher levels with water, enteric fever and diphtheria have been the result. Whatever truth there may be in this statement, there can be no question whatever that while a water-carriage system, with an ample supply of water, is one of the best means of carrying sewage, it has its dangers if the water-supply be deficient. Should the water-supply be cut off for any lengthened period the water in the various traps becomes evaporated, and the closet is turned into nothing more nor less than a ventilating shaft. The Council, however, have under consideration the augmentation of the present supply.

Another matter of importance which, unless there be some insuperable engineering objections to it, should receive early consideration from the Council, is the putting in of a filter-bed between the source of supply and the consumer. When this is done Wellington will have a water-supply which will answer to all modern requirements.

Christchurch.—This city is fortunate in having an excellent and abundant supply of artesian water. The main disadvantage is the want of sufficient "head" for flushing and fire purposes. A scheme, however, is on foot for tapping the Waimakariri higher up, and thereby removing this disability. From a health point of view there is little to remark, except that until some system of storing the water is introduced water-closets cannot be used with safety in many parts of the city.

Dunedin.—Dunedin at present owes its water-supply to two sources—(1) To the north of the town from a reservoir supplied by Ross Creek; (2) to the south by a reservoir supplied by an open water-race of several miles in length, which brings in the water from a pure stream called the Silverstream.

The catchment area of the northern water-supply is not subject to more than average pollution, there being few houses in its neighbourhood, and no pollution of the stream. The water from the reservoir, as supplied to the town, varies in its quality, being at times clear, and at other times much discoloured. There is no system of filtration employed.

In the case of the southern supply, the length of open water-course, which passes through a country in which there are cattle, sheep, and rabbits, renders it liable to pollution from these sources; otherwise the area is free from the accidental pollution by dwellings. Again, there are no filtration-beds in connection with this reservoir.

The combined supply from these two reservoirs has occasionally, during the occurrence of continuous dry weather, shown itself to be insufficient for the needs of the population; moreover, the levels from which the two supplies come are not sufficiently high to permit of a service to the suburbs of Mornington, Roslyn, and Maori Hill, which are situated on the hills surrounding Dunedin, and which have, in consequence, to rely on rain-water alone. For this reason the City Council have recently adopted a scheme for the further extension of their area of water-supply. The new area embraces the watersheds of the rivers Waitati and Leith, the water from which is to be collected in a reservoir, whence it is to be conveyed by pipes to the city, and to various contributing reservoirs divided amongst the higher suburbs, which will result in securing for the city and suburbs an ample water-supply, and favour public health by the facility, hitherto non-existing, of flushing gutters, &c.

MEAT AND MILK SUPPLY.

Meat.

By the passing last session of the Slaughtering and Inspection Act it is to be hoped that much of the illtreatment which the staple article of our diet received, and still receives, will be diminished. The conditions under which the slaughtering of animals intended for food purposes took place were, in many instances, of the most primitive and most disgusting character. Pigs could be seen wallowing up to the shoulder in liquid filth, drinking the blood as it ran from the floor of the slaughterhouse; the whole place greasy and slippery with offal; no drainage in many cases, and a