

plumbing-work of a date forty years back, and so forth. There is the most astonishing ignorance on the part of the Council as to modern sanitary requirements, their idea of sanitary inspection beginning and ending with the removal of rubbish when it has accumulated sufficiently to cause a bad smell. At a recent meeting at which I was urging an increase in the staff of Inspectors I was informed that it was not necessary, as all the backyards had been recently examined and cleaned up. As a matter of fact, there are not many buildings where serious faults do not exist. It must be admitted that they have during the past year caused a large amount of inspection to be done, but it appears to me to have been misdirected, as on examining the premises immediately after the more serious faults remain unchanged. The appointment of a well-trained Sanitary Inspector within the last few weeks should, however, result in this error being rectified.

*Water-supply.*—In this direction true advance has been made during the last year in the introduction of water from the Waitakerei Ranges. It is only a supplementary supply, and still has to mix with the dubious water from the Western Springs. But there is now a wholesome feeling of distrust regarding the water from this latter source—a feeling which did not exist three years ago, when I ventured to question its purity, as the vehement protests in the Press at that time show. A scheme for the completion of the Waitakerei supply is in hand, and in a few years we shall be able to dispense with the waters which have for their collecting-ground the most thickly populated part of the district.

*Drainage.*—This remains unsatisfactory from sewer-outfall to house junction. A few bits of patchwork have been done in the newer parts of the district, where sewers have been laid in the streets and carried down in some instances as far as the sea-beach. But the whole system is wrong. The advancing pollution of the harbour and foreshore has already been touched on, but this does not seem to be realised by the Council, for they continue to build vast tunnels (at great expense) which are calculated to take all storm-waters, as well as sewage, to be emptied along the sea-front. An up-to-date system of separating the sewage and dealing with it by septic tanks, or other modern methods, has not yet found a place even in the list of works to be done when funds and energies permit. One great evil which the present method leads to is the backing-up by the tide at high water of the contents of these cavernous tunnels, with the result that at the lower levels, such as the end of Queen Street, the pressure leads to the forcing of traps and the flooding of yards and cellars. The soil in such places must be saturated with sewage, and certainly they are prolific in evil odours.

House connections appear to be made without being officially tested, a mere inspection being apparently considered sufficient. What a systematic testing would reveal it is hard to say, but from the frequency with which the carefully supervised work in other cities has to be renewed it is probable we would find a very insanitary condition. The new by-laws, when they come into force, provide for better work here, and it is to be hoped every effort will be made then to carry out the work as it should be, and that the present pan closets, D traps, and other sanitary crimes will be abolished.

*Nightsoil.*—A very small proportion of the houses are provided with water-closets, and for this reason the nightsoil service should be carried out in a thorough manner. The use of closed enamel pans was doubtless an advance, but, as these pans are returned unsteamed and reeking with the filth of the tubs in which they are rinsed (in cold water), the system can only be said to attain a small part of its object. As an improvement I suggested the drying of the empty pans before the lids were fitted on, and this had a slight effect; but there is a great need for a well-regulated nightsoil depot, where the pans can be steamed and the filth disposed of in a cleanly way. I cannot approve of the lumbering wagons which crawl malodorously over the roads for six or seven miles distance out into a suburb and there deposit their contents, to be ploughed in more or less roughly. With so much sea-frontage it would seem natural to use the waterway the harbour affords, and, though the carts would require to collect as before, their journeying would be shortened and the road saved much heavy traffic by having two or three collecting-wharfs where the pans could be transferred to a barge, and so towed up to some waste lauds at the head of the harbour, where a depot could affect no one, and the ground is poor and will stand many tons of nightsoil. Here the apparatus for steaming could be placed, and the pans would be returned in a clean condition. It is a question not for the city alone, but for the suburban bodies to consider, and one on which to take combined action, if that be possible. Readjustment is required also by which the payment of the contractor should no longer be directly by the tenant. This leads to the former refusing to do his work owing to the latter objecting to pay his dues, and a nuisance arises as the result.

*Refuse-removal.*—At present six-sevenths of the householders dispose of their scraps by letting them accumulate until the stench gets unbearable, then they are burned, dug in, or carted away.

The whole question of refuse-removal is to be placed on a sound footing when the destructor is established. The money has been voted, the reports on the different forms of destructor have been obtained, and it remains only to choose a suitable site to erect the apparatus and frame by-laws dealing with the matter.

I am urging the Council to adopt a closed metal refuse-pan. I trust that in the course of the next few months I shall be able to report the city has at last an up-to-date system of dealing with refuse, and that future statistics will show by a greatly diminished death-rate and by a lower incidence of zymotic disease that this reform has gone far to remove the necessity for adverse criticism on the sanitary state of the city.

*Cleansing of Streets.*—An important advance is at present in progress in the asphaltting of Queen Street. Thorough cleansing will be possible, and the complaint so frequently heard as to the evil odours arising from our main thoroughfare will be thus removed. It is to be hoped that a more cleanly way than the present of disposing of street-sweepings will be introduced. The utilising of such matter to fill up hollows and prepare vacant allotments for building purposes is