

ready. This I consider one of the greatest triumphs we have been able to secure. Much of the credit of this stroke of diplomacy is due to Mr. A. Kidd, the Mayor of Auckland. But for his help I am afraid we must have failed. Plans have been made, so that within a very short space of time Auckland, as far as these protective works are concerned, will be in a fair way of being considered safe.

The good example set by Auckland strengthened my hands greatly, and since then Christchurch and Nelson Districts have passed the same resolutions. Wellington and Wanganui have already provided hospitals, and now there only remains Dunedin to complete the cordon of defence. The place chosen for Christchurch is a portion of land which had been set aside as a cemetery reserve, near Bottle Lake. I have to thank Mr. Rhodes and the present Mayor of Christchurch, Mr. Wigram, for their sympathetic help in bringing the various local bodies together in reference to these matters, as well as in other things pertaining to the public health of the district. It was only after careful examination of the land about Lyttelton that it was decided to erect the hospital at Bottle Lake. It was clearly realised that in all probability most of the cases of plague occurring in Christchurch District would come from Lyttelton; and had the hospital been only for such diseases as plague and small-pox it might have been advisable to put up a temporary building at Lyttelton. The housing and treatment of infectious diseases generally, however, was the question that had to be faced. For long this had been in a most unsatisfactory condition. Under the Hospital Act hospital trustees cannot, it has been held, set aside any of their revenue for the erection of a hospital. Under "The Public Health Act, 1900," the onus of providing hospitals for infectious diseases is cast upon the local authorities. It has happened that cases of diphtheria have been refused admittance to a general hospital in one district; another set of trustees, while they are willing to accept diphtheria, are disinclined to take in scarlet fever, and so it goes on. Now, when these hospitals under construction are ready, all these difficulties will be removed. No longer will every one operated on suffer as a matter of course from scarlet fever, as was unfortunately the case in a hospital in one of our principal towns.

The following are the arrangements made for infectious disease occurring in Lyttelton: A special car has been set aside for the purpose of conveying the patient through the tunnel; an ambulance will meet the train on the Christchurch side. In this way, without much fatigue to the unfortunate patient, and with absolutely no danger to the general public, the difficulty of serving our sparsely placed population with something approaching modern hospital treatment has been overcome.

The cost of erecting several small hospitals would not be great, and, if necessary, they will have to be put up; but the maintenance and providing of separate and distinct staffs would, I am convinced, not only be a great and unwarrantable waste of money, but the efficacy of these several small hospitals would not be equal to that of one central one. With these views, I am pleased to say, most of the local authorities are in complete accord.

The selection of the site for all such hospitals has been a difficult and a delicate task. In the cases of Auckland, Christchurch, and Nelson this task has been undertaken at the request of the local authorities by myself. That my selections could possibly be made without arousing opposition from those residing in the neighbourhood was not to be expected. I have been most agreeably surprised, however, to find that in all cases a personal interview with the aggrieved people has ended in our parting the best of friends, and my being able to convince the protesters that our attitude was honest and unbiassed, and that, as a matter of fact, my selection was as good as could have been made. This happy ending of our differences was due in not a small degree to the broad-hearted and public-spirited way in which the delegates of the several local bodies concerned were pleased to view these matters. Even then it remains not an easy task to persuade a man, the value of whose property you will in all probability depreciate, that there is no other way out of the difficulty. This has been done, however, and I am glad to say that all over the colony the departmental suggestions in reference to these matters have been received in a most gracious spirit. The meeting in Nelson was most enthusiastic. The hospital question was decided in the course of an interview of something like an hour's duration, without an inharmonious note being struck. Much of the credit of this was due to the Mayor (Mr. Baigent) and his able Town Clerk (Mr. Gully).

The following telegram was drafted for your consideration, and sent by you to all local bodies and newspapers in the colony: "In view of the continued presence of plague in Sydney and Brisbane, and a recent occurrence of a death from the disease in our own colony, it behoves every one, private as well as public, to do everything in their power to destroy all rodents. A careful house-to-house inspection of all back yards, &c., should be undertaken by every local body. No waste food ought to be thrown upon the yards, and all house refuse should be kept in a covered metal box, so that rats cannot reach it. All local authorities should institute a bi-weekly removal of all house refuse. No fowls ought to be kept, except in properly constructed pens. Special men should be told off in every borough to trap and kill rats." The replies from many of the recipients were most encouraging, but there is lack of continuity in the efforts of many. Were it fully realised that plague has visited our shores, that rats and dirt are the most potent allies of the disease, more, I feel, would be done. That good will come of the iteration and reiteration of this truth I feel certain, but, like the pagan warrior, "I would that some of the future rewards might be translated to the present."

Profiting greatly by my stay at the Sydney Plague Hospital, I suggested that those officers of the Department who had not had a personal acquaintance with plague should visit Sydney, and make themselves conversant with the methods of treatment, &c., practised in that city. Dr. Valantine has returned from a very profitable trip, and Dr. Makgill will leave for New South Wales as soon as he has been able to clear up the more urgent matters in his district. I have to thank the Chief Health Officer (Dr. Thompson), Dr. Tidswell, Dr. Salter, Dr. Henry, and all the other officers of the Health Department over there for the great kindness shown by them to Dr.