

cases which exist in some of the recently annexed South Sea islands. One case, of which a full report is adhibited, was that of a Chinaman living at Macrae's Flat. This case, in conjunction with Dr. Ogston, I personally examined. The patient had suffered from the disease for a great many years. His condition when examined was that the greater part of the fingers of both hands, the toes, and anterior part of both feet had withered away. The Chinaman suggested that his hands had been frost-bitten, but an examination of the affected parts showed clearly that, while the greater parts of the fingers had been absorbed, the nails were still present. There was no doubt whatever as to the nature of the disease, but it is interesting from a clinical point of view to remember the alleged cause of the malformations. During conversation with the patient he was asked if he had ever seen any similar cases in his own country, and he replied that he had seen a great many. The type of the disease was that very commonly seen on the streets in India and China. There was no erosion of the surface tissues, and consequently, looking to the fact that leprosy is spread mainly by means of inoculation, just as plague and syphilis are, there was little or no danger to be apprehended from a public-health point of view. The patient is a gold-seeker, and lives in a very secluded part of the once-popular Flat. Arrangements were made by the County Council whereby he is to be supplied with food, in return for which they take his gold. His house is situated some half-mile from the nearest neighbour, and several miles from the nearest village. The food is placed in a box about a quarter of a mile from his hut; the gold is boiled before being handled by the bank, and in this way all possible source of infection is destroyed. The police authorities have been asked to keep an eye upon the man to see he does not break bounds. (Several photographs of this case are attached.)

The majority of the Maori cases inquired into have turned out to be a mixture of syphilis and tuberculosis. The one exception is that of an old man situated in the Raglan County. In his case, owing to the fact that there are abrasions of the surface tissues, more stringent precautions have been taken in order to prevent his communicating with the rest of his people. A house has been obtained in an isolated part, and a special attendant has been employed.

Although there is no reliable information with regard to the alleged cases in Penrhyn Island beyond the fact that a surgeon of one of His Majesty's gunboats visited the place and described several cases which he saw, it is intended, at as early a period as the business of the Department will permit, that either myself or one of the other officers should make a survey of our newly acquired dependencies. Should it be found that there are any great number of cases of leprosy amongst them a scheme will have to be evolved for their complete isolation and protection. There are many diseases peculiar to the islanders which it would be well the Department should thoroughly investigate in view of the possible greater intercommunication with New Zealand, and this will be part of the work of the officer appointed to visit these places to investigate.

EXAMINATION OF RETURNED TROOPERS.

Early in October Cabinet decided that this Department should undertake the examination of all troopers returning from South Africa. Further, that the various District Health Officers should act as members of the various Pension Boards throughout the colony. When it is pointed out that no less than 400 have been examined between the beginning of October and the 31st March, you will easily see that very great demands have been made upon the officers of this Department. The home-coming of so large a number of men who have been exposed to the privations and diseases consequent upon such a struggle as the Empire has been engaged in during the last two years and a half has occasioned the appearance in the colony of some diseases which hitherto were not present. A great number of cases of measles occurred through the introduction of that disease by some of the troopers on board the troopship "Tagus" which landed at Port Chalmers. In consequence of the statement made to me that the men had been supplied with blankets which had previously been infected, and the occurrence of several cases among the Defence people whose duty it was to store these articles, I advised that they should be thoroughly disinfected or destroyed, and as a precautionary measure that no blankets should be allowed to land in any other instance.

In addition to the gunshot wounds from which a good many of our returned men suffered, there were a large number of cases of malaria. In these instances we endeavoured to find the specific organisms in the blood of those affected, and in some cases we were successful. Contrary to what might have been expected, there has been no case of the disease occurring in any one who has not at some time or other been absent from the colony. It is at present the subject of experiment whether any of the variety of mosquitoes which we have in New Zealand are capable of acting as a medium of the disease between an infected person and an otherwise healthy one. The result of this experiment will be detailed in a later report.

There have been several cases of what is termed hæmaturia. This disease is prevalent in a great many parts of Africa, as well as other tropical parts. It is due to the organism *bilhartzia hæmatobia*. The presence of these organisms in the urine during the acute stage of the disease has been detected on many occasions. An unusual number of cases of dysentery of very intractable type occurred during last year. As Dr. Makgill in his report points out, such cases are said by the medical men of long standing in Auckland never to have occurred before, and it is suggested that the disease has been introduced by our returned soldiers.

As indicative of the mindfulness and interest taken in the health and welfare of those of our sons who, answering to the Empire's call, went to South Africa, the fact that we tried to protect them against enteric ought to be recorded. Impressed by the value of Dr. Rideal's paper upon the bactericidal effect of the acid sulphate of soda, and fortified by the result of some experiments made here, I suggested that each member of the Tenth Contingent should be provided with a tin case containing 100 5-grain tabloids. 300,000 of these tabloids were cabled Home for so that they could meet our men on their arrival at the Cape.