

*Sanitation of Hotels.*

An effort is being made to improve the general sanitary condition of hotels in the district. In the older ones grave defects are common, and even the more recently built ones often afford matter for criticism.

The hearty co-operation of the police has been secured in this direction, and, as usual where the services of that Force can be called on, some real benefit is likely to be the result. A few hints on the principal points to be observed have been drawn up and issued to the police for their guidance, and serious defects, if not remedied, will be brought to the notice of the Licensing Benches. Drainage, water-supply, privy accommodation, and the better ventilation of bed-rooms are more especially being attended to. As regards the last item, too often one finds rooms without communication directly with the open air; these are being condemned, as also dark ill-ventilated passages.

Our inspection has not as yet been systematic over the province, except in the case of hotels in the tourist district, which have been reported on by Inspector Winstanley.

In three instances the owners have reorganized the drainage systems on our recommendation—two in the city and one at Thames—while minor improvements have been effected elsewhere.

*School Sanitation.*

My time has been too fully occupied to go systematically into this question. As regards the public schools visited, on the whole little room for criticism is found. Overcrowding exists here and there, but is remedied as soon as the necessary funds are available. The Education Board are fortunate in having in their architects, Messrs. Mitchell and Watt, gentlemen who are enthusiasts on sanitary matters, and who keep in touch with modern advance.

The disposal of school drainage in the suburbs and country districts where no sewerage systems exist is a troublesome question, more especially owing to the difficulty of finding a local School Committee to take an intelligent interest in the matter. These bodies find obstacles even to the regular cleansing of privies, and have sometimes replaced the architect's work with a foul and dangerous cesspit, risking the children's health in order to save themselves trouble.

In the septic-tank system probably the solution of the difficulty will be found; but various points have to be considered before this can be generally applied. Thus the flow of sewage is very intermittent, being only during certain hours of the day, and during holidays is absent altogether. The possible effect of this must be taken into account. Then, again, a trough closet—the only suitable form in schools—discharging a large volume of fluid suddenly into a small tank will tend to replace too quickly the contained matter, and might lead to solids being washed through unchanged. It is evident that the experience, satisfactory though it be, of cities and private homes does not necessarily apply to country schools. Then, again, a safe position for the filter-beds and for the disposal of the effluent is in many places hard to find, especially when we consider the inherent love of investigation in children; and, above all, is the lack of assurance that the system will receive fair and sufficient attention at the hands of the School Committee. As regards slop-waters and the discharge from urinals, where there is a sufficiently porous subsoil I have recommended a septic tank with subsoil distribution of the effluent in open-joint tiles, using the natural soil for a filter-bed, and so avoiding the erection of one in the school playground. This system has been installed at Mount Eden and Onehunga public schools by Mr. Mitchell, who suggested the plan, and whose advice on the subject has been invaluable. At Mount Eden especially a very dangerous condition had existed, the soil being saturated with urine and fecal matter, which was buried in the school grounds, and I had reason to complain of the delay in carrying out the improvements. The septic tank, with distribution of effluent in the subsoil, which is here very porous, together with closed pans in the privies, has provided a satisfactory remedy, and one which the Education Board will do well to copy where similar conditions are found. At Devonport, Kamo, Waitohi, and Karangahake public schools I have also made suggestions for improved drainage.

The question of disinfection of schools has been already dealt with. In this connection it would be well were the walls to be treated from time to time with a lime-wash, both as a germicide and as a remedy for the grimy condition too often to be seen. Improvement also might be made as regards sweeping. On entering immediately after school hours one finds the cleaner busy with his brush, filling the air with dust (and therefore, probably, also infective germs) which settles on the desks and on the walls. Damp cloths or mops, or even a sprinkling of wet sawdust, would avoid this.

It is to be regretted that the playground should receive so little thought in both primary and secondary schools in the towns. There is a tendency to crowd it with new buildings, as the school attendance increases, until there is but little room left for the children to get air, sunlight, and exercise. Without going the length of having a football or cricket ground attached to each school, I think it would not be amiss were there a regulation made as to the minimum space per head permissible for playgrounds. Where the school attendance has increased so as to overstep this limit more land should then be acquired. I think the outlay would be warranted, affecting as it does the health of the children.

*Septic Tanks.*

Not only in schools, but for private homes and elsewhere where the disposal of sewage has presented obstacles, I have advocated the septic system of treatment, and many of the public have shown a considerable interest in the subject. In order to demonstrate the method, on behalf of the Education Board, Mr. Mitchell constructed a small model, which he kindly placed at my disposal. It was examined while in the office by a very large number of persons, and proved useful in convincing them of the extreme simplicity of the process. I further used it to illustrate a lecture at the Auckland Institute. As already mentioned in connection with schools, the conditions under