

Inspectors are necessary for the Marlborough and Westland Sub-districts. Sanitary inspectors, as required by our Department, should be entirely different from the type usually styled "inspector of nuisances," with which the former name had become associated in the colony before 1900. Such men had numerous duties given them, dog-tax collecting and collar-distributing, cab-licensing, &c.—a heterogeneous conglomeration, of which pure sanitary-inspector work was but a trifling constituent. Such men—many of them in my district—are very excellent and worthy officers, but they themselves would be the first to acknowledge they are not conversant with such a knowledge of sanitary-inspectorship work as the Local Government Board, England, and as our departmental regulations specify as necessary. A certificate of the Sanitary Institute implies that its possessor has this expert knowledge. Without able sanitary inspectors of that specialised type the District Health Officer's work is greatly hampered, if not almost nullified. I would ask, then, that those to be placed in my district should be as far as possible on a parallel with the present Inspector. It is unfair to the man who has spent much time and money in educating himself for the special object of being a sanitary inspector to classify him with those of an inferior standing by entitling all and sundry "sanitary inspectors." I would respectfully request that the inspectors required be only appointed permanently on the condition that they obtain the certificate of the Sanitary Institute. I do not propose a problem without indicating its solution. This is simple. The Sanitary Institute has held such examinations in Sydney, and I understand they would be willing to arrange them at Wellington. I am greatly interested in the training of these men. I take to myself some of the credit of the success of my own Inspector's methods, and I am willing to help others to compete for these examinations. I sincerely hope you will give my suggestion your accord, for the sake of the inhabitants of Westland and Marlborough, and to keep our departmental inspectors at a standard equal to if not better than that required by the Local Government Board, England.

INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS FROM THE HYGIENIC STANDPOINT.

I may introduce this subject by stating that, as you are aware, the London School Board has a medical staff for the above purpose; that in Germany and France the superintendence of school hygiene in general, and the examination and approval of the plans of new school buildings, must be performed by an official—Kreis Physicus in Germany—having such qualifications and holding such a position as those of the District Health Officer here.

The Department of Education in New Zealand does not possess a hygienist staff, nor does it seem necessary when the District Health Officers of the sister Department are available. This, I presume, is the conclusion of the Department of Education, for I take as a precedent the request to me to examine and report upon the Millerton School, and that afterwards a grant was given by that Department provided the work was done to the satisfaction of the District Health Officer.

I do not think, however, that the status of the District Health Officer as hygienist is in such matters rightly understood by the Department of Education, by the Education Boards, nor, in truth, by myself. For instance, though I learn from the newspaper-cuttings that such, as stated above, has been the result of my Millerton inspection, yet I have not been advised or consulted thereon, though, as the statement would show, I am in a sense made responsible.

Obviously the simpler sanitary inspection of schools is a matter for the every-day work of our sanitary inspectors; but in higher matters such as the health or otherwise of the site, construction, ventilation, lighting, heating, proper build of desks, and prevention of spread of infectious diseases, what is the position? All these are vital matters which concern the specialist in school hygiene, but the last alone seems as yet to receive adequate attention.

For months I strove to bring about an improvement, on hygienic grounds, in the architectural features of a proposed school near Blenheim; yet, though convinced the Marlborough Education Board were with me, I was almost baffled in my desire to get a better system of ventilation and light for the scholars by the opposition of the architect on almost a mere question of length of studs. The Board ultimately upheld my opinion as being that of the expert with whom responsibility of questions of hygiene should rest. The Nelson Education Board have always agreeably received and acted upon our Department's suggestions.

So far my connection with school hygiene mainly consists in making a report after inspection. Further action by me in the way of seeing if the specifications of that report are carried out, or if the work done meets with my approval, would, I fear, be deemed interference, and, as I say, I do not know if I have authority to take such further action. I therefore ask for an authoritative statement through the Department of Education as to with whom lies the responsibility of seeing that the hygienic conditions of schools, present and future, are efficiently improved and brought more up to date and in accord with modern requirements, and as to whether the approval of the District Health Officer, as the sanitary expert in the district, is to be received in the carrying-out of such improvements.

Diagrams of modern schoolrooms and modern school-furniture are absolutely necessary. I am aware that very few schools in the colony would pass the building rules of the Education Board of England or the German standard. I have done what I can to prevent continuation of a style of building in one part of my district which no hygienist could speak of too badly. These efforts could be rendered much less likely to be called the personal ideas of the District Health Officer if rules for the building of schools from the standpoints I have mentioned were issued by the Department of Education.

REGISTRATION OF PLUMBERS.

I can see no reason why an inferior standard of plumbing-work should be considered good enough for the smaller towns. Defective or antiquated plumbing-fittings, with bad workmanship, is worse—that is, more a danger to the individual and public health—than not having these—certainly not sanitary—improvements at all. Again, the health of the individual, poor or rich, in a small town is of quite as much importance as in one of bigger status. Yet the fact remains that you rarely get Wellington and Christchurch samples of plumbing outside those cities. This is regrettably evident in my district.