

Foremost in trades does that of the plumber most intimately concern the public health. Plumbers and drain-connectors should be, and very many are, our allies in the application of those principles in domestic sanitation and drainage which we are engaged in advancing.

A general standard of all-round efficiency can, I think, only be obtained by the registration of the plumbers of New Zealand on the lines of the National Registration of Plumbers in England, initiated by the Worshipful Company of Plumbers of London, which has now become the basis of a Bill before the Imperial Parliament. There are three parts in any such scheme of registration for our colony: (1.) The manner in which instruction in the trade shall be received; this will include apprenticeship or other way of gaining practical experience, and attendance at a technical school. (2.) The nature of the examination and the examining board; the former should be both theoretical and practical, including a *viva voce* and operative-work test. The examining board should have representatives of (a) the teaching bodies—that is, the master plumbers and the technical schools, (b) the registered plumbers as a body, (c) the local governing bodies, (d) the Health Department. (3.) The making, keeping, and control of the Register. This also concerns those fairly entitled to be registered as qualified plumbers who are already engaged in the trade.

It is only by some such scheme as the above that the technical classes for plumbers in smaller towns can be made of any real value. A New Zealand standard must be fixed. For it must be obvious that if the low standard prevailing in any small town—aye, even in Nelson City—is to be the criterion of a good plumber, then the technical teaching in plumbing in these places will be valueless—its end and aim entirely frustrated. It should be the object of each technical school in small towns to turn out plumbers quite on a par with those from the bigger towns. Such, however, is only attainable by uniformity in registration.

Much more could be written on this subject, but I make these outlines more particularly on behalf of the country plumber. It would give me much satisfaction in the future to be able to lecture on the relation of plumbing to sanitation and public health in all parts of my district to bodies of young plumbers who are candidates for registration.

It appears there are over eleven thousand registered plumbers already in England and Wales, although general registration is comparatively an innovation. Further, there is a very wide feeling at Home that the Plumbers Registration Bill, which has been before Parliament, should now be passed into law. It is held that registration "will raise the status of the trade and the standard of the work, consequently the remuneration." Also, this is a movement, in whatever part of the world it is made, for the public benefit and for the preservation of health.

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CANTERBURY DISTRICT.

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THE Canterbury Health District comprises the Provincial District of Canterbury, the County of Waitaki, in Otago, and the County of Kaikoura, in Marlborough, with a population of 159,059.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The only statistics available are those compiled by the Registrar-General, which refer to Christchurch City and the four suburban boroughs—Sydenham, Linwood, St. Albans, and Woolston.

Birth-rate.

The birth-rate per 1,000 population for the colony in 1902 was 25·89; for Christchurch City, 25·84; for Christchurch City and suburbs, 26·36. The birth-rate for the city alone is therefore lower than the birth-rate for the colony, while the rate for the city and suburbs is higher. Christchurch, with and without the suburbs, has the second highest rate of the four chief cities.

Death-rate.

The death-rate per 1,000 population for the colony in 1901 was 9·81; Christchurch City, 13·11; for the city and suburbs, 12·77.

The following table, taken from the Registrar-General's report in the *New Zealand Gazette* of the 12th March, 1903, gives the returns for Christchurch and suburbs for 1902:—

	Census, March, 1901.	Estimated Mean Popula- tion, 1902.	Births registered in 1902.	Proportion of Births to the 1,000 of Population.	Deaths registered in 1902.							
					Males.			Females.			Total Deaths.	Proportion of Deaths to the 1,000 of Mean Population.
					Under 1 Year.	1 and under 5 Years.	5 Years and over.	Under 1 Year.	1 and under 5 years.	5 Years and over.		
Christchurch ...	...	18,306	473	25·84	40	7	71	23	6	77	224	12·24
Linwood ...	...	7,035	217	30·85	18	3	34	11	4	43	113	16·06
St. Albans ...	57,041	7,073	168	23·75	4	...	33	5	3	26	71	10·04
Sydenham ...	...	12,042	323	26·82	26	3	44	17	5	40	135	11·21
Woolston ...	...	2,664	61	22·90	...	...	13	2	2	12	29	10·89
Totals ...	57,041	47,120	1,242	26·36	88	13	195	58	20	198	572	12·14