

informed that full instructions in disinfection generally, and the formalin method in particular, would be given to their inspectors, or the persons they appointed to carry out the disinfection, at this office or at any house in their district which needed disinfection. The Borough of Woolston immediately acceded to my request, and undertook the disinfection of infected premises. One Road Board sent their Clerk to have a look at the apparatus, but apparently he was not much impressed by his visit, as that was the only action taken by them in the matter. The other Road Boards, as far as I know, took no notice whatever of my communication. The only inference to be drawn is that they did not consider themselves the proper authorities to undertake this work. In this, I must say, I entirely agree with them, as they have no staff or facilities for doing such work. The remedy is, of course, the combination of such bodies under one larger body, and the appointment of an inspector properly trained and qualified. As the amalgamation of other boroughs to form a Greater Christchurch was pending, they did not feel inclined to make any new departure for the short time that they were still to be in existence. The disinfection was in the meantime carried out by the Inspector of the Health Department. As the cases continued to increase in February, the Health Department was unable to cope with this work, and at my suggestion the boroughs that it was proposed to form into Greater Christchurch agreed to appoint a special inspector to carry out this work. Inspector Preston was then appointed, and his time has since been fully occupied in visiting the cases as soon as notified, and carrying out disinfection when the cases had recovered. The outlying districts in the Road Boards the Health Department has continued to look after, and this work has occupied a considerable portion of the Inspector's time. This work is not, strictly speaking, the business of the Health Department; but it seemed the only course to adopt until a suitable combination of local bodies in the district could be made, and a suitable inspector appointed.

The cards issued by the Department to be left at the house by the Inspector on his first visit, which are to be filled up and returned by the householder when the period of infection is over and the premises are ready for disinfection, have proved of great service. The certificates of efficient disinfection also issued by the Department have proved very useful. Endeavours are being made to prevent the readmission of scholars to school, or factory employees to a factory, unless the scholar or the employee can show to the schoolmaster or the manager such a certificate signed by the Inspector.

The chief towns where infectious disease has been prevalent throughout the district have, on their responsibilities in the matter being pointed out, undertaken the disinfection of infected premises. The necessary apparatus for disinfecting with formalin vapour and spray have been supplied through this office, and the Department's Inspector has in each case shown the Inspector of the local authority the proper method of disinfecting premises.

DISINFECTION OF SCHOOLS.

As measles and scarlet fever had been prevalent in Christchurch and district before the schools broke up in December, it was thought advisable that the schools in those districts where these diseases had occurred should be disinfected before the scholars reassembled. The North Canterbury Board of Education and the School Committees gave the Department every assistance in making arrangements for having disinfection carried out, and twelve schools were disinfected by the Department's Inspector.

GENERAL SANITATION OF THE DISTRICT.

Detailed remarks on this subject had better be referred to a future report, as the period, five months, during which I have been in the district—the greater portion of which has been taken up by the prevalence of infectious disease—has been too short to do more than obtain a general acquaintance with the main details of the sanitation of the chief towns and the majority of the small ones.

Christchurch.

A most important event in the past year has been the amalgamation of three adjoining boroughs with the city to form a Greater Christchurch.

Though it might be considered somewhat egotistical on the part of the Health Department (if a department of any kind can be egotistical) to imagine that the main object of amalgamation was for sanitary purposes, yet it is difficult to exaggerate the benefits that should result to the combined districts from a sanitary point of view. The provision of a high-pressure water-supply has had a first place in all programmes of new works that it has been proposed the new Council should undertake.

The present individual artesian water-supply is bristling with disadvantages, not so much from the quality of the water itself as from the quantity. The water itself is probably not directly responsible for causing any specific disease, as the water is in most cases a good water (though samples have been obtained from wells which smell offensively, and appear to be contaminated with organic matter of vegetable origin, and these waters might have a prejudicial effect on health), but the lack of an abundant supply has always been reckoned as a most important defect in the sanitation of a large town.

The possibility of the completion of a constant water-supply introduces another possibility—the completion of the water carriage of sewage. The sealed-pan system at present in use within the old boundary of the city is an immense advance on the other system; but the water-closet system, if carried out on modern principles, is a still greater advance on the sealed-pan system. A sanitary earth-closet system is an unattainable ideal in any large town; an insanitary pan-closet is the reality that occurs; a sanitary water-closet is an attainable ideal.

The city destructor will now destroy the rubbish of the whole city, and not the rubbish of the central portion only.