

*Norsewood.*

This town stands at a higher elevation than any other in my district. Three cases of diphtheria have been notified here—all due to defective arrangements in the several houses. These have been reported on, and the nuisance abated. The defective sanitary arrangements that obtained in the two hotels in the town have been reported on and rectified.

*Makotuku.*

This stands at much the same elevation as Ormondville, and is still more open and scattered. There is very little sickness here, and none reflecting on its sanitary condition. The sanitary defects in connection with the two hotels have been reported on and improved.

*Dannevirke.*

This is a favourably placed town, and on the whole well ordered. It stands at a high elevation; the soil is porous, and the town enjoys the services of that excellent scavenger, the wind. One case of enteric and two of diphtheria have occurred in Dannevirke during the past year. Both cases of diphtheria died, and both occurred in the same house, as the result of the same causes; otherwise there has been nothing which points to defective sanitation. There have been thirty-one cases of scarlet fever notified—only five less than in Napier, with one-fourth the population. Mild cases are often not seen by a doctor, and therefore are not notified. In this way the cases escape isolation, the premises and things are not disinfected, and it is impossible to take steps to prevent these cases from spreading the disease amongst those who are susceptible. The drainage scheme, which was designed by Mr. Leslie Reynolds, is being taken advantage of. There have been 240 house connections since the scheme was available, 132 having taken place during the present year. Several householders are under notice to connect, and I predict that there will be a still greater advantage taken of the sewer in the near future. The septic tank into which the sewage is received is doing its work well, and the effluent is less than usually offensive. It is further purified by being conducted over cultivated soil, which it in turn fertilises.

I have had some slight difficulty with the Borough Council during the past year. The Mayor seemed to consider that my communications to the Council were to him personally, and treated them as private correspondence, failing to bring them before the Council. I think that there is now a better understanding, and the mistake is not likely to recur.

*Woodville.*

This borough is advancing deliberately. New houses are going up here and there, and some of the old houses have been condemned, and have either been pulled down or made sanitary by structural alterations.

Eleven deaths from tuberculosis have taken place in Woodville during the past year. With the exception of one case of diphtheria, there have been no cases of acute infectious disease notified from Woodville.

*Gisborne.*

From its situation this borough should be the healthiest in the Dominion, but from its defective sanitary arrangements, or perhaps want of any sanitary arrangements, it suffers more from preventable disease than any other town in my district. Nineteen cases of enteric and nine of diphtheria have been notified during the past year. This compares very unfavourably with Hastings, with five of each, both towns having nearly the same population, and yet Hastings is not a pattern for sanitary imitation. Both compare very unfavourably with Napier—five of one and four of the other—yet Napier has more than twice the population. Gisborne compares unfavourably with all the other towns in my district.

The scheme for supplying Gisborne with pure water, designed by Mr. Hay, C.E., of Dunedin, was completed last spring, and was available for the town people during the long spell of dry weather which occurred last summer. The boon of enjoying a copious supply of pure water during drought was enjoyed for the first time in the history of Gisborne, and was much appreciated. The water is a good potable one, but has the disadvantage of being hard, most of the hardness being temporary. It should prove a factor in reducing the amount of preventable disease in Gisborne; but, with the increasing congestion in the centre of the town, I fear there will not be so very much amelioration till a thorough system of drainage on a sound design is installed and taken advantage of. The Borough Council have employed Mr. Mestayer, C.E., of Wellington, to draw up such a scheme, which he submitted to them some time back. To carry out the whole scheme at once would involve a larger expenditure than Gisborne is prepared to face; but the design is of such a nature that the work can be carried on in sections where most required at present, and added to as required without interfering with its homogeneity. A portion of the work to drain the most congested portion of the town, where drainage is most urgently needed, could be carried out for £50,000. This should not prove too great a sum to face, and the expenditure would prove a very sound investment. Up to the present the matter has not been laid before the ratepayers, but when it is—if it is properly represented to them—I have little doubt that the poll will favour the raising of the loan. It is risking the health of the residents of the town to attempt to carry on in Gisborne much longer with this condition of affairs, and if the installation of drainage is much delayed reckoning must follow. The Gisborne people should lose no time in proceeding with the work.

I mentioned in my last report that the plans for the much-needed isolation hospital were out. I am now pleased to be able to report that the structure is completed in a manner that