

SANITATION OF HOTELS.

The outcome of the co-operation of our Inspectors with the police in reporting to the Licensing Committees, where the Licensing Benches have required recommendations made to be carried out, may be summed up in one word, "excellent." The encomium of the results I have had opportunity of hearing from many persons—commercial travellers amongst the number—encourages sustained persistence in our efforts where the Licensing Committee is lukewarm or merely "receives" the reports and advice of this Department pertaining to the better sanitation of hotels under its jurisdiction.

The following table shows the number of inspections made by each Inspector and the total number of hotels reported upon:—

Hotels inspected during the Period ended 31st March, 1908.

Licensing Committee.	Chief Inspector Schauer.	Inspector Gardiner.	Inspector Wilson.	Inspector O'Brien.	Inspector Perry.	Inspector Dorizac.	Inspector Miller.	Total.
Egmont	1	7	..	..	..	..	..	8
Taranaki	7	3	..	..	..	..	..	10
Patea	6	13	..	..	..	..	..	19
Hawera	7	9	..	..	..	..	..	16
Wanganui	15	..	..	..	..	..	..	15
Rangitikei	9	..	3	..	..	..	..	12
Oroua	7	..	2	3	..	..	..	12
Manawatu	10	..	6	..	..	..	..	16
Palmerston North	9	..	..	1	6	..	..	16
Otaki	5	..	..	3	..	..	..	8
Pahiatua	..	..	..	..	..	8	..	8
Masterton	..	..	..	..	..	14	..	14
South Wairarapa	..	..	..	..	..	2	14	16
Totals	76	32	11	7	6	24	14	170

Each separate report has been supervised by myself, and a general report, with recommendations approved, accompanied these when sent to the Committee. In many instances personal inspections were made by me.

It has been a pleasure to assist the Committees of South Wairarapa, Masterton, Pahiatua, Manawatu, Oroua, Rangitikei, Patea, Hawera, and Egmont. Generally our efforts met with the unstinted commendation of these licensing authorities. In Palmerston North our action was, in a sense, regarded as an innovation, and perhaps received the inevitable faint praise—that welcome of the "something new." Good results have, however, been obtained in this district, and already the number of "no recommendations to make" for future hotel reports is quickly increasing.

The Taranaki and Wanganui Committees were especially weak. The former seemed quite dismayed by a little opposition and some legal flourishings at the annual meeting, and ultimately sought safety by not asking that the Department's recommendations be required to be carried out in their entirety. Nevertheless the licensees have evidenced a desire to have Departmental "tags" removed, and I hope eventually to see these hotels in such sanitary condition that it will not be necessary to worry this Committee with any reports.

The lack of earnest of the Wanganui Committee is unaccountable. In the report to the annual meeting on the 10th June, as requested by this Committee, I commented upon Chief Inspector Schauer's report on a prominent hotel in Wanganui as follows: "The revelations as to the plumbing and sanitary fittings on these premises are astounding. Nothing more than one week should be allowed in which to enter upon the work of recommendation No. 1." Yet as far as the published accounts go—obviously, however, carefully curtailed by the local press—the license in this case was granted without comment. To my surprise, on arriving in Wanganui more than a month after the licensing meeting, I found the following state of affairs, which had existed at the time of the annual meeting: A water-closet compartment opening direct off a corridor amongst bedrooms had a notice, "Please keep this door shut." Reason obvious: the stench of the interior was abominable. Under the closet-seat was an accumulation of rats' excrement. A hole had been eaten into the seamed-lead soilpipe, and consequently the sewer-gas of the Wanganui sewerage system had free vent into the hotel. This closet, too, was just above the kitchen and dining-room.

I gave instructions that the door should be locked and the closet dismantled immediately. This was done. Nevertheless, a published report of the licensing meeting glibly made mention of the Department's reports as being "also satisfactory, containing a few recommendations for minor sanitary improvements," and the Committee weakly complied with an appeal that "It was time enough at the next quarterly meeting, after the licensees had been given an opportunity to make alterations, and had disregarded the same, for the Chairman to comment upon the same."

The amount of sanitary improvement in hotels recommended and already accomplished in the first year of this Department's systematic attention thereto is a sufficient justification for our efforts, and adds greatly to the comfort and health of the traveller and to the satisfaction of the genuine licensee, who is only too glad to be able to say his place "has passed the Health Department."