

DRAINAGE-WORK AND DISPOSAL OF REFUSE.

Year by year sees the boroughs and townships in this district advancing along the broad road to modern sanitation by means of drainage-work and proper refuse-disposal. In this regard special mention must be made of Palmerston North, Feilding, Masterton, Eketahuna, Pahiatua, and Petone, all of which are extending their drainage schemes. The outlying parts of these boroughs, which formerly were unsewered, and contrasted strongly and unfavourably with the other and sewered portions of the town, are now receiving or are about to receive that greatest of all blessings from a householder's point of view, a water-carriage drainage system. Under the old order of things one saw houses perhaps placed on small allotments with no means of disposing of their waste waters, &c., except in an unsavoury (to say the least of it) cesspool. If no cesspool were in existence, the slops, &c., had to be thrown over the small back yard, which was probably too small to boast a worked garden, where the polluted soil could be turned over and thus allow nature to step in and thus eradicate the contamination.

At Kaponga a proposal is being put before the ratepayers to borrow sufficient money to establish a high-pressure water-supply and drainage scheme. If this is carried out it should prove very beneficial, as the business portion of this town is extremely crowded. Small epidemics of typhoid have occurred here, and if the proposal is accepted and the work completed it should go far towards preventing a recurrence.

Having due regard to the limitations of the septic-tank system of sewage-treatment, it may be said that at all the boroughs in this district, with one exception, where the sewer-connection is obviously faultily constructed, the installations are working satisfactorily. Mechanical difficulties at Feilding gave some trouble. At Palmerston North much difference of opinion existed as to effectivity. Special investigations were made by me on three occasions, and I was enabled to come to the conclusion that there is no need to be disquieted. The especial trouble is the amount of secondary black deposit which passes from the tank to the filter-beds. I have, however, pointed out that secondary black deposit is a concomitant of a normally working septic tank, and cannot, as far as I can learn, be avoided in this method of sewage-treatment.

INSPECTION OF FOOD.

The following list shows the amount of foodstuffs condemned by the Department during the year:—

31 bundles of fish,	3 crates crayfish,
113 kerosene-tins whitebait,	21 hapuka,
2 pieces meat,	1 ham,
2 crates fowls,	2 crates turkeys,
1 crate rabbits,	12 hares,
58 boxes dates,	149 sacks potatoes.
11 cases chocolate (damaged by water),	

Owing to the number of infectious diseases notified, and to the fact that for more than half the year we have had the services of only one Inspector in Wellington in place of three, we have not been able to give as much attention to foodstuffs as they demand. Now that the Foods and Drugs Act has become law, it will, as I have already pointed out, require one Inspector for Wellington City to properly administer it, and he will, if as energetic as I would wish, have very little spare time to attend to any other duties. I have found it impossible, owing to our curtailed staff, to carry on that important branch of our work which was alluded to in last year's report as receiving special attention—viz., the material sold in the auction-marts. As a rule, it is to the auction-mart that any blemished foodstuff is sent, because it cannot be disposed of in the ordinary manner; consequently, it is at these places that constant supervision is needed.

In three cases, as will be seen in the table of prosecutions, it was necessary to take proceedings in connection with unsound food, and in every case a very substantial penalty was imposed.

BY-LAWS.

The model by-laws framed by the Department last year have been in great demand, and have been supplied on request to various boroughs and townships, including Drainage and Plumbing By-laws to Nelson; Nightsoil By-laws to Johnsonville Town Board, Greytown Borough Council, Horowhenua County Council, and Rongotea Town Board. An Offensive Trade By-law was drawn up and submitted to the Petone Borough Council. It was approved by the local authority and adopted, after slight emendations.

LEGAL ACTIONS.

The following is a list of the legal proceedings undertaken by the Department this year:—

No.	Date.	Particulars.	Fine and Costs.
	1907.		
1.	May 31 ..	Not notifying case of scarlet fever	£ s. d. 0 1 0
2.	July 15 ..	Scarlet-fever patient exposing herself in shop	7 16 0
3.	" 15 ..	Shop let for hire without disinfection or informing incoming tenant scarlet fever had been in house within previous six weeks	5 4 0
4.	Aug. 28 ..	Offering unsound butter for sale	7 15 0
5.	Sept. 23 ..	Cabman taking infectious case, and only having disinfection performed on compulsion	Dismissed
6.	Oct. 22 ..	Preservative (formalin) in milk	6 10 0
7.	" 23 ..	Failing to notify case of infectious disease	1 15 0
8.	" 23 ..	"	2 8 0
9.	Dec. 10 ..	"	3 3 0
10.	" 10 ..	"	6 9 2
	1908.		
11.	Feb. 29 ..	Offering unsound hams for sale	12 19 0