

The question of improving the water-supply is now being considered by the Council. The water is a good one from the point of view of chemical purity, except that it is very often a very dirty one, owing to the presence of clay and other solid matters. As the same main is used for domestic supply and power purposes, there is, owing to the large quantity of water used, more difficulty in effectively filtering the water than in a scheme which provides only a domestic supply; but until some means are devised for effectively removing the solid matters the Timaru water-supply cannot be considered a first-class one.

As is the case in most other towns, a large part of the population lives outside the borough boundary, where there is practically no local government or facilities as far as sanitation is concerned. The borough has no power to extend its boundaries, and the County Council has no very great facilities for making improvements. In one small district, known as Buchanan's Paddock, which is as densely populated as parts of the borough, the ratepayers took steps under section 269 of "The Counties Act, 1886," to have a drainage district constituted, so that improvements could be made in connection with drainage matters. The district only contains about fifty ratepayers, and this seems a very cumbersome and roundabout way to have to take before such small improvements as the construction of side channels can be made.

Waimate.

The water-supply in Waimate was completed during the year, and, in spite of a dry summer, the quantity of the supply never gave cause for any anxiety. This town is favourably situated for a deep-drainage scheme, and, as the population is increasing and local opinion is becoming more progressive, I expect that this will be a subject that will be brought before the ratepayers shortly.

Oamaru.

In my last report I stated, "It is to be hoped that a complete drainage scheme will soon be undertaken. It would at all events be good policy for the Council to get a report on a complete scheme from a competent engineer, so that all future extensions of the sewers will be done on a recognised plan, instead of on the somewhat haphazard system that prevails at present," and this course of action had been previously recommended to the Borough Council. I am glad to be able to report that the Council has since obtained a report from Mr. Marchant on a complete system of sewerage for the Town of Oamaru. The cost is estimated at £26,779, excluding house connections. One short sewer has already been laid in accordance with the scheme, and any new sewers that are put in from time to time will similarly form part of the scheme, and will not be money thrown away if at any future time it is decided to complete the scheme.

INSPECTORS' WORK.

The appended reports show the nature of the routine work that has been carried out during the year.

HUGH E. FINCH, M.B., D.P.H.,

Dr. J. M. Mason, Chief Health Officer, Wellington.

District Health Officer.

Dr. Finch, D.H.O.

I HAVE the honour to report as follows regarding work done during the year:—

CHRISTCHURCH AND DISTRICT.

In addition to the ordinary work in connection with the investigation of infectious cases and complaints received, special inspections were made as follows:—

- (a.) Butchers' shops, with particular reference to the manufacture of small goods.
- (b.) Jam, pickle, and sauce factories.
- (c.) Cordial-factories; also inquiries regarding essences and preservatives used.
- (d.) Milk-shops, as to methods of storage and general conditions.
- (e.) Stables, regarding provision or non-provision of suitable manure-receptacles.

A revised set of Drainage and Plumbing By-laws was prepared for the Lyttelton Borough in connection with the proposed drainage scheme.

The drainage arrangements in connection with the Sanatorium for Consumptives, Cashmere, have been supervised, tested, and passed.

Akaroa has been visited, and inspections made of several drainage and plumbing installations.

TIMARU AND DISTRICT.

Various notified cases of infectious disease from this district were investigated, and other matters arising have been attended to. During the year the Borough Council appointed Mr. Smith Sanitary Inspector, and as a sequence the Drainage By-laws are now strictly enforced, resulting in a marked improvement in the character and efficiency of the work being done.

OAMARU AND DISTRICT.

The work done in this district has consisted largely in arranging and supervising drainage and plumbing work, and attention to various complaints received.

PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE CLASSES.

Classes were held in these subjects at Timaru and Oamaru during the year, and the attendance was satisfactory. Both class and local examinations were conducted, and for the latter a large number of candidates entered in Timaru to enable them to qualify for licenses,