

BACTERIOLOGIST'S REPORT.

Department of Public Health (Pathological Laboratory), Wellington,
10th June, 1908.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the work of the Bacteriological and Vaccine Laboratories during the year 1907-8.

Each year we find the medical profession make an increased use of the opportunities afforded them for getting pathological investigations done by the Department, and the past twelve months is no exception. At the Museum Street laboratory we have made 224 more examinations than last year, the total being 1,439, to which must be added the specimens examined by Mr. Gilruth at the Veterinary Laboratory, Wallaceville. The amount of work required of us has more than doubled in the last four years, so that, although I have been relieved of the district-office work by the transfer of Dr. Frengley to Wellington, I have found it impossible to attempt more than the routine examination of specimens and the more important water-analyses.

The outbreak of plague at Auckland made a considerable inroad on my time, as I was there altogether about four weeks during May and June, while subsequently I paid several visits in connection with the examination of rats. Other matters not directly connected with the laboratory also occupied my time and attention, such as collecting data for the proposed regulations for the control of "gas-producer" plants, and general sanitary supervision in the Marlborough and Nelson Districts, while for the first few weeks of the year, before Dr. Frengley arrived, I still continued to do the general district work for Wellington Province. In all I have paid thirty-eight visits to various districts during the year, the majority being in connection with water-supply analyses.

Much special work has been required in the laboratories owing mostly to the unsatisfactory results from some of the vaccine lymph. Altogether it has been a busy year, and but for the fact that I have so able an assistant in Mr. Hurley, it would have been impossible to cope with the amount of work. In previous reports I have drawn attention to the excellence of the work done by this officer, and this year he has more than ever earned the fullest measure of praise I can give. In connection with the Vaccine Laboratory, the duties have fallen chiefly on Mr. Green, who has shown himself to be a careful and diligent worker. The fact that laboratory reports and letters have numbered 1,356 during the year indicates the extent to which we are indebted to Mr. Steward, Chief Clerk, and Miss Martelli, typist, of the District Health Office. Our work is increasing so rapidly that it throws a severe strain on the clerical staff.

I have to acknowledge the able assistance of Mr. Gilruth in the examination of many specimens which, owing to my absence from Wellington, or other causes, had to be referred to him. Mr. G. H. Barker, as formerly, superintended the supply of media to the Sydney Street laboratory, and during Mr. Hurley's absence prepared the bulk of the sections for microscopical examination.

The rapid growth of the work shows that it is appreciated by the medical profession, and it has now become of sufficient importance to warrant the establishment of a properly equipped building. The time has also arrived when it becomes necessary to consider the necessity for additional expert assistance. At present too great a strain has to fall on Mr. Hurley, who has to spend too much time in such insanitary surroundings. In the matter of water-supply analysis alone there is sufficient work, if it is to be done systematically, to occupy the whole time of one man expert in this direction.

As regards the pathological investigations, there is evidently a tendency in some cases to lean too heavily for assistance on the departmental laboratory. Evidence of this is found on glancing at the accompanying tables, where it is shown that on ninety-four occasions we were called on to make analyses of urine for the presence of sugar and albumen, while in Auckland