

On investigation these were found to be due apparently to the bad quality of the water, the season having been unusually dry and the available water of very inferior quality. And the fact that several amateur doctors had had a hand in treating the patients with purgatives, &c., did not improve matters, leading to three deaths out of the eleven persons attacked in one household, mostly members of a family. The symptoms of the disease were sudden fever, rise of temperature to 103° Fahr., diarrhœa, then whitish mucous discharges, none of the most characteristic typhoid symptoms being present. One child, aged fifteen months, began with convulsions suddenly, followed after a few hours by severe diarrhœa, dying on the ninth day.

As there was a good deal of influenza about at the time the disease may have been a variety of this disease, which in many cases began with diarrhœa, but it was undoubtedly influenced by the treatment adopted by the amateurs of this remote bush settlement. One man, said to be a local quack, gave them some of his nostrums; another man treated them with a decoction of green raspberry-leaves; and a third purged them with castor-oil. No wonder, perhaps, some of the invalids died. Those who were treated sensibly recovered in a few days.

Besides the above infectious diseases we have, I am aware, had a considerable amount of measles in my district, and for some time, in January and February especially, I think, we had numerous cases of a rather severe type of influenza, and I believe we have had a good amount of whooping-cough present.

I send you a summary of the cases of tuberculous diseases which proved fatal during the year, as furnished by reports from Registrars of Deaths in my district, with other reported cases of death from infectious diseases as a contrast.

Those from tuberculous diseases, principally of the lungs, were 120 in number, an average of 10 per month.

Those from pneumonia were 95 in number, or an average of 8 per month.

Diphtheria, though fairly prevalent in a mild form, accounted for 6 deaths.

Scarlet fever, also prevalent, only gave 3 deaths.

Enteric fever accounted for 4 deaths.

Diarrhœa, which was unusually much in evidence, especially during the months of January to March, caused 14 deaths.

PROVISION FOR TREATMENT AND ISOLATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

In my report for last year I stated that Southland was providing a hospital at Kew, near Invercargill, for the reception of these cases, and I have now to report that the building, so far as at present provided, is now completed and practically ready for use, though meantime, till the nursing arrangements and suchlike are settled, infectious diseases are being accommodated in an isolated ward in the General Hospital.

After much worry and discussion the infectious-diseases hospital for the Dunedin district has been put under way and is making good progress—likely to be ready for use about July. This progress, which I am glad to report, has been mostly due to the new Hospital Board, and especially to the energetic action of the Chairman, Mr. Stevenson, assisted ably by Dr. Batchelor. The necessity for such provision was shown at an opportune time by an outbreak of scarlet fever arising within the General Hospital, which required to be temporarily provided for in tents erected near the hospital-site, at Pelichet Bay.

Provision for Consumption.

In all the country hospitals these cases are adequately provided for in their buildings, in isolated rooms. In the Southland District it is proposed, when the actual necessity arises, to erect a building in an isolated portion of the ground at Kew at a sufficient distance from the epidemic hospital.

In Dunedin the private sanatorium at Rock and Pillar is being made use of, serving quite well the cases requiring isolation and treatment in a climate and locality very well suited for these requirements. But the Hospital Board are taking steps to provide a permanent sanatorium for their own necessities. And I should also mention that, thanks to the assistance of Dr. Valintine, Inspector-General of Hospitals, provision, temporary or permanent, has been made at the Benevolent Institution for incurable cases, which, being unsuitable for sanatorium treatment, are as well and more cheaply accommodated in Dunedin.

SUPERVISION OF FOOD-SUPPLIES.

We have been keeping a pretty strict supervision on the food-supplies coming into the two chief towns in my district—namely, Dunedin and Invercargill—my Inspectors, aided in Dunedin by City Inspector Donaldson, having paid many visits to stores and places into which food-articles come for sale or consumption.

In the course of such visits we have come across and caused to be destroyed:—

At Dunedin,—

11 pieces of bacon.
32 pigs' carcasses.
270 cases of bananas.
9 cases of grapes.
16 cases of prunes.
449 cases of oranges.
20 cases of walnuts.
13 boxes of rotten eggs.
10 boxes of butter.
28 boxes of fish.

At Invercargill,—

3 rolls bacon.
22½ cases bananas.
9 cases pears.
2 cases pineapples.
4 cases apples.
22 boxes figs.
12 sacks potatoes.
2 crates rabbits.
81 dozen eggs.
1 hogshhead mutton-birds.
80 cases fish.