

Without resorting to prosecutions we have now come to an understanding with the vendors of food-articles, who readily fall in with our requisitions to destroy such as I consider unfit for human consumption, and in many instances they have intimated that such articles have come into their possession, requesting me to examine them and, if necessary, to order their destruction.

BACTERIAL EXAMINATIONS.

I have made 24 microscopic examinations for medical men, finding that—

- 9 specimens of sputa were tuberculous;
- 14 specimens of sputa were pneumonic or broncho-pneumonic;
- 1 specimen of membrane was diphtheritic.

Besides these I understand some morbid specimens have been sent direct by medical men to Dr. Makgill for examination; but of these, if there have been any, I have no record.

DRAINAGE OF TOWNS.

In Dunedin the drainage system, begun some years ago, is progressing well, and, as it is carried out in streets, the houses are being gradually made to connect with the sewers by up-to-date apparatus and connections, in accordance with by-laws made by the Drainage Board, so that in time we may hope that the health of the community will be much improved.

In Invercargill the Puni Creek, an open sewer frequently causing a nuisance, has now been piped in, and the house-drains connected with it, to the manifest improvement of that part of the town; but the town in general is much in need of a good system of drainage, which it cannot in the meantime have until a more abundant water-supply is acquired.

In Gore the drainage system is completed, and houses are being gradually connected with the sewers.

In several of the smaller towns little improvements in the drainage are being carried out as far as possible.

WATER-SUPPLIES TO TOWNS.

In Dunedin the water-supply has been very much augmented by taking into it several creeks and by the taking-over of the whole gathering-ground on Mount Cargill as a water reserve, and buying out the proprietors of several farms lying in the watershed. The importance of this was shown by the fact that, although we had an unusually dry summer, there never was any question of a short supply.

In the course of these operations it was found necessary to make a minute inspection of the reservoir in the Leith Valley, which had been leaking for many years. The leak—in the retaining-wall—was found to be serious. This is now made secure, and all danger from bursting of the reservoir is now past.

At Invercargill the water-supply has, with the increase of the town, been gradually becoming insufficient, and a greater supply is contemplated, either by sinking another deep bore to augment the present one from which the water to the town is now derived, or by bringing in the water from the New River at a distance of some forty-five miles. The latter, though more expensive, would be the more satisfactory. The water thus obtained from the river, at a site which I made a special journey to inspect, along with the Town Council and their Engineer, and which I had tested by Professor Black, is of excellent quality, and not liable to pollution in any way.

At Alexandra the water-supply, undertaken some years ago, failed this year during the dry weather, and, as it was never quite satisfactory, it has been resolved to derive water from another source, likely to prove better and more abundant.

Throughout the district, except in some parts of Southland, the unusual dry weather affected the water-supplies for some time, especially in the Central Otago district, always tending to be dry in summer.

INSPECTION OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN.

I am glad to have to report some little progress in this matter within my district.

Following up the issue among our school-teachers of the pamphlet, which you did me the honour to have printed by the Government, I had several conferences with the Education Boards regarding further steps to be taken, and arranged with those of Otago and Southland that I should meet the school-teachers of these districts at their annual congresses and confer with them regarding the methods and proceedings they might adopt to bring the scheme into actual operation. In accordance with this, I attended the congresses both at Invercargill on the 28th June, and at Dunedin on the 11th July, making short addresses to the teachers and School Inspectors, and, at the former, members of the Education Board. The addresses were followed by interesting discussions, and terminated by resolutions to fall into line with any proposed method which might be workably arranged.

Meantime the pamphlet, which was well received by teachers, has been made use of by them to weed out scholars manifestly unwell, leading them in many cases to consult me in suspected cases of illness, or where they found infectious diseases prevailing in their school districts.

Thus, if nothing farther were to come of the movement, it has done this good: that it has strengthened the hands of teachers in excluding sick children from schools in some degree, and, by that means, impressing on parents the necessity of keeping children suffering from infectious diseases away from school till the danger of infection had passed. And the movement, having now begun, is certain to progress.

In the Girls' High School of Dunedin the pupils are more or less frequently systematically examined and the examinations recorded; and in the Mornington Public School a regular scheme of monthly measurement of height, weight, and chest-measurement is undertaken and recorded on a card, a specimen of which I send herewith.

Probably in more schools than these some such schemes are being worked out, though these are all I have come across so far; but I am also aware that teachers in many schools have undertaken regular methods of physical exercises for the pupils under their direct supervision.