

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Appended are the returns showing the number and nature of samples taken, also legal proceedings taken under this and the Public Health Act. The penalty inflicted in many cases, more particularly in Oamaru, can hardly be said to fit the crime.

I have, &c.,

H. E. FINCH,

District Health Officer.

D.—OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND DISTRICT.

STATISTICS.

Population, 171,000 (census 1906); area, 19,977 square miles, exclusive of the mountainous and sparsely populated County of Fiord; number of local authorities under Public Health Act, 48; number of Hospital Boards, 5. The figures for the Provincial District of Otago would be larger than the foregoing were it not that the County of Waitaki and the large Borough of Oamaru, although part of the Otago Province, are worked as part of the Health District of Canterbury.

ACCOMMODATION FOR CONSUMPTIVES.

In August of this year the new Sanatorium was opened at Palmerston South. Upwards of thirty beds are available, and these are being added to as occasion requires. Arrangements have been made whereby this Sanatorium receives patients from practically the whole of South Canterbury, Otago, and Southland, and each Hospital Board has its own medical adviser, who examines the recommended patients before admission. Gardening, wood-carving, and poultry-rearing are provided for those patients who are able to work. It is hoped shortly to institute tuberculin treatment for certain selected cases.

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN.

In June and July some 2,300 children attending the public elementary schools were medically examined. The examination was not carried further till the new scheme for medical inspection of school-children is adopted and put into action. On the whole the children show a lower percentage of defects than do school-children at Home, but the percentage of defective teeth and tonsils are quite as high—in some cases more so.

Appended is a table of percentage defects.

Percentage Defects in 2,300 Children of Four Large Primary Schools in Dunedin.

	George Street.	Normal and Union Street.	Caversham.	Forbury.
Children in attendance	..	..	..	660
1. Total percentage of children with defects ..	9½	19	26	18½
2. Percentage of defective children with defective teeth	50	40	38	45
3. Percentage of all children in attendance with defective teeth	6	8	10	8
4. Percentage of defective children with considerably enlarged tonsils or suspected adenoids	39½	47	62½	50½
5. Percentage of all children in attendance with defective tonsils and adenoids	4	9	16	9
6. Percentage of all children with defective eyesight	Not examined	4½	3½	4
7. Serious defects.. .. .	..	1 case early phthisis	..	1 case marked mitral stenosis (heart-disease).

GENERAL SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS.

A considerable number of Borough Councils have shown great activity during the year in sanitary matters, chiefly in the direction of securing first-class water-supplies. Following is a note of the principal improvements effected or well under way:—

Balclutha.

The ratepayers have sanctioned the raising of a loan of £7,500 for a water-supply. The supply will be pumped from a well near the banks of the Molyneux River to a tower in the highest part of the borough, thence reticulated to the consumers. An analysis which I made of water from a private well close to the proposed borough well, after personal inspection, showed the water to be of fairly good quality both chemically and bacteriologically. The site of the proposed well being within the town boundary, I advised the Council how best to guard against possible pollution in future years. When the service is under way frequent analysis will be made to test the continued purity of the supply.

Mataura.

A poll was carried some time ago to borrow £7,000 for water and sewerage. Plans are now being prepared by Mr. B. B. Couston, C.E., Dunedin.