

PART IV.—REPORTS OF DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS ON THE SANITARY CONDITIONS AND WORK DONE IN THEIR DISTRICTS.

A.—AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

SANITARY CONDITION OF SPECIAL LOCALITIES.

Auckland City and Suburbs.

The announcement of the presence of plague during the autumn was followed by a general effort at cleansing and reform as to removal of refuse. In the city extra Inspectors were temporarily appointed, and some good work done. The Council, however, did not see their way to permanent reforms, and the effort proved somewhat spasmodic.

Steady progress is being made by the Drainage Board in the work of providing the main sewers. The need for this scheme is greatly felt in the Lower Queen Street area, where no permanent work is possible at present towards removing the old broken rat-run branch sewers and drains, which doubtless are the chief source of the plague infection.

The Arch Hill Gully sewer was completed by the Board in August, and though it was thus possible for the various local bodies to make use of it for the slop-water drainage by the end of the year, not a single connection had been begun, and the watercourse continues to be the foul-disease-breeding, rat-run abomination which has been the disgrace of suburban Auckland for so long. No more telling evidence can be brought against the present grotesque system of local government by a number of small independent bodies than the history, past and present, of the Arch Hill Gully sewer. Petty jealousies, personal vainglory, and unworthy ambitions to economize or benefit at the cost of their neighbours form the basis of support for this form of administration, and all may be found when inquiring into the reasons for the delay in completing this sewer. There is need for Napoleonic action in the direction of abolishing this system, self-interest and prejudice being too strong to permit of the movement coming from the local authorities themselves.

Suburban Nightsoil Service.—The grievous inadequacy of the suburban nightsoil services has led to an effort being made to get co-operation among the suburban local authorities in the direction of securing a comprehensive and effective system of removal. A great obstacle presents itself in the difficulty of securing a suitable area for a depot within carting distance of Auckland. Any system of removal by rail or water involves an outlay which the suburban bodies are loth to undertake in view of the early provision of the sewerage system. Still, in the majority of cases three to ten years of the present system have to be faced, and the defects in the present services are too gross to be permitted to continue so long.

The Health Department have been making efforts to secure a depot, and found several areas suitable; but it is difficult to overcome the natural disinclination of owners to let their land for such purposes. A site on a Government reserve on the Manukau Harbour offers the best facilities, and was submitted with other more ambitious schemes to a meeting of local bodies. The usual opposition—the outcome of “parish pump” local government—was met, and the matter still remains *sub judice*.

Smoke nuisance was the cause of many complaints in the city, but under present legislation it is difficult to obtain a remedy. There is need for special legislation in the direction of limiting the time during which black smoke may be emitted.

Morgue.—A site at Freeman's Bay and plans for a morgue thereon have been approved, but there is reason to fear further delay over this long-standing grievance.

Offensive Trades.—Much trouble has been experienced in the Mount Wellington District over the carelessness in the management of offensive trades, more particularly boiling-down works. Special by-laws are being prepared.

Country Districts.

The rapid growth of many of the country towns has necessitated a vigorous policy in order that sanitation may keep pace with population.

Hamilton Borough is considering a scheme for refuse-removal, and its suburban neighbour, *Frankton*, is discussing a water-supply system. The general health in this district has been good.

Cambridge Borough escaped with only a few cases of scarlet fever, and kept up its reputation as regards freedom from typhoid and diphtheria.

Te Kuiti and *Taumarunui* have become boroughs, and announce a vigorous policy as regards municipal works, especially as regards water-supply. At *Te Kuiti* the scheme is now in the hands of the engineer, and a visit was paid to obtain samples for analysis, the results proving wholly satisfactory as regards quality and purity. A nightsoil depot has been selected, and a scheme for drainage planned. The sanitary by-laws for this vigorous borough deserve special commendation.

Te Aroha is enlarging the sewerage system to embrace the outlying parts, and is obtaining a loan for this purpose, for which the approval of the Department was obtained.

Pukekohe has a water-supply service under consideration.

At *Morrinsville* a nightsoil depot has been obtained, and a good closed-pan service instituted.

Waihi still lags behind in sanitary matters considering the size of the town. The need for a sewerage system is shown by the frequent cases of typhoid and diphtheria there.

Huntly is growing, and can no longer continue with the present primitive services. Water drawn from the sewage-polluted river constitutes a serious menace. Their need for a proper water-supply has been the subject of correspondence.

I attach brief reports from Inspectors Bennett and Franklin as to the progress made in the districts.