

as Helensville. The Boards in other centres acted promptly and energetically in providing for patients in their main hospitals and in auxiliary and temporary. They further showed all readiness in co-operation with the Health Department, the other local authorities, and with voluntary organizations.

### *Borough Councils.*

The Mayors and Borough Councils took a most active part in fighting the epidemic. In some instances, however, it was the private citizens that first moved the authorities before action was taken. We find that the general attitude of the municipal authorities was just the same as that of the Health Department in taking slow action until the full charge of the epidemic was upon the community. In nearly all boroughs the Mayor or Deputy Mayor acted as Chairman of the Citizens' Committees, which did a great amount of good work in visiting; supplying medicines, food, clothing, and other necessities; and in conveying doctors, nurses, and patients as required. The local authorities took very substantial liabilities, both financial and otherwise, and all of them spared nothing in order to cope with the epidemic when its virulence became manifest. In certain directions advantage was taken of the urgent demand for services and commodities, so that in some instances higher charges had to be paid than were ordinarily demanded. A recurrence of such excessive charging can be avoided by taking the course recommended by the Minister of Public Health in his evidence (p. 704-5)—that is, to amend the Public Health Act by adding what might be termed "epidemic clauses," and making regulations under these clauses to provide payment at specified rates for the use of buildings for doctors and nurses, the use of motor-cars and other vehicles, or for any services commandeered for the purposes required. In addition the Board of Trade should be empowered to fix prices of food, fruit, drugs, medicines, hospital supplies, and other necessities required, whether these are commandeered or not. Advantage should never be allowed to be taken of any stricken community during an epidemic, or at any other time of special distress.

On the evidence presented to us it is clear that the Borough Councils and other local authorities worked in amicable agreement with the Health Department, and were ready at all times to carry out the wishes expressed to them by the District Health Officers.

### *Sanitation and Housing.*

The administration of the local authorities as relating to public health generally was commented on in evidence with special relation to the sanitation and housing of work-people. During the time of the epidemic some Borough Councils carried out special investigations into the sanitary conditions of the more thickly populated portions of their boroughs, even appointing a number of temporary Inspectors for that purpose. The special cleaning-up of quarters and removal of rubbish was instituted in the cities, and at wharves, and on board ships. We can say that next to a settled plan of procedure the best guard against an epidemic is cleanliness—keeping town and country as clean as possible. It might be well if instead of taking pride in spasmodic efforts to make our towns clean we were to spend our energies in keeping them clean. The Commissioners made direct investigation of the more congested districts of the cities, commencing with Auckland. From our inspections and the evidence submitted we are confident that considerable improvements are required in respect to the conditions in which large numbers of people in our cities are required to live. It was most evident that the bad conditions existing were due to an inheritance of wrong subdivisions of land; the continued habitation of old, dilapidated, worm-eaten, vermin-infested, and in some instances really rotten structures; the economic factors of short supply of decent houses and excessively high rents, and the personal habits of uncleanness of a proportion of the tenants. Whilst the Borough Councils appear to give very full attention to the general sanitary requirements, there is no doubt that in all centres groups of houses, and in some places nearly whole streets, stand as a constant menace to public health, in that the houses are quite unsuitable for habitation with proper regard to the health, particularly of the women and children. In these congested areas, and in the case of a large number of single houses scattered throughout the cities, there