

Influenza, it will be noted, was widely prevalent in 1919, a total of 3,700 cases being notified, with 346 deaths. As only a fraction of the cases were reported, it is apparent that the disease was of a comparatively mild nature.

Following upon the epidemic of 1918, vigorous administrative measures were adopted in an effort to prevent any further outbreak. All types of the disease, including simple influenza, were declared notifiable, and full precautions were taken, including strict isolation of the patient, quarantine of contacts for at least forty-eight hours, free issue of vaccine, &c. In May, 1919, pneumonic influenza, septicæmic influenza, and fulminant influenza were separately declared notifiable in order to ensure speedy information of any tendency on the part of the disease towards an increase of virulence. After extended trial it was found that notification of simple influenza was a measure of little value in the control of the disease, owing to the great number of mild cases who do not seek medical aid. At the time of writing the only forms of influenza which are notifiable and with regard to which administrative action is taken are the pneumonic, septicæmic, and fulminant varieties.

Acute Primary Pneumonia was made notifiable at the same time as pneumonic influenza. During the remaining seven months of the year 879 cases were notified. Owing to the lack of data no comparison is possible with previous years.

Lethargic Encephalitis.—Cases of this disease first came under notice about the beginning of May, 1919, and the disease was declared notifiable on the 20th of that month. A total of 90 cases was reported during the remainder of the year, with 29 deaths. As is not unusual with "new" diseases, these figures include a proportion of typical cases of more common maladies. A form of inquiry was prepared and copies forwarded for completion to all practitioners reporting cases. The information from this source as to the course and symptoms of the disease is not yet available.

Measles was not very prevalent in 1919, 477 cases and 3 deaths being recorded. The deaths from this cause in recent years were 33 in 1914, 64 in 1915, 93 in 1916, 17 in 1917, and 15 in 1918.

Venereal Diseases.—An important step was taken during the year in the inauguration of a scheme for the treatment of venereal diseases. New Zealand is relatively free from these diseases as compared with the older lands, but it must be admitted that of late years there has been a distinct tendency towards increase. Four full-time Medical Officers who had special experience in the Army in the treatment of venereal diseases have been appointed, one for each of the main centres. Their duties include the charge of a clinic in their home towns, together with the general supervision of the campaign against the diseases in the whole of the health district. As part of their routine work they visit the smaller towns to confer with Hospital Boards and arrange for the establishing of clinics in these places. While at present the majority of the cases are ex-members of the Expeditionary Forces, there is an ever-increasing proportion of civilians presenting themselves for treatment. To ensure early and adequate treatment the State pays the whole of the expenses in indigent cases.

NOTE.—Further information with regard to vital statistics may be obtained from the "Statistics of New Zealand, 1919," issued by the Government Statistician.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1908.

Tables showing the Department's activities under the above Act are published monthly in the *Journal of Health and Hospitals*.

A comparison of 1919 with preceding years shows that there has been an expansion in this branch of Public Health administration, and that such expansion has resulted in an improvement in the general quality level of the samples.

The statistical compilation of food and drugs returns has been divided into three sections—(1) The weighing of foodstuffs; (2) the taking of samples for analysis; (3) legal proceedings.

Reviewing the work under the above headings it is found that, whereas the number of weighings of foodstuffs during the year 1918 was 5,769, for the year 1919 a total number of 5,303 samples was weighed, comprising 3,197 bread-samples, 1,579 butter-samples, and 527 samples of other foodstuffs. Of these, 380 samples of bread did not comply, as against 346 samples in 1918; in other words, the proportion of bread-samples not complying decreased from 13.1 per cent. to 11.9 per cent. As regards the butter-samples, 35 did not comply, this being 2.2 per cent. of the samples weighed, whereas last year the percentage was 3.9 and the number of samples that did not comply 68.

Of the samples taken for analysis it is interesting to note the improvement in the quality of the milk-samples taken. 2,135 samples were taken throughout the whole Dominion. Of this number, 1,538 were taken in the Wellington Hospital District. Only 152 of the total samples did not comply, whereas during the previous year, of 2,461 samples taken, 223 did not comply, the percentage of milk-samples not complying having decreased from 9.1 per cent. to 7 per cent. This may to a certain extent be accounted for by the fact that the quality of milk in the Wellington City area has largely improved during the past year on account of the distribution system introduced by the Wellington City Council.

Three hundred and fifty-four samples of miscellaneous foodstuffs were taken during the year, including samples of such nature as cordials, ice-creams, patent foods, &c. The number of these which did not comply, 115, is comparatively high, but it must be pointed out that such samples are generally taken only where there is reasonable cause to suspect that the sample may not comply. Under this heading last year 339 samples were taken and 88 did not comply, 33 prosecutions resulting. During the past year, of the 115 samples not complying, 31 prosecutions were recommended, the remaining cases being disposed of by warnings to the vendors.

A review of the legal proceedings taken under the Food and Drugs Act is of considerable interest. The Department has been pleased to note that many vendors have been severely dealt