

Redcliffs.—All the sewer-mains and septic tanks in connection with the Redcliffs scheme are now complete, it only remaining for the house connections to be made, and this work is now progressing actively.

A drainage scheme is also being put in at the Selwyn Huts encampment, in the Springs County.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

Certain of the offensive trades have not been run as satisfactorily as these trades can be conducted, and in one or two instances I have had occasion to recommend that the responsible local authority in whose area these trades are situated prosecute. This has had a salutary effect upon the remainder, owing to the publicity given in the newspapers.

WATER-SUPPLY.

The Christchurch City Council has decided to carry out the water-reticulation scheme authorized by the ratepayers last year. It is now found that the sum so authorized is sufficient, owing to the deflation in prices since that time, to allow of the cost of putting in the necessary mains.

NIGHTSOIL-REMOVAL SYSTEM.

I have to advise that this service is now in operation at Pleasant Point, and one will shortly be in operation, I hope, in connection with the Cobden Town Board, in the West Coast Health District.

RUBBISH-DUMPS.

I am glad to note that there has been a big improvement in the Greymouth Borough Council's rubbish-dump, situated near the railway in Herbert Street.

FOOD AND DRUG WORK.

This has been carried out as regularly as circumstances would allow during the year. The work in connection with milks has been much more active owing to the fact that Mr. Grigg, the District Analyst, now has an assistant. Further, an extensive survey, lasting three months, is being carried out for the Christchurch City Council, the investigation comprising both the bacteriological and the chemical sides.

During the year it has been found necessary to warn a few vendors whose milks showed signs of obvious dirt. I regret to record the fact that there have been quite a number of watered milks during the year, and this risk will be run by a certain type of vendor until he finds the risk is made too costly. The small fines now being inflicted in the Court are not sufficient to act as a true deterrent.

The samples of the various foodstuffs taken during the year comprise a varied assortment. On the whole, these were mostly up to standard.

The total fines and costs for the year for the Canterbury and West Coast Health Districts amounted to £237 5s. 1d.

In conclusion, I would thank my staff of the various branches for their loyal support during the year, and for the capable way in which each officer has fulfilled his or her duties.

NORTH AND SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Colonel DAWSON, Assistant Medical Officer of Health.

Part 2.

Scarlet Fever.—There are a large number of cases of scarlet fever of a mild type which pass undetected in the scattered districts, where parents are reluctant to send for medical aid for minor cases. These, however, are infectious, and are frequently the starting-point of an epidemic.

Diphtheria.—Diphtheria in Ashburton accounted for 133 cases, with four deaths. A large number of adults, particularly in the later months of the epidemic, were attacked. Twenty-nine cases, or 21·8 per cent. of the total, were adults over eighteen years of age. The epidemic started about Christmas, 1925, in Tinwald School. The family of the local storekeeper were attacked, and owing to a delay in notification the shop was not closed or disinfected for three or four days. During this time many children visited it. It was subsequently discovered that a boy who had been attending school for three months with a discharging ear was a diphtheria-carrier. He had frequently visited Ashburton, and a number of cases were his direct contacts. During the epidemic several carriers were found. The disease was widely and evenly spread throughout the district. No particular food-supply, water-supply, or school could be held responsible other than Tinwald, where it originated. The season was a dry and dusty one. The epidemic ceased with the spring rains.

Diarrhoea.—An outbreak of acute diarrhoea resembling ptomaine poisoning and gastric influenza occurred in the Ashburton Borough and County about the end of September. It lasted for three weeks. It not being notifiable, our attention was not drawn to it until the 20th October, when an immediate investigation was made without the source of infection being traced. The epidemic was then over, and neither cases nor material were available for investigation. The local authorities' Inspectors have been warned in future to report such occurrences, even if they are not notifiable. Incubation period: About forty-eight hours. Duration: About forty-eight hours, with one or more relapses at forty-eight hours' interval in some of the cases. Distribution: The majority of the inhabitants of Ashburton Borough were attacked, and a large number in the county. As far as can be ascertained, the cases occurring in the county had partaken of food in Ashburton. Christchurch people who had