

REFUSE AND NIGHTSOIL REMOVAL.

Queenstown.—A new site for a rubbish-dump has been procured. An improvement is noticeable in the sanitary work carried out in this borough.

Refuse-collection services are now provided at Naseby, Cromwell, Alexandra, Roxburgh, Arrowtown, and Clyde. Periodical clean-ups are held at Ranfurly and Waipiata.

The Lake County Council have been asked to provide a rubbish-dump at Pembroke, and the Maniototo Council have also been requested to provide refuse and nightsoil services at Ranfurly.

During the year a nightsoil-removal service was inaugurated in the county area comprising Waikiwi, Collingwood, and Grassmere. This service has now been in operation for one month and is working satisfactorily.

GENERAL.

Mutton-bird Industry.—An investigation was made into the methods adopted in connection with the cleaning and packing of mutton-birds. These birds are caught on the Titi Islands, adjacent to Stewart Island, by the descendants of the original Native owners of Stewart Island during the months of April and May of each year. Permits to take the birds are issued by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Invercargill. It was found that there was room for considerable improvement in the methods adopted by the Natives. Suitable regulations were drafted, and after consultation with the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Invercargill, these were agreed to by the Natives concerned.

Fish-market, Dunedin.—As I have already reported, arrangements are now in hand for the removal of the fish-sale depot from its present site to the Pelichet Bay Railway-yard. A suitable building is to be erected by the City Council. It is gratifying to report that finality is now assured.

Cemeteries.—During the year the work of inspection of cemeteries was taken over by the officers of this Department. This has entailed a large amount of work for the Inspectors concerned, but will no doubt in future ensure that these grounds are satisfactorily administered and cared for. In the case of many of the small cemeteries it has been found that sections 23 and 24 of the Act are not being complied with. In several instances the trustees were not provided with a copy of the Act, and they were not aware of their responsibilities.

NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH SEAS EXHIBITION.

Up to the date of closing—the 1st May—the departmental display at the Exhibition continued to attract numbers of interested visitors. After this date the work of packing and returning the various exhibits occupied a considerable amount of time.

PROPAGANDA.

Suitable lectures by departmental officers have been broadcasted at intervals during the year from station 4YA, Dunedin. This form of public-health education serves a useful purpose in bringing the work of this Department before the public.

Several newspaper articles on health subjects have also been written by Dr. Shore and myself.

DIPHTHERIA IN KAITANGATA, 1926.

During the year 1926 the Township of Kaitangata experienced two outbreaks of diphtheria, the outbreaks being separated by a period of approximately six months. The first epidemic occurred in March-April, and showed a total of forty-five cases, and the second outbreak, which occurred in October-November, showed fifty-one cases. The March-April epidemic was essentially a "school epidemic." Thirty-three of the total of forty-five were school cases. The pre-school group escaped almost completely, there being only three cases in this group. A very large percentage (approximately 70 per cent.) of the school cases occurred in two standards.

It is somewhat surprising that this epidemic did not assume greater proportions, as when Schick testing was done it was found that over 60 per cent. of the children gave positive results. Extensive immunization work was carried out, and practically all the parents readily gave consent. It was therefore a source of surprise when diphtheria again appeared in the borough during the months of October and November. The epidemic was of a much more severe nature. The total number of cases was fifty-one. The distribution of cases as regards school attendance was considerably different from the March-April epidemic. The primary department and the pre-school group gave a much greater incidence of cases than did the previous outbreak. The pre-school group gave 25 per cent. of total cases. The post-school population gave about 35 per cent.; the primary department about 26 per cent.; and the remainder of the school only about 14-15 per cent. Also this latter visitation was of a more explosive character than the former, the period of time in this being only nineteen days, as against twenty-eight days for the March-April.

The investigation of the milk-supply also gave some interesting findings. The two chief suppliers, taken as representatives of the borough, gave the following results:—

				Number of Houses supplied.	Number of Cases	
					March-April.	October-November.
Milkman A..	..	..	..	109	15	47
Milkman B..	..	..	..	104	11	..

Showing that there was strong evidence in support of the contention that the October-November epidemic was milk-borne. This is further strengthened when it is known that the third case in the October-November period was a member of Milkman A's family, and that the milkman was himself affected later on in the epidemic.

This mass infection per medium of milk would be largely responsible for the overwhelming of the "immunity" of the victims, and would account for the altered age of distribution