

Housing: During the year ending 31st March, 863 new dwellings were erected. With the increased building activity in the Hutt Valley and activities in the State Advances Department, I think it may be considered that the housing question in Wellington is well grappled with. Fifty-three houses were demolished, and structural alterations under the Health Act were required of sixty-two premises. Analysis of the reports received upon infectious-disease cases very rarely discloses overcrowded conditions.

By-laws: The consolidated or remodelled by-laws which have been under consideration have not yet been finalized. I have made a point that all such relating to public health, &c., will be submitted to this office for perusal. In the meantime I have suggested that the City Council adopt our departmental plumbing and drainage by-laws. In some respects the present city by-laws are not up to the standard of those now obtaining in the surrounding boroughs and counties.

Public Baths: There is a proposal to establish baths at Karori. New baths in the centre of the city have not yet been erected. I shall endeavour to ensure that new installations will embrace any necessary provisions as regards the proper filtration, and, if thought desirable, chlorination, of the water.

Recreation-grounds and Play Areas: The City Council have not neglected this work during the year. Additional facilities were provided and improved in various parts of the city. The new area retrieved from the sandhills at Rongotai should prove useful for sport and other purposes.

Rat Nuisance: During the year 276 rats were caught on ships and 372 in Harbour Board sheds; also 958 by the Wellington City Council. Investigation of the work and methods adopted by the Wellington City rat-catcher has been attended to at intervals. Thanks are again due to the Harbour Board for their co-operation in the matter of rat-catching on wharves and ships. Seven hundred and eighty-eight rats were examined by the Bacteriologist.

Free Ambulance (Wellington City): This continues to do good work. The organization is proving extremely useful in enabling quick notification of infectious cases removed to hospital.

Theatres: Occasional visits were paid to theatres and experimental observations taken.

Food Premises (City): These continue to improve. Evolution in all cases to the standard of our new regulations must necessarily be a slow matter. During the year I visited the majority of the bakehouses in company with the Officer in Charge, Labour Department. In some instances there is still room for improvement. The question is one, perhaps, not so much of structure of building but of the personal factor. During these inspections, bakers were examined for baker's dermatitis. Only one example of this was discovered, and that of a very mild type. During last summer a special effort was made to induce fish-shops to provide cases during the fly season. Several co-operated, but in some instances great reluctance was shown. I think that during the summer months some further protection from flies is desirable.

Lower Hutt.—The standard of sanitation continues to improve in all directions in this borough. The new by-laws are well up to standard, and the work generally of the sanitary staff is efficient. The rate of increase in this borough has been so great that the Borough Council is in some respects hard put to it to keep pace with developments; especially is this so when it is remembered that the low-lying nature of certain portions particularly adds to the difficulties.

Garbage: Sooner or later this borough will require to combine with Petone in the erection of a destructor, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the industrial area, possibly. In time there will be practically no place available for tipping, even if carried out according to up-to-date English methods.

Petone Beach: Conditions have improved. The Gear Meat Co. have devoted considerable time towards experimentation and the installation of a new "save-all"; also several self-cleansing screens. These are proving very effective. The gut-works have also adopted similar methods, and have improved and extended their outfall. The Woollen Co. are also making improvements.

Eastbourne.—The necessity for water and drainage again became apparent on many occasions.

Upper Hutt.—**Drainage:** During the year the Borough Council applied to the Loans Board *re* a drainage scheme. The Board refuses to approve of the application at present. The question of drainage for this borough, in view of its steady progress, must not be lost sight of.

The excellent bitumen road from Wellington to the borough is adding considerably to the popularity of this area as a residential town.

Johnsonville.—**Water-supply:** The new supply from the Ohariu Valley has proved most valuable during the dry summer months.

Titahi Bay.—The seaside resort of Titahi Bay requires careful supervision as regards sanitation.

Hutt County.—As reported last year, the whole of the county is now controlled by the sanitation and health by-laws. In many parts of this county there are areas which are now townships or will become so in the future. There is at times a tendency for houses to be erected which are not altogether what they should be as regards structure and sanitary appliances. The Council must watch this matter carefully.

The problems of this Council are somewhat difficult, in that it administers rural areas and more closely settled areas. Great opportunity exists in the county for the application of the best town-planning principles, thus removing in some instances serious administrative difficulties in the future.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS.

There are now ten private maternity hospitals in the district, and eight medical and surgical homes, in addition to the Alexandra Home and St. Helens Hospital. The increased inspection and application of regulations governing private hospitals has, I am sure, resulted in a higher standard, especially in maternity hospitals.