

In dealing with such matters two necessities arise—the need for some definite standard as to what shall be deemed dangerous pollution, and the need for some knowledge as to how these waste waters can be effectively rendered harmless as far as pollution of streams is concerned. The first necessity might be met by the Department by regulation fixing standards for the effluents from such works; the second is a matter upon which the factories concerned look to this Department for some lead as to efficient methods of treatment. It should be possible for our Department, in conjunction with these factories and one of the technical Departments, such as Industrial Research, to arrive at some methods of treatment which could be authoritatively recommended.

WORK UNDER THE SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Milk-sampling.—During the year 196 samples of milk were taken throughout the district. Of this number, seven failed to comply with the standard provided by the regulations. In addition to this sampling, various vendors' milk has been submitted to the sedimentation test for dirt. The application of this test this year in Wanganui has demonstrated to the milk-vendors in no uncertain manner the necessity for an efficient inspection of the conditions under which the production of household milk is being carried out, and the necessity for the Milk-vendors' Association functioning in the direction of endeavouring to secure for themselves a cleaner supply has been brought to their notice.

In addition to the milk-sampling, samples of butter, bacon, and ice-cream have been taken and submitted for analysis. After inspecting the bacon-factories in the district a detailed report on the conditions obtaining throughout the manufacture of this food product was furnished to you.

SANITATION GENERALLY.

During the year we have continued to keep closely in touch with the local inspectors and to assist and co-operate with them in carrying out the various duties imposed upon them by the Health Act.

The provisions of the various regulations governing eating-houses, food-shops, cattle-saleyards, and offensive trades, &c., are being given effect to throughout the district, and the by-laws relating to health and sanitation are being effectively administered.

During the year we received your permission to make exhibits at the Palmerston North and Wanganui agricultural shows showing the Department's activities. As showing the interest that is taken in public health, it is worth noting that the request for these exhibits came from the show Committees. The interest taken in the exhibits at both places was very gratifying, and more than sufficient return for the expenditure thereon. We have been asked to repeat the exhibit at this year's Palmerston North show. The co-operation and setting-up and showing the exhibit at Wanganui by the Wanganui City Council sanitary staff indicates that local authorities are interested in and are prepared to co-operate with the Department in this branch of propaganda work if the opportunity is given.

All the departmental Inspectors have continued to do good work, and, as special work involved frequent absences on my part, a considerable amount of the administration work fell on the shoulders of Senior Inspector Gardiner, who performed this work with his usual efficiency. I would like to express my appreciation of this officer's work, his assistance being almost invaluable.

SECTION 6.—WAIRARAPA-NELSON-MARLBOROUGH HEALTH DISTRICT.

Dr. MERCER, Medical Officer of Health.

INSPECTORS.

There have been no changes of departmental Inspectors in my two health districts. The Sanitary Inspector of the Hastings Borough resigned his position, and Inspector Carroll, of the Christchurch City Sanitary Inspectors' staff, has been appointed in Inspector Fawcett's place.

I wish to express my appreciation of the manner in which all the Inspectors in my health districts have carried out their duties during the year, and my indebtedness to them for the assistance I have been given by them in all branches of their work. Without their close co-operation the many duties of the Medical Officer of Health, including the official correspondence with the District Office, would not have been so satisfactorily carried out.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The notifications show a very considerable increase as compared with previous years, but this increase is almost entirely due to an epidemic of scarlet fever. There were 759 scarlet-fever cases notified, as compared with 260 (including the East Cape) in 1927. The only other infectious disease in which an increase is noted is pneumonia (including pneumonic influenza). Diphtheria is stationary; pulmonary tuberculosis the same. There has been no epidemic of non-notifiable infectious diseases—*e.g.*, measles, mumps, whooping cough—in any part of the two health districts.

The incidence of infectious disease all round in the Nelson-Marlborough Health District, though greater than in 1927, is still exceptionally low as compared with the Wairarapa-Hawke's Bay Health District.

The disproportion of the incidence—or, at any rate, the notification—of infectious disease as between the Nelson Health District and Marlborough Health District is again most marked. Scarlet fever shows an increase of fifty cases, as against twenty-nine in 1927. There is also a slight increase of diphtheria cases, and a marked increase of pulmonary-tuberculosis notifications, possibly due to the fact that I drew the attention of one or two medical practitioners to the fact that they had failed to notify cases. There were also five maternal mortalities.