

Erysipelas was responsible for a considerable increase in notifications from an average of under four for the previous six years to eighteen in 1928. This may have some connection with the epidemic of scarlet fever.

Dysentery.—Three cases of dysentery in one family were also reported.

The district was practically free from other notifiable conditions.

School reports indicated that *measles* was fairly prevalent throughout the year, but the schools affected with epidemics were chiefly located in the country districts. Chicken-pox was present in small epidemics in four schools. Whooping-cough was responsible for a considerable amount of sickness in New Plymouth schools in November and December. Mumps was only present sporadically throughout the district.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

The trial for one year of voluntary notification of fresh cases of venereal disease terminated in August. During the twelve months 114 fresh cases of gonorrhoea were notified, but only six of primary syphilis. These figures suggest that the incidence of syphilis is insignificant in this part of New Zealand. Gonorrhoea is obviously present to a considerable degree, and the cases reported probably do not represent more than half the cases which actually occur, owing to a number of those affected not consulting a physician.

Undoubtedly gonorrhoea is also responsible for a number of cases of pyosalpinx and other diseases of the female reproducing system, which would not, of course, have been reported as fresh cases of the disease.

WATER-SUPPLIES.

Arrangements were made for the bacteriological examination of samples of water for the presence of *Bacillus coli communis* in the New Plymouth Hospital laboratory, and during the year samples were submitted from all the town water-supplies in the district. The reports received indicated that practically all the sources of supply were contaminated to a greater or less degree as compared with the English standards for a good water.

The Waitara supply consistently gave the poorest results, though the one chemical analysis made indicated a satisfactory water. The Kaponga supply was bacteriologically the best.

Chemical analyses made of the Kaponga, Inglewood, Stratford, Waitara, and New Plymouth (two) supplies all gave satisfactory results. It is probable that some degree of animal, and possibly human, contamination takes place on the watersheds, which in all cases include a varying amount of farm lands in their respective areas. The chemical analyses, however, indicate that this pollution is not very extensive or else is well diluted by the volume of water.

In addition to the above examinations, water-supplies from various isolated hotels, seaside resorts, and camping-grounds were tested. Certain of these were reported on adversely to the authorities concerned.

During the year the ratepayers of New Plymouth approved of a loan being raised for the provision of a retaining-dam on their combined hydro-electric and water-supply scheme. This had been previously approved by the Local Government Loans Board. While I regret that the Borough Council did not see its way to utilize the excellent water from the Kiri River, the safeguards agreed to by them in the combined Waiwakaiho and Mangamahoe scheme should ensure an adequate and safe water-supply for New Plymouth for many years to come.

A water-supply ought to be provided at an early date in Opunake, and investigations of the available sources were commenced with this end in view.

SANITATION.

Waitara and Opunake are the only towns in Taranaki without a sewage-disposal scheme. In both cases trouble has arisen during the year owing to the lack of such a scheme. In the case of Opunake, the want of a water-supply holds up the installation of a sewage scheme.

The New Plymouth Borough sewage scheme was held up pending the agreement of the ratepayers to a loan for the provision of a more adequate water-supply. Now that this has been carried, and the work commenced, it has been possible to finalize the plans for the extension of the sewage scheme to the whole of the borough. Such extension is urgently required in view of the present antiquated and dangerous methods of sewage-disposal in many sections of the town.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS.

The usual routine inspections of private hospitals were made by Nurse Inspector Broad until Nurse Inspector Wise took over the duties in October.

In August the Inspector of Private Hospitals held a special inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of three parturient women after transfer from a private hospital to the public hospital in New Plymouth. The source of infection was discovered, but its mode of transfer from the first case to the second and third was not definitely established.

During the year Nurse Ellis had a modern eight-bedded maternity hospital built in New Plymouth, while Nurse Paterson had a building reconstructed to form an eight-bedded maternity hospital. Nurse White, New Plymouth, obtained sanction to the remodelling of her house and its opening as a three-bedded maternity hospital. Nurse Cobb obtained permission to open a three-bedded convalescent home in New Plymouth.