

Diphtheria showed a slight increase, though this is below the mean for the past year. Pulmonary tuberculosis showed a decrease. Influenza and pneumonia both showed an increase for the previous year, being slightly above the mean figures for the nine-years period. Puerperal fever showed a decrease and septic abortion an increase over the previous year. Erysipelas, as was to be expected, showed a marked increase in sympathy with the prevalence of scarlatina. An increase of this disease is always noticeable when scarlatina is prevalent. Eclampsia, tetanus, hydatids, ophthalmia neonatorum, and food poisoning showed a decrease. Poliomyelitis was responsible for twenty-three cases more than in the previous year. One case of actinomycosis was reported.

SANITATION.

The Christchurch Drainage Board's extension scheme has been considerably extended, and the 1924 drainage-extension programme is nearing completion. The Borough of Rangiora, at a poll of the ratepayers, decided upon a sewerage scheme; but this I do not consider would be sufficient from a health point of view, as it is necessary that a high-pressure water-supply be provided at the same time.

The Greymouth Borough Council have decided to take a poll of the ratepayers for an extension to their sewer scheme. This is very much needed.

WATER-SUPPLY.

During the year the Christchurch City Council has extended their high-pressure water-supply reticulation, and all portions of the city are now provided with an adequate water-supply.

The Mount Pleasant water-supply, in the Heathcote County, was found on chemical analysis to be unsatisfactory, and I called upon the Heathcote County Council to make provision for a new source of supply. A new 6 in. well has been driven at Onecliff Street, Woolston, and this, I have no doubt, when connected up, will provide a water-supply free from suspicion, as it will be from one of the artesian flows.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

These, on the whole, have caused very little trouble during the past year. The Christchurch City Council is establishing, at North Linwood, a masticator for dealing with their refuse, and this will be buried in trenches in the sandy loam in the vicinity near to the masticator.

One butter and cheese factory in South Canterbury has been causing trouble with their drainage during the year. The directors of this company have been written to, and I have no doubt that they will endeavour to improve their effluent. The nightsoil-depository at Chaney's has given trouble also.

FOOD AND DRUGS.

The usual amount of care has been devoted to this work in general, and food-premises have been inspected from time to time as opportunity afforded.

The Christchurch metropolitan milk-supply has been systematically sampled, with good results, the number of samples not complying with the regulations under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1908, being 6·58 per cent.

The amount of fines recovered from prosecutions under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1908, and offences under the Health Act, 1920, and its regulations, amounted to £355 10s. 2d.

INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE.

Attention has been paid to those trades likely to endanger health, particularly paint-spraying plants and other industries in which dust or sharp particles are likely to be injurious to the worker. Bitumen-mixing plants have also been under observation both in regard to the dust and vapours generated in the mixing process.

ST. HELENS HOSPITAL.

It was with considerable regret that Dr. Bonar Lindsay's resignation had to be accepted, owing to health reasons. Dr. Hamilton Gould has been carrying on in his stead to date of this report.

In conclusion, it is my pleasure to again record my thanks to my staff, one and all, for the loyal manner in which they have carried out their work; particularly would I instance my Health Inspectors, whose duties were very much increased by the magnitude of the scarlatina outbreak.

SECTION 10.—NORTH AND SOUTH CANTERBURY HEALTH DISTRICTS.

Lieut.-Colonel F. W. W. DAWSON, Medical Officer of Health.

SCARLET FEVER.

Incidence has been severe, particularly in the vicinity of Christchurch. Oxford suffered heavily in the earlier months of the year. Kaiapoi, Rangiora, Waimate, and Leeston had their outbreaks in the spring. The expected spring drop in the numbers did not occur. The Christchurch carnival week and the picnics during this period helped to spread the disease. Many mild cases are missed. Owing to distance, parents do not call medical aid for these cases. They recover in a few days, and are a source of infection for several weeks. Isolation at home is often unsatisfactory. It is possible that parents dread the expensive ambulance journey, and shirk their responsibility with regard to notifying a doubtful or suspicious case.