

The continued installation of water-supplies has assisted greatly in health matters, and, although the number this year is not so great as previously, we have nevertheless made provision for twelve supplies within the settlements of Kerepouia, Te Kao, Tongoake (in the North Auckland District), and Opoutama (East Coast), at a total estimated cost of £600.

The drainage scheme laid out last year at the Te Kuiti Pa is now proceeding, and the work should shortly be completed. This entails four up-to-date W.C.s, drainage from large dining-hall, and extension of the borough sewer so that connections can be made therewith, the total cost being £200, of which sum the Natives are contributing £50, with all labour in addition. A drainage scheme was also laid out at the Ngaruawahia Pa, provision being made for six up-to-date W.C.s and septic tank, with the necessary drainage, at a total estimated cost of £175, the Natives contributing £1 for £1 and supplying labour in addition. This work I hope to commence as soon as details of finance are completed.

These will be permanent works, and give some indication of the desires of the Native people to better the conditions of the past and to ensure improved sanitary facilities in the interests of health in the future.

Privy accommodation at the individual homes show greatly increased numbers over previous years, and the erecting of these is fast becoming a routine procedure.

Such innovations as I have mentioned and the casting-aside of old customs in these directions all take time to being about, but nevertheless are proceeding very satisfactorily, and the teachings of the Department, not only in these matters, are being rewarded by the co-ordination of efforts of the Native people in the preservation of health and the betterment of sanitary conditions generally. It is nevertheless necessary to exercise strict supervision and personal touch during the transitory stages of introducing customs and ideas differing from those that have existed amongst our Native people since the beginning.

MAORI HEALTH COUNCILS.

These Councils continue to show their usefulness, and I have nothing but praise for their endeavours in carrying on their duties as defined under the Acts they administer. They work in co-ordination with the various Medical Officers of Health, Inspectors, and nurses. Their organizations and Village Committees, spread as they are throughout the country, are of valuable assistance in carrying out the dicta of the Department generally.

We have completed the formation of four additional Councils, all being in the South Island, and which include the Chatham Islands. By-laws have been prepared in each instance and forwarded for approval, and when these are returned I shall have the necessary gazetting attended to, after which they can function accordingly. This has entailed a large amount of work, but I feel sure that when completed these organizations will give us good service and, like all other Councils, be a valuable agency in carrying on the works of the Department. This completes the whole of our Councils, with the exception of the Waikato District, which, however, I hope shortly to link up.

We are not experiencing quite so much difficulty as last year with the Ratana element in their attempts to usurp the powers and functions of our Councils. This is accounted for by the determination of our Chairmen to demand compliance of the by-laws from this element, and possibly by the movement generally being not so pronounced as previously. We have in the past received passive resistance from large sections of these people, and although a deal of it still exists it is not nearly so general.

The concealment of sick cases and refusal to call medical and nursing aid has caused the Department a deal of trouble by the spread of disease which, had we known of in the early stages, could have been checked. However, the position is easing by the misguided element becoming more amenable to the dictates of the Department.

TYPHOID FEVER.

During the year we had two outbreaks, one being in the Hot Lakes district, where twenty-two cases were treated, and the other in the East Coast area, where fourteen cases occurred. Fortunately we were able to confine the sickness to their own particular settlements, and no further spread occurred. It is satisfactory to know that notwithstanding these two outbreaks the incidence of the disease shows marked improvement over previous years. Sporadic cases will no doubt present themselves, but I have every reason to forecast a diminution of the disease year by year.

The general improvement in sanitary and housing conditions is being reflected to a marked degree in the lessened incidence of the disease, which was a few years previously a menace amongst the Native people.

Instructions and advice to the Native are sent in pamphlet form in the Maori language for distribution amongst the people, and these, together with lectures by our Native Inspectors, nurses, and myself, provide a valuable means of imparting information in safeguarding the position generally.

DYSENTERY.

Towards the end of March an epidemic occurred, the majority of the cases being in the Auckland District. The fatality rate has certainly been high to the total number of cases, but the position is being carefully watched, all settlements are being combed, and every precaution being taken to prevent its spread. At the time of writing I am still engaged upon the supervision of the areas affected.