

1876.
NEW ZEALAND.

BOARD OF HEALTH REPORTS.

(UNDER SECTION 15 OF "THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1872.")

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

AUCKLAND.

No. 1.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Auckland, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.
SIR,— Superintendent's Office, Auckland, 10th June, 1876.

In conformity to section 15 of "The Public Health Act, 1873," I have the honor to forward the accompanying reports from the Central and Local Boards of this province.

I have, &c.,

READER WOOD,

(for the Chairman of the Central Board of Health.)

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 1.

REPORT of the CENTRAL BOARD of HEALTH for the PROVINCE of AUCKLAND.

IN accordance with section 15 of "The Public Health Act, 1872," are forwarded herewith copies of the reports furnished by the Local Boards of Health within this province, in regard to the health, cleanliness, and general sanitary state of the districts respectively under their jurisdiction.

The generally good health of the inhabitants of the province during the past year may be attributed rather to the climate than to any other circumstance. There has been an outbreak of scarlet fever at Coromandel and at the Thames, and at the latter place a serious average of cases proved fatal. Very few cases have occurred in Auckland. It is supposed that this disease was brought by the ship "Dover Castle," in August, 1875.

A large number of cases of typhoid (or enteric) fever have occurred in various parts of the province, but the mortality has been small. Many of the subjects of this disease were immigrants, recently arrived, whose constitutions had been somewhat weakened by the long voyage from England. The exciting cause of this disease is most probably to be found in the use of impure water for drinking purposes. It is true that in large centres of population the disease may be accelerated by imperfect drainage, bad smells, &c.; but it is remarkable that very many of the cases admitted into the Provincial Hospital have come from the most isolated localities.

As regards the city of Auckland and the populous district of the Thames, it is anticipated that the water supply now being introduced into those places will greatly improve their sanitary condition, and remove many fruitful sources of disease.

The appointment of a local analyst, and the facilities thus afforded for checking the adulteration of food, and more particularly of liquor, should also confer a great benefit upon the public health.

The services of the two Inspectors under the Central Board have been continuously employed in visiting the various districts outside of the city limits, and in attending to the abatement of nuisances of various kinds. In one or two instances only have the Local Boards availed themselves of the gratuitous assistance of these officers; and it has been found not unfrequently that the powers conferred by the Act are not sufficient to cope with various nuisances calling for prompt and energetic measures.

A separate hospital for infectious and contagious diseases has been erected, at the joint expense of the Provincial Government and City Council; but it is satisfactory to be able to report that the building has not yet been required for use.

Regulations have been issued by the Board, under subsection 5 of section 21, directing the isolation of patients in cases of infectious disorders. Further regulations have been asked for by the Local Boards at the Thames; but it is questionable how far the Central Board can interfere with the private rights of individuals in such matters.

It is hoped that the Public Health Amendment Bill will more clearly define the powers of the Central and Local Boards in this respect, and that its provisions will be less cumbrous and more easy of administration than those of the present Act have been found by experience to be.

Auckland, 10th June, 1876.

T. M. PHILSON, M.D., Health Officer.
VINCENT E. RICE, Secretary.

Sub-Enclosures to Enclosure in No. 1.

REPORTS furnished by the LOCAL BOARDS of HEALTH.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. City of Auckland. | 6. Epsom. |
| 2. Karangahape Highway District. | 7. Mount Eden. |
| 3. Ponsonby. | 8. Borough of the Thames. |
| 4. Grafton Road. | 9. Waiotahi Highway District. |
| 5. Newmarket. | 10. Kauaeranga. |

N.B.—No reports received from the following Local Boards:—Parnell; Newton; Remuera; Eden Terrace; and Mount Albert.

SIR,—

Town Clerk's Office, Auckland, 20th May, 1876.

In reply to your letter dated 15th inst. requesting a report upon the health, cleanliness, and general sanitary condition of the city, in conformity with section 15 of "The Public Health Act, 1872," I have the honor herewith to enclose you the report from the City Sanitary Inspector relative thereto.

V. E. Rice, Esq., Secretary,
Board of Health (Central), Auckland.

I have, &c.,
P. A. PHILIPS,
Town Clerk.

SIR,—

City Council Offices, Auckland, 20th May, 1876.

I have the honor to report upon the health, cleanliness, and general sanitary state of the district under the jurisdiction of the City Council.

The health of the city has much improved, and is now good. Twenty-two deaths were registered for the month ending April 1876. The number for the corresponding month of 1875 was 39, (showing a very marked improvement in the infant mortality). The number of deaths of children under two years in April 1876 was 9, whilst the number of deaths under two years for the corresponding month of 1875 was 28.

The cleanliness of the city has considerably improved, and a further improvement will be experienced when the suggested amendments to the Public Health Act become law.

The sanitary state of the city is daily attended to: a number of men being constantly employed to sweep and cleanse the channels, cab and cart stands, throughout the city, where no sewers are laid; also to remove any matter of a filthy nature that may be deposited on or upon any street or public place, which is not unfrequently the case.

A number of old holes used as privies, rarely emptied, as the ground soaks up the filth, have been discontinued, and boxes fixed instead, which must be emptied regularly.

A contractor, with an efficient staff of workmen and plant, attends to the removal of all such matter.

The number of boxes now fixed within the city in privies, for the month ending April, 1876, is 1,200. For the corresponding month of 1875 there were 900. These boxes are continually replacing the old cesspits.

With the expectation of a large supply of pure water being shortly introduced into the city, I fully believe the advantages will be great, and that the health of the city will continue to improve, if persons who are or may have been suffering from a highly infectious or contagious disease can be kept out of the city.

The Chairman, Local Board of Health, Auckland.

I have, &c.,
GEO. GOLDIE, Sanitary Inspector.

2.—KARANGAHAPE.

Office of the Local Board of Health,
Karangahape District, 17th May, 1876.

SIR,—

In reply to your circular of the 15th instant, I beg leave to inform the Central Board of Health that our district is in a clean, healthy, and flourishing position. I have taken every opportunity of looking after the sanitary condition of the district. Having a large stake in it myself, I consider it my duty to look after its cleanliness and prosperity.

Vincent E. Rice, Esq.

I have, &c.,
THOMAS BARNES,
Chairman, Local Board of Health.

3.—PONSONBY.

SIR,—

Auckland, 19th May, 1876.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular dated the 14th instant, requesting, in terms of the 15th section of "The Public Health Act, 1872," a concise report of the "health, cleanliness, and general sanitary state" of the "Ponsonby and, or Dedwood" District.

In reply, it affords me much pleasure to state that, during the term of office of the present Local Board of Health, the health and general sanitary condition of that district has been so eminently good and gratifying that my report is therefore necessarily concise. Nevertheless, I must not omit to record the fact that the Local Board has appointed Mr. Francis Humphreys Highway to act as local Sanitary Inspector for the due carrying out of the provisions of Part II. of the above Act, and who has from time to time rigidly inspected the whole district; and though the local population is rapidly increasing,

there has been no matter or subject of complaint brought under the notice of the Board, or anything which required any intervention on its part whatever.

I have, &c.,

JOSEPH AUGUSTUS TOLE,
Chairman, Ponsonby and, or Dedwood Local
Board of Health.

The Secretary of the Central Board of Health,
Auckland.

4.—GRAFTON ROAD.

Grafton Road Local Board of Health Office,
Auckland, 31st May, 1876.

SIR,—

I am instructed by the Chairman of the Grafton Road Local Board of Health to acknowledge the receipt of your circular of the 15th instant, asking for a report upon the health, cleanliness, and general sanitary state of this district.

In reply, I am directed to inform you that the district is well drained and clean, and that good health prevails among the inhabitants.

I have, &c.,

H. ASHTON, Secretary,
Grafton Road Local Board of Health.

Vincent E. Rice, Esq.,
Secretary, Central Board of Health.

5.—NEWMARKET.

Newmarket Highway District, 17th May, 1876.

SIR,—

I have to acknowledge your Circular 243, dated 15th instant, calling my attention to section 15 of "The Public Health Act, 1872."

In reply, I have to state that the health of this district is generally good, and, so far as I am aware, it is free from any contagious or infectious diseases.

Its cleanliness and general sanitary state, with two exceptions stated below, is also in good condition.

The smell from the slaughter-house is occasionally very strong, and a source of much annoyance to the residents. The refuse which passes through the creek under Hobson's Bridge has also been a source of complaint by the inhabitants in that part of the district; it appears to be decayed vegetable matter from the breweries, and the smell is very offensive.

I have, &c.,

JOHN MCNEILL,
Chairman.

The Secretary, Board of Health, Auckland.

6.—EPSOM.

Auckland, 26th May, 1876.

SIR,—

In answer to yours, dated 15th instant, requesting a concise report as to the health &c. of our district, I beg to inform you—

1. That the health of the district is excellent.
2. That each house is a model of cleanliness.
3. That the general sanitary state of the district could not materially be improved.

I am, &c.,

GEO. H. LAVERS,
Secretary of Epsom Highway Board.

Vincent E. Rice, Esq.,
Secretary, Central Board of Health.

7.—MOUNT EDEN.

Mount Eden, 31st May, 1876.

SIR,—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, relative to the general sanitary state of the district, and in reply have to say the district is in a clean and healthy state. But I would beg to call the attention of the Central Board of Health to a boiling-down establishment in the Mount Albert District, which is a great annoyance to residents in the western portion of this district.

I have, &c.,

JOHN PROBERT,
Chairman.

Vincent E. Rice, Esq.

8.—BOROUGH OF THE THAMES.

Office, Thames Local Board of Health, 20th May, 1876.

SIR,—

I have the honor to enclose report as asked for under section 15 of "The Public Health Act, 1872."

From what I see reported in the public Press as having fallen from his Worship the Mayor of Auckland, I am led to think that, if my view of the law be correct, he labours under a misapprehension as to the powers vested in this Board; and as his views may be shared by the Central Board, I take the liberty of expressing the opinion shared by this Board of its position and powers relative to measures for the checking of contagious and infectious diseases.

By section 23 of "The Public Health Act, 1872," the Local Board, apart from the Central Board, have certain inherent powers of action "when a disease dangerous to the public health breaks out in their district"—their powers being, (a) to provide place of reception for sick and infected; (b) to make regulation for conduct of such place; (c) to cause sick and infected to be removed thereto, with consent of invalid, or parent &c. of such invalid; (d) if the condition of the invalid be such as not to admit of

removal without danger, then to treat the abode of the invalid as a hospital (*i.e.* place of reception appointed), and to apply hospital regulations to such abode.

It will be seen that the inherent power of the Board to regulate private abodes is given *only* in the event of a patient being too ill to be removed, and not in the case of assent to removal being withheld; so that this Board finds itself powerless in just the cases where it could most usefully and most frequently act.

I would suggest that the Central Board frame and issue such regulations under section 21 as would meet the difficulty pointed out as arising under section 23.

The regulations already issued by the Central Board under section 21 are under its last subsection only; while it is not found that any dwelling or locality in this district are in such a state as to come under the operation of the regulation.

It must be admitted that no hospital has been erected, but, as will be seen by the report of Mr. Mason, measures for isolation, &c., have been taken; while it has transpired that in any event, in the majority of cases, the assent for removing a patient to an hospital would have been withheld.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman, Central Board of Health, Auckland. J. E. MACDONALD, Chairman,
Thames Local Board of Health.

9.—BOROUGH OF THE THAMES.

THE Thames Local Board of Health having been called upon to report to the Central Board of Health for the Province of Auckland, upon the health, cleanliness, and general sanitary state of the district, have the honor to state,—

That they annex hereto copies of reports from (a) their medical officer, Dr. Lethbridge; (b) Dr. Fox, surgeon to the Thames Hospital; and (c) J. B. Mason, an officer of the Board.

It should be explained that the appendix to Dr. Lethbridge's report is not confined to the mortality in this district proper (Borough of Thames), but embraces that of surrounding districts, and also deaths in the hospital of persons brought into the borough.

J. E. MACDONALD, Chairman,
Thames Local Board of Health.

20th May, 1876.

SIR,—

Grahamstown, 18th May, 1876.

In reporting upon the health, cleanliness, and general sanitary state of the Thames Gold Field, I may remark, in the first place, that the general health may be said to be good, for, with the exception of scarlet fever which has been affecting this locality since December last, there is little sickness of any kind. We may therefore almost entirely confine our attention to a record of this particular disorder.

Commencing almost simultaneously in Grahamstown and Tararu, it exhibited a strong tendency to become localized in the latter place, and round the entrance of Tararu Creek; on both sides it seems to have spread, more or less, from house to house.

In Tararu there were about 30 cases, and 3 deaths. It seems now to have partially died out there. Approaching Grahamstown, the Upper Albert Street and Waiotahi District were the next to suffer; here the number of cases may be reckoned as 30, the number of deaths 4.

Next there were a few sporadic cases in Shortland; and lately there have been a considerable number of instances, within a limited area, about the spot where the Karaka Creek enters the flat; here the number of cases has been about 60, the deaths 3. There have also been a few mild cases in Block 27.

The Moanataiari and Parawai districts have hitherto escaped a visitation. At the present time there are but one or two recent cases in Shortland, though there are doubtless many in various parts suffering from the *sequelæ* of scarlet fever. The epidemic has travelled slowly and erratically, the total number of cases, for the population, not being large. Possibly the previous epidemic of measles may have exercised some protective influence on the community. It seems reasonable to expect that scarlet fever will continue to affect the inhabitants in the same uncertain manner.

The total number of cases may be estimated at 120, of deaths 10.

We may next notice the efforts which have been made in various directions to mitigate the severity of the epidemic. First, the Local Boards of Health, upon the first case occurring, convened meetings and promoted consultations among the medical men of the town. They also published hygienic directions for the use of the public.

Two medical men were deputed to draw up plans for a fever hospital; but as the erection of the edifice was, from various reasons, unable to be proceeded with, this idea fell through. Meanwhile, a medical officer was appointed by the Boards to assist in advising them, and to attend such cases needing assistance—and in these, nursing, food, &c., were provided on the proper condition of isolation from the neighbourhood. The health officers were also assiduous in attending to and reporting on the comfort and cleanliness of each family, and several schools were from time to time closed.

These measures were ably seconded by the exertions of the medical men of the district; and I believe that in the majority of instances the cases of scarlet fever were reported to the Local Boards as they occurred, although it is questionable whether any advantage is derived from this proceeding.

Nor was the public at large backward (with a few exceptions) in affording assistance to the medical profession in adopting sanitary precautions—isolating patients when practicable, and so forth; and that their efforts have been to some extent successful, no one can reasonably doubt.

With respect to cleanliness, it does not appear that the inhabitants are remarkably inattentive to it, although there may be individual instances to the contrary; and this naturally leads me to call attention to the fact that the district has no drainage worth the name. Besides cesspools and other receptacles, streams and watercourses become merely secondary channels for sewerage; hence the

mouths of streams form the peculiar habitat of infectious disorders. The same thing may be, to some extent, said of a zone of land upon which houses are built, extending a short way up the hill from Tararu to Block 27. This also is a favourite haunt of fevers; and the Health Officer complains of the defective state of the drainage along this line.

The system, also, of having closets attached to district schools, the soil of which is not removed, but allowed to accumulate, and occasionally to overflow into an open drain, cannot be too strongly deprecated. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine more favourable conditions for the spread of endemic or epidemic disorders; and if, as is asserted, there is a financial difficulty in the way of performing for these schools one of the most elementary essentials of health, it would seem to call for some attention on the part of authorities. To revert to the general question: any measures to improve the public health here will be of little avail, without a comprehensive system of drainage. They should also afford means of isolation, and rules to enforce it. Neither of these at present exist.

To conclude, the general sanitary state of the Thames District may be pronounced much better than we have any reason to expect, since, as I have described, many of the conditions conducive to entire freedom from disease are "conspicuous by their absence."

I have, &c.,

CHARLES F. LETHBRIDGE,

Medical Officer.

The Chairman, Local Board of Health, Grahamstown.

APPENDIX.—Showing TABLE of CAUSES of MORTALITY in THAMES DISTRICT since 1st January, 1876.

Disease.	No. of Deaths.	Disease.	No. of Deaths.
Scarlet fever	9	Erysipelas	1
Diarrhœa	7	Convulsions	1
Violent, and deaths by drowning...	6	Bronchitis	2
Pneumonia	2	Aneurism	1
Dropsy	2	Hernia	1
Marasmus	3	Hyperpyrexia... ..	1
Heart disease	4	Addison's disease	1
General debility	6	Worms	1
Peritonitis	1	Mesenteric disease	1
Enteritis	3		
Phthisis	4	Total number of deaths	58
Cut throat	1		

SIR,—

Thames, May 18th, 1876.

The health of the Thames, as inferred from the mortality returns, is good, and will bear comparison with that of any other town either in New Zealand or the British Islands. If it should be remarked that the newness of the district and the numbers of its population who are in the prime of life and health are sufficient to explain its low rate of mortality, I would again reply that an enormous proportion of young children and infants, as in our population, must aggravate the mortality of any district in a more than compensating scale.

Scarlatina is now prevalent, and some of these cases have been of a peculiarly virulent and rapidly fatal type. Typhoid fever is not common—probably less common than in any other New Zealand town. Diphtheria and croup are not infrequent, and often fatal. Measles caused a very large number of the deaths registered last year.

The town is built on a low flat by the seaside, composed chiefly of porous sand and gravel; this absorbs readily the drainage matters, and the fluid matter from cesspools and privy pits—the first effect of the porous nature of the subsoil being thus beneficial, though likely to be replaced by an effect of a very opposite character when the ground gets saturated with animal matter, and liberates noxious gases whenever it is opened. The abominable habit of covering up holes full of human excrement instead of emptying them has obtained at the Thames to a very large extent.

Drainage is all by open sewers, which there is no proper system of flushing. In that part of the borough formerly known as Grahamstown, there are wooden water tables, and the sea water at spring tides washes them well out, rising often to the level of the wooden foot-ways.

The chief slaughter-yard of the locality is situated at Parawai, a quarter of a mile from the borough boundary; it is kept clean, but its removal before long will be an imperative necessity.

I have, &c.,

ALEXANDER FOX,

M.D., M.R.C.P.

The Chairman of the Local Board of Health, Thames.

SIR,—

Thames, 19th May, 1876.

I beg to report I have in each case of scarlet fever, where the circumstances of the family attacked were not such as to enable them to comply with the suggestions of the medical attendant, induced the parties to take, and defrayed the expenses of, such measures as were suggested by the medical officer for checking contagion.

In some cases my efforts were defeated by the unthinking action of mothers of families, who would, despite all warnings, intrude into the infected premises, and thereby in several cases conveying the disease to their own families.

I have, &c.,

J. B. MASON,

Officer to the Board.

The Chairman, Local Board of Health, Thames.

9.—WAIOTAHĪ.

SIR,—

Office, Waiotahi Local Board of Health, 20th May, 1876.

I have the honor to enclose you the report of the Waiotahi Local Board of Health, as asked for by your letter of May 15th.

V. E. Rice, Esq., Secretary,
Central Board of Health, Auckland.

I have, &c.,
F. C. DEAN,
Secretary to the Board of Health.

[COPY.]

THE Local Board of Health, Waiotahi, have the honor to report, for the information of the Central Board of Health, Auckland, that the district over which they are placed in authority has, since December last, been visited by an endemic disease, the symptoms of which are similar to that of scarlet fever, but very much milder, and also by the disease of scarlet fever;—the former necessitating but from a few hours' to a few days' confinement to the bed, and being unattended by fatal results, whereas the latter has resulted in about one death in every ten cases that have occurred, and death has frequently taken place about forty-eight hours after the patient has been first attacked.

The powers granted under the Public Health Act to Local Boards, to cope with or stop the spread of any contagious or infectious disease, when such breaks out within their district, are virtually nil. It is compulsory on the Local Board to expend the local rates for sanitary purposes; but power to stop the spread of, or to stamp out disease at its first appearance, is withheld.

To isolate within their own houses or allotments families having contagious disease; to prevent persons, other than nurses appointed for that purpose by the Board, visiting affected houses and so spreading the disease; to prevent public passenger vehicles being used to convey to the cemeteries those who have been resident in the house in which death from contagious disease has occurred; to prevent those likely, from the last-named or other causes, imparting disease to others, by following as mourners any funeral, with many other similar powers, should be possessed by Local Boards; and the Waiotahi Local Board of Health exceedingly regret that the Central Board of Health, Auckland, have for month after month allowed the disease of scarlet fever to spread and obtain a firm footing at the Thames, without exercising the powers they possess, by making regulations under the second subsection of clause 21 of the Public Health Act, for purposes similar to those enumerated above, the which subsection reads as follows:—

“From time to time after the issuing of any such order as last aforesaid, and whilst the same shall continue in force, the Central Board of Health for the province within which the part or place or parts or places to which such order applies is or are situate, may issue such directions and regulations as such Central Board shall think fit, for the prevention as far as possible, or mitigation, of epidemic, endemic, or contagious disease, and from time to time in like manner may revoke, renew, and alter such directions and regulations, or substitute such new directions and regulations as to such Central Board may seem expedient;” and without having delegated the power to carry out such regulations, when made, to the Local Board or other persons to enforce.

The Local Board desire to report that they consider the closets attached to all schools and mines where many hands are employed should not be a wooden erection with a hole dug in the earth for the reception of excrement, the soil and filth from which soaks through the earth, or overflows, and is washed by the rains into all the gutters and water tables around.

During the months of March, April, May, June, 1875, this district was visited by measles that carried off a great number of children; and probably to this may in some measure be attributed the reason why scarlet fever is not more rife within the district than it is at present. But the Board desire to record the opinion expressed by its medical officer, that this epidemic is surely and rapidly spreading, about thirty cases being known at the present time to exist within a circle of a few yards of a house in which two deaths from this disease lately occurred.

The want of pure water for drinking and household purposes, in almost every part of the district, is, in the opinion of the Board, one of the great causes of illness amongst the children in the district. Water running from drives in many of the mines is the only water available.

The Board's officer has from time to time visited and inspected every house within the district, and supplied with chloride of lime those who from poverty were unable to purchase the same. The privies and drains of the houses have been cleaned and disinfected—notice to do so within a given time being served on all owners of premises who were neglectful in this matter.

In every case where the Medical Officer to the Board has considered isolation advisable, even when the house in which the patient resided was detached by a considerable space from other houses, the Board has endeavoured to secure its being carried out by providing medical attendance, and in one instance a nurse for the family, conditionally on isolation being observed; but, generally speaking, within two or three days, neighbours (often women with children in arms) have visited the sick family, and thus ran the risk of carrying the disease into their own households; the warnings of the medical man and of the Board's officer being powerless to prevent it.

In conclusion, the Board would urge the necessity of the Public Health Act being amended so as to give to Local Boards of Health power to take the necessary and often immediate action to stamp out or prevent the spread of contagious or infectious diseases.

20th May, 1876.

ALEXANDER BRODIE, Chairman,
Waiotahi Local Board of Health.

10.—KAUAERANGA.

Shortland, 24th May, 1876.

THE Local Board of Health of the Kauaeranga District beg to report, for the information of the Central Board of Health, as follows:—

Two cases of scarlet fever of a mild type were reported in this district, one on 26th March and the other on 7th April, both of which were duly notified to the Central Board; and as no further

cases have been since reported, the Local Board have no reason for supposing the disease to have spread. Several cases have, however, been found to exist on the Karaka, just outside the boundary of the district; and the danger to our population is as great from this source as if the disease had spread within our own boundaries. Owing to the want of funds, no sanitary precautions could be instituted by the Board; but in cases where the inhabitants were living near the infected house, in the borough, they have been instructed as to the best means of warding off a visitation of the disease. In other respects the district is healthy.

The general cleanliness of the district would be much improved by the substitution of earth-closets for the present system of cesspits, as, after heavy rains, the offensive matter is washed into the water-tables, and is likely to disseminate any infectious disease which might be prevalent at the time. In other respects our sanitary condition is good, the dwellings as a rule being detached, thus allowing the air to circulate freely.

By order of the Board.

ROBERT MITCHELL,

Secretary.

The Central Board of Health, Auckland.

HAWKE'S BAY.

No. 2.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Hawke's Bay, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.
SIR,— Board of Health Office, Napier, 16th May, 1876.

In compliance with section 15 of "The Public Health Act, 1872," I have the honor to report that there has been no unusual sickness in this province during the past year. There has been no occasion for any meeting of the Central Board of Health, and no report has been received from the Local Board of Health.

I have, &c.,

J. D. ORMOND,

Chairman, Central Board of Health.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

TARANAKI.

No. 3.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Taranaki, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.
SIR,— New Plymouth, 19th May, 1876.

I have the honor to forward herewith the report on the sanitary condition of the Province of Taranaki, as required by section 15 of "The Public Health Act, 1872."

I have, &c.,

FRED. A. CARRINGTON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 3.

SIR,— New Plymouth, 16th May, 1876.

I have the honor to report, for your information, that the health of New Plymouth and neighbourhood was never in a more satisfactory state than at the present time. There is almost and absolutely no disease at all; and this I have also on the testimony of other medical men of the place.

The general health has been very good during the whole of the summer, with the exception of several sporadic cases of typhoid fever, but little fatal, almost entirely confined to newly-arrived immigrants. These, as far as possible, have been isolated in the barracks, the hospital, fever-house, and detached country districts; and in no instance has the disease spread farther.

I believe the cleanliness and general healthy condition of the town are satisfactory. Where any objectionable conditions have been observed, they have been reported to the Board of Health and remedied.

I have, &c.,

T. E. RAWSON, M.D.

The Chairman of the Board of Health.

MARLBOROUGH.

No. 4.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Marlborough, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.
SIR,— Blenheim, 15th May, 1876.

In reply to Mr. Cooper's telegram 354, of the 13th instant, I have the honor to inform you that since the date of my letter of the 5th November, 1874, no further action has been taken under "The Public Health Act, 1872." I am, however, able to report favourably of the general sanitary state of the province.

I have, &c.,

A. P. SEYMOUR.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

NELSON.

No. 5.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Nelson, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.
 SIR,— Office of Central Board of Health, Nelson, 22nd May, 1876.

I have the honor to report that the general health in all parts of this province during the past year has, on the whole, been satisfactory, and that nothing has occurred to call for any special action on the part of this Board.

I have, &c.,

OSWALD CURTIS,
 Chairman.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

CANTERBURY.

No. 6.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Canterbury, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,— Superintendent's Office,
 Christchurch, Canterbury, N.Z., 8th June, 1876.

In reference to your request that I would furnish you with a report upon the working of the Public Health Act in this province, I have the honor to inform you that, at a recent meeting of the Board, the following resolution was adopted by the Board:—

"The Board having heard read a letter from the Colonial Government declining to sanction the expense of printing and circulating 'Precautions against the Spread of Typhoid Fever,' is of opinion that the absence of funds to give effect to the Board's decisions, as well as the urgent want of definition of powers of the central and local authorities, render the Act less useful than it might be, and recommends that the Government be moved to introduce an amended Bill in the next Session."

I may state that since the commencement of the year 1875 the dealing with ships which have been placed in quarantine has been the principal work of the Board, and that in every case their instructions have been carefully and effectively carried out by the Health Officer in Port Lyttelton, and by the Superintendent of Quarantine, Mr. March. These instructions have related chiefly to the regulating of the time during which the ships and passengers were to be detained in quarantine; to the fumigating of the ships; to the careful washing and disinfecting of clothes; and to the separation and isolation of those who have been subjects of infection.

The ships so dealt with have been—

The "Rakaia," in the month of February, 1875;

The "Jessie Osborne," in the month of February, 1876;

The "Countess of Kintore," in the month of May last.

On the 21st December last, the Board was called together to consider reports which had been received of the existence of scarlet fever in the Christchurch and Heathcote districts. From the reports of the medical practitioners which were then forwarded to you, the Board came to the conclusion which the subsequent progress of the disease has proved to be mainly correct—that the fever was not of a sufficiently dangerous character to render any very stringent measures advisable. The following precautions were, however, adopted:—The intercolonial steamers were ordered to be inspected on arriving in the harbour, to ascertain whether they were free from disease; and the Central Boards of the neighbouring ports were requested to keep the Central Board of this province advised of any suspicious cases which might arise in their respective districts.

On 8th January, the following instructions for the guidance of medical officers of Local Boards were issued and published in the *Provincial Gazette*:—

"The medical officer appointed by any Local Board of Health under Section No. 14 of 'The Public Health Act, 1872,' in any district shall, whenever he shall be informed by the Chairman of the Local Board of the existence of any epidemic, infectious, or contagious disease, inspect and report to the Chairman of the Local Board as to the circumstances attending any such case, giving information as to the locality in which the disease has appeared, and its sanitary condition, and other facts that may come to his knowledge which may tend, or appear to tend, to the better or more full comprehension of the disease, together with such recommendations as he shall think fit to make as to the best measures to be adopted to prevent the spread of the disease."

Clause No. 17 of the Public Health Act, directing medical practitioners to give notice of infectious cases under their charge to the Local Board, and clause 18, compelling householders to give like notice of dangerous diseases within their houses, were also published in the *Provincial Gazette* and public newspapers for general information.

As previously stated, the Board was anxious that greater publicity should be given to a valuable paper suggesting precautions against the spread of typhoid fever, and directed that it should be printed and circulated, with a heading to the effect that persons receiving a copy should keep it in such place that it would be easily accessible. As, however, the Colonial Government declined to place any portion of the vote of the General Assembly at the disposal of the Board for this purpose, no further action has been taken in the matter.

With the exception of the spread of this mild type of scarlet fever, the Board has not been made aware of the existence of any infectious epidemic in the province, and believe that the attention to drainage, and other sanitary precautions consequent upon the constitution of a Drainage Board having charge of the main drains and sewers in Christchurch and the neighbouring district, will be attended with great benefit to the maintenance of the public health in this part of the province.

I have, &c.,

WM. ROLLESTON,
 Superintendent.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

OTAGO.

No. 7.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Otago, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Dunedin, 26th May, 1876.

In reply to your telegram, in which you request to be furnished with report on the sanitary condition of the province, I have the honor to state that there is nothing very special to report on the subject.

In Dunedin, the Local Health Board has incurred a considerable expenditure in the erection of a fever hospital and otherwise, in the adoption of stringent measures for the suppression of scarlet fever, of which there have been a number of cases, supposed to have emanated from Melbourne.

I am glad to say that the result of the action of the Local Health Board has been successful.

The various other Health Boards throughout the province have also been very assiduous in the performance of their functions, and are devoting as much attention to sanitary arrangements as the means at their disposal will admit of, and as can well be expected of them under the incipient circumstances of a young and thinly-peopled country.

I have, &c.,

J. MACANDREW.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

WESTLAND.

No. 8.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Westland, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Superintendent's Office, 12th June, 1876.

In compliance with your request, I have the honor to forward report from the Central Board of Health for the past year. I enclose report from the Provincial Surgeon upon the general health of the province; also reports from the Local Boards of Health of Ross, Okarito, Kanieri, and Hokitika.

The delay which has occurred in furnishing you with the yearly report has been caused by the non-receipt of reports from some of the Local Boards, some of which are not yet to hand.

The Provincial Surgeon in his report alluded to one case of typhoid fever which occurred at Stafford Town, and of which you have already received full information. I am glad now to state that the patient there referred to has completely recovered. Since that report was sent in to the Central Board several other cases have occurred—namely, two in Hokitika, one of which proved fatal, and one in the Kanieri District, which was also fatal.

There does not, however, appear to be any cause for apprehension as to the disease spreading extensively, as the Local Boards, acting upon the suggestions of the Central Board, are taking such precautions as their circumstances will permit against such a contingency.

Seven meetings have been held by the Central Board during the past year, and its efforts have been principally directed to making suggestions to the various local Boards, pointing out to them where they have failed to give effect to the provisions of the Act, and how they may most successfully be put in operation.

As you have been already informed in previous correspondence, the Board is very much hampered in its action by the want of funds; and it is to be hoped that during the approaching Session of Parliament something may be done towards providing it with the necessary means for undertaking works which may be deemed essential to the health and well-being of the community, such as the proper drainage of our towns.

The funds at the disposal of the Local Boards in Westland are barely sufficient to enable them to carry out the ordinary provisions of their Road Board duties, leaving nothing to meet any extraordinary expenditure for which occasion may arise, while acting as Local Boards of Health.

I have, &c.,

JAMES A. BONAR,

Chairman, Central Board of Health.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 8.

Copy of Report furnished by FITZHERBERT DERMOTT, Esq., Medical Officer for the Province of Westland, upon the state of the Public Health.

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit a short report on the general condition of health which has prevailed in this province up to the 30th April, 1876. I have much pleasure to state that the health of the population during the period referred to has been extremely good.

With one exception, there has not been a single case of contagious or infectious disease reported to the various Boards of Health; nor have I any reason to suppose that such prevailed.

The exceptional case referred to is that of a female school-teacher who recently arrived in Stafford from Nelson to take charge of the Government school. Some weeks after arrival, she was attacked with typhus fever, and very little if any doubt exists that the infection was produced beyond the Province of Westland.

The prompt action of the Stafford Local Board of Health prevented the spread of the disease, and the patient is now rapidly recovering.

I cannot better describe the healthiness of Hokitika than by mentioning that since the establishment of the Board of Health not a single case of contagious or infectious disease has been reported as existing within the borough.

The Hon. J. A. Bonar, Chairman,
Central Board of Health, Hokitika.

I have, &c.,
FITZHERBERT DERMOTT,
Provincial Surgeon and Local Health Officer.

SIR,—

Local Board of Health, Ross, 11th May, 1876.

In reply to your honored of the 8th inst., requesting the Local Board of Health to report on the health of this district for the year ending April 30th, 1876, to-day I waited on Dr. Duff, asking him if any contagious diseases had come before his notice during the above period. In reply, the Doctor states that the inhabitants of the Totara District are in a healthy condition.

I further beg to state, on behalf of the Local Board of Health, that the residences and outhouses in this district are clean and satisfactory.

Further, it is the intention of the above Board to carry out the provisions of "The Health Act, 1872," in its entirety.

J. A. Bonar, Esq., Chairman,
Central Board of Health, Hokitika.

I have, &c.,
JOHN B. LOPAS,
Health Officer.

SIR,—

Road Board Office, Okarito, 24th May, 1876.

In answer to your Honor's circular *re* the health of the district, I am instructed by the Chairman of the Okarito Local Board of Health to inform your Honor that the Okarito District is in a very healthy state, and free from any disease.

I beg also to inform your Honor that proper attention will be paid to your circular dated April 29th, and numbered 46.

His Honor the Superintendent of Westland.

I have, &c.,
JAMES S. BENYON,
Secretary.

SIR,—

Office of the Local Board of Health,
Town Hall, Hokitika, 19th May, 1876.

In compliance with your request, I have the honor to furnish the following report on the health of this district for the year ending 30th April, 1876 :—

The town of Hokitika has been in a very healthy condition during the period referred to, which may be attributed in great measure to the frequent heavy falls of rain, assisted by the hilly formation of the town, causing a periodical scouring of the main channels and drains.

Considerable improvements would be effected both in the formation of new culverts and deepening and closing in of existing drains; but the funds at the disposal of the Borough Council (the Local Board of Health) are quite inadequate to carry out any permanent works of this nature, although in many localities they are urgently needed, to preserve the sanitary condition of the town.

Notably, it has long been the wish of the Local Board to construct a large main culvert through Tancred Street, for the drainage of the thickly-populated east side of Revell Street; and, as before reported, the requisite plans and specifications have been prepared, extending a distance of about fifty chains, viz. from Park Street to the Hokitika River; and it is intended to carry out the work as soon as practicable.

Probably during the next Session of Parliament a substantial sum will be placed on the Estimates to be at the disposal of the Government in pursuance of clause 11 of "The Public Health Act, 1872," for temporary loans to the less wealthy Local Boards, to enable them to attend to pressing works, the neglect of which might endanger the lives, not merely of the immediate residents, but, through infection, those of the entire colony.

The Health Officer of the Board (Sergeant James O'Malley) has been most active in requiring the various provisions of the Act to be complied with, and in nearly every case have his instructions as to removal of nuisances, filling up of hollows, &c., been attended to. The exceptions have been where the owners are absentees; and no provision being made in the Act for charging the cost of such on to the property, the same has fallen in some cases on to the Borough Council.

An amendment in the Act in this respect appears desirable. It has not been found practicable to stringently carry out clause 20 with reference to earth and water closets. The greater portion of the drains in the town being uncovered militates against the use of the latter; and the Act gives no power to Local Boards to levy rates for the expenses attendant upon employing nightmen and supplying the earth.

In a town of such recent date as Hokitika, it cannot be surprising that there is not a complete and thorough system of drainage, the lack of funds, as before stated, is the cause; and the approaching meeting of Parliament is anxiously looked forward to, in the hope that corporate bodies may be liberally endowed, so that they may not from want of funds become (as it is to be feared have some of the larger cities) hotbeds for the creation and spread of disease.

The interments in the Hokitika Cemetery during the twelve months have been—Adults, 41; children, 74; total, 115. Many of the former had been residents beyond the town; and of the latter, many were stillborn, and nearly all the rest only a few months old. The proportion to the population will compare favourably with other parts of the colony.

His Honor the Superintendent of Westland.

I have, &c.,
FRANCIS C. TABART, Mayor,
Chairman of the Board of Health.

SIR,—

Office of the Local Board of Health, Kanieri, 25th May, 1876.

I have the honor to report that the health of the inhabitants of the Kanieri District for the twelve months ended 30th April, has been very good.

There has been no endemic or epidemic disease existing in the district during the twelve months; the habitations and business premises throughout the district are, on the whole, clean and well drained, the only exception being the slaughter-yards on the North Beach; their situation being so low it is impossible to drain them.

The Chairman of the Central Board of Health,
Hokitika.

I have, &c.,
ROBERT PAUL,
Hon. Secretary, Local Board of Health.

No. 9.

The CHAIRMAN, Central Board of Health, Westland, to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Office of the Central Board of Health,
Hokitika, 15th June, 1876.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward herewith further reports from the Local Boards of Health for the Districts of Greymouth, Arahura, and Paroa, being a continuation of my letter of 12th inst.

I have, &c.,
JAS. A. BONAR,
Chairman, Central Board of Health.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosures in No. 9.

SIR,—

Town Clerk's Office, Greymouth, 13th June, 1876.

Referring to your letter No. 49, of the 8th May, 1876, requesting the Local Board of Health to furnish a report upon the health of the town of Greymouth, for the year ending April, 1876, I have the honor to forward the enclosed report, received this day from Dr. C. L. Morice, upon the health and sanitary condition of the town of Greymouth.

The Chairman, Central Board of Health for the
Province of Westland.

I have, &c.,
JOHN A. WHALL,
Town Clerk.

GENTLEMEN,—

Greymouth, 13th June, 1876.

The town of Greymouth is at present free from any infectious or contagious diseases, and has been generally healthy during past six months, with the exception of a few cases of diphtheria during early part of year, two or three of which proved fatal (children). The water supply, privy, and drainage system is capable of improvement.

The Local Board of Health, Greymouth.

I have, &c.,
C. L. MORICE.

SIR,—

Stafford Town, 13th June, 1876.

I have the honor to report on the sanitary state of this district. There has been no scarlet fever or any other infectious diseases in this district during the present year, except one case of typhoid fever (Miss Tucker), which has been already reported to the Central Board. But I am happy to state she has recovered, and will soon be able to attend to her duty as school teacher at Stafford Town. This district is free from sickness of every description.

The Chairman, Central Board of Health,
Hokitika.

I have, &c.,
MICH. HOULAHAN,
Chairman, Local Board of Health, Arahura.

Office of the Local Board of Health for the District of Paroa,
Marsden, 13th June, 1876.

SIR,—

I am directed by the Local Board of Health for the District of Paroa, to report "That the sanitary condition of the district is good, no contagious diseases being in existence."

The Chairman, Central Board of Health
for Westland, Hokitika.

I have, &c.,
H. H. WOLTERS,
Secretary.

