

after a drought. I have pointed this out to the local authority, the Wairoa Town Board, and recommended that they make the use of some of the various appliances to prevent the influx of dirty water into the tanks—such as Roberts's rain-water separator, or, better still, Oxenham's patent, which provides for the separation of the dirty water and the automatic cleansing of the tanks by an underflow instead of an overflow—compulsory, but my recommendation has not yet found favour. The number of deaths in Wairoa during the year amounted to ten, a rate of 16·05 per 1,000. This is much higher than it should be in such a favourably situated township. I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that much of the sickness and some of the deaths are attributable to the want of pure water. Dr. Thresh states in his excellent work on water supplies, "The filthiest waters used for domestic purposes which I have examined have come from rain-water tanks." I shall again move in the matter with the Town Board, and I hope with better success.

*Mohaka.*—The new hotel is rapidly approaching completion, and the architect informs me that it will be ready for occupation in the course of two or three weeks. The commencement of the building was delayed from various causes: first, the local authority, the Wairoa County Council, took up a defiant attitude and refused to serve the notices on the owner, who was a member of their body. I brought the matter before the Hawke's Bay Licensing Committee, who gave effect to my recommendations, but were more lenient to the owner in the time-limit than, in my judgment, was advisable; then there was some culpable delay on the part of the owner in calling for tenders, some unavoidable delay in getting timber on the ground owing to the difficulty in negotiating the bar of the Mohaka River, and notwithstanding my protests the Licensing Committee extended the time-limit for the completion of the hotel. However, when the work was commenced it was pushed on expeditiously, and the time is near at hand when the travelling public between Napier and Wairoa will be provided with decency and comfort during their enforced night's sojourn at Mohaka. The schoolhouse at Mohaka is out of repair, badly lighted, and requires to be rebuilt. I have reported adversely upon it, but owing to the action of the Natives there are difficulties in the way. I trust that they may be overcome, and the work put in hand shortly.

#### BUILDINGS CONDEMNED.

The building provided for the manager for the Assets Company's estate beyond Muriwai, about twenty miles from Gisborne, was visited by me. I found that the building occupied an unwholesome site, and the building itself was quite unfit for occupation. After notices were served the building was vacated for some months. The estate has now changed hands, and I am informed by Mr. Currie, the Inspector appointed by the Cook County Council, that the manager for the present owners is occupying the house. I have written to the local authority, the Cook County Council, to take proceedings under the Act. I have not yet received their reply. An insanitary house at the Tiratu sawmills, near Dannevirke, was pulled down.

The residence provided for the school-teacher at Puketapu, a village about nine miles from Napier, is very old, the floors nearly resting on the ground and below the level of the adjacent road; the timber is in a state of advanced decay, and the house quite unfit for habitation. I wrote to the Education Board condemning the building under section 11 of "The Public Health Amendment Act, 1903," but the Board contented itself in spending a little money on paint and paper and declined to go further. It is disgraceful that a public body should provide such a building as a residence for one of its employees.

Two dilapidated and insanitary cottages situated at Mohaka were condemned by me and ordered to be pulled down. Later on the architect employed by the owner, Mr. Finch, of Napier, called on me and assured me that the condition of the cottages warranted the expenditure necessary for reconstruction. I therefore consented to this being done, the work to be completed to the satisfaction of the Department.

#### PROSECUTIONS.

A prosecution resulting in a conviction was undertaken by the Department, the local authority—the Hastings Borough Council—having refused to act against a resident for defiling an open drain in the borough. A prosecution resulting in a conviction was instituted by the Napier Borough Council, at the instigation of the Department, against the occupier of a house who had permitted his yard to remain in a dirty condition. These are the only prosecutions that have proved necessary; many others have been threatened, but when the delinquents were assured that the bite would follow the bark they considered discretion was the better part of valour, and carried out the requirements of the Department.

I have been able to obtain improved sanitation in several of the hotels situated in country places. At Morere there was a badly constructed and foul drain, which was a nuisance and menace to the health of the boarders whose rooms abutted on the vicinity of the drain. I am informed that my requirements have been carried out, and shall satisfy myself on the point by personal observation as soon as my engagements permit me to visit the district. At the Havelock Hotel sanitary improvements have been and are still being carried out. At the Puketapu Hotel sanitary arrangements that I have recommended are being initiated.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS.

In many of the older towns there are slums and overcrowding of houses on insufficient areas; this should not be in a young country. I have recommended the Borough Councils in this district to pass a by-law insisting that the curtilage should be at least equal to the land covered by the buildings. I have always received courteous replies informing me that the matter will merit their consideration; but I have little hope that the matter will be taken seriously by the members of the municipal bodies. It would tend to the health of the inhabitants of the towns that are growing if some such law could be enforced.

I have, &c.,

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