

the town—to compel them to supply proper water, drainage, and latrine accommodation. The prosecution was withdrawn at the last moment, the owners agreeing to pay all costs incurred, and undertaking to effect the reforms required. After some shuffling and delay the work was commenced, and completed to the satisfaction of the Department.

A prosecution at the expense of the Waipawa Road Board was instituted by the Department, and a conviction secured against a person who was keeping pigs in such a manner as to be a nuisance and a menace to health.

Several prosecutions have been threatened, but the threat has proved to be sufficient coercion.

Houses have been condemned in the following places: In Gisborne, 2; Napier, 5; Hastings, 2; Taradale, 1; Papakura, 1; Wairoa, 1. Most of these buildings have been repaired in such a manner as to make them habitable, and to the satisfaction of the Department; the others are standing empty. In the absence of retaliatory clauses in the Act, there seems to be a difficulty in getting condemned houses demolished.

In Napier, and in areas becoming congested in Gisborne, a watchful eye has to be kept to prevent clause 352 of "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1900," with respect to open spaces round houses from being neglected. I have insisted on this clause being rigidly enforced, and have curtailed the size of outbuildings in some residences to obtain the required curtilage. As we boast of belonging to an Empire on which the sun never sets, it behoves us to prevent the formation of slums into which the sun cannot enter.

PARTICULARS AS TO THE CONDITION OF VARIOUS CENTRES OF THE DISTRICT.

Napier.

The cleanliness of this town is the pride of the inhabitants and the admiration of visitors. Several nuisances that have been discovered have been improved out of existence during the past year. They have chiefly consisted in dirty stable and other yards, situated in the less-frequented portions of the borough, and faulty drain-connections to houses that were connected with the sewer in days gone by, when the work was not so well understood by drain-connectors and plumbers as it is at present, and when supervision was not so thorough as is now the case.

The town owes much to the Borough Councillors in the past for their intelligent appreciation of the necessity of sanitary requirements, and their readiness to seek the aid of the Department since it has been in existence, and to take the advice that is given. It is but fair to state that the Department is not wholly responsible for the creditable condition of Napier: thirty years ago the enterprise and intelligence of some of the prominent citizens of Napier gave the town an ample supply of magnificent water, and twenty-five years ago the drainage scheme was designed by the late Mr. Napier Bell, and has brought the town to a pitch of sanitary excellence which might well be envied and emulated by many larger centres. The chief work of the Department has been to paint the lily and gild refined gold by continuing and perfecting the work so ably begun by the people.

Mr. Kershaw's lectures on sanitary plumbing, which have been continued by Mr. Pickering, have borne good fruit, and the plumbers in the district—not in Napier only—are doing good work. From what I have observed during my recent visit to the Old Country, many large centres at Home are not so well served in this respect as we are.

During the latter part of 1905 Napier sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr. Waterworth, the Road Overseer, who has done as much as, perhaps more than, any resident in Napier to promote the general cleanliness of the town. The excellence of our streets are his best monument. "He rests from his labours, and his works do follow him."

I had hoped that by the time it came to writing this report the nightcart would have ceased to exist in Napier, but I regret that it is still in evidence, and pursues its odorous course, though the area that receives its attentions grows more and more restricted. On this head Mr. Pickering writes in reply to a communication of mine asking for information, "The number of water-closets fixed, including the construction of other sanitary work, between the 1st April, 1905, and the 31st March, 1906, was 237, against 359 of the previous year. The number of residences now served with the nightcart is 188. Striking a low average of twenty per month, which may easily be constructed, and allowing a little time for necessary sewer constructions, extensions, and connections for new buildings, the 31st March should see the nightcarts abolished in this town. If at that date only a few scattered exceptions remain, the nightsoil may be collected by the dustcart in sealed pans. The total number of water-closets in the borough on the 31st March, 1906, was 1,891."

I regret that Mr. Pickering has forwarded his resignation to the Borough Council. I trust for the sake of Napier that his successor may prove his equal, and I have pleasure in according my appreciation of the cordial manner he has always worked with the Department.

The reclamation of the swamp continues to proceed, and it is estimated that in a year from the present date it will be ready for the erection of buildings. The Borough Council has been wise in securing an area of 20 acres for a park, and the Caledonian Society have secured another 10 acres as a recreation-ground. These will form good "lungs" when the land is taken up and built over, as it will be in a few years. The acquisition of fresh building-sites in the immediate vicinity of Napier will do much to relieve the congestion which increased population is rendering acute.

A large amount of tinned salmon that was offered for sale in one of the auction-rooms was seized in compliance with my orders by Inspector Munro. Most of the tins were blown, and those which were opened proved quite unfit for food. The owners consented to the fish being destroyed, and the destruction was carried out under the supervision of Inspector Munro.

Two large shipments of currants were found to be infested with weevils, maggots, and larvæ to a large extent. I retained one lot in quarantine, and they were subsequently shipped to Wellington and dealt with by the authorities there. The other shipment was returned to Sydney by the consignees,