

Department of Public Health,
Wellington, 3rd September, 1909.

MY LORD,—

I have the honour to transmit herewith, for Your Excellency's information, the report of the Department of Public Health for the year 1908-9.

I have, &c.,

D. BUDDO,

Minister of Public Health.

His Excellency the Right Hon. Baron Plunket, K.C.V.O.,
Governor of New Zealand.

The CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER to the MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

SIR,—

Department of Public Health, Wellington, 31st May, 1909.

I have the honour to forward you the following reports of the work done by the various officers during the past year.

A great deal of valuable work has been done. The general health of the Dominion has been good. There has been no epidemic of infectious disease of any great magnitude. Diphtheria has appeared in various districts, but, fortunately, the death-rate has been low. Outbreaks of enteric fever have taken place in several places, the most important being that which occurred in Gisborne. There were a large number of cases in a short time. The Department has for many years been urging upon the people of that city the urgent necessity there was for the installation of a proper system of sewerage. The recent outbreak has worked for good, in that it has brought acutely before the citizens the wisdom of bringing their fine city into line with others of similar size. A series of public meetings were held, and great interest was shown in the addresses delivered by His Worship the Mayor, Dr. De Lisle, and myself. A thorough clean-up was made; a sealed-pan system of collecting the nightsoil was at once inaugurated, and negotiations were at once begun with the object of installing a water-carriage system. Altogether I feel most hopeful regarding the early undertaking of a proper system of sewage-disposal.

Various loans have been raised for works pertaining to public health in several of the large and many of the small towns, and generally the progress has been very satisfactory.

CONSUMPTION.

New Zealand still keeps a front place in the war against this disease. The Dominion is slowly but surely being provided with sanatoria, open-air shelters, &c., wherein the poor consumptive can be cared for.

South Canterbury has fixed on a site near Fairlie, and Otago has purchased a fine property near Palmerston South. When every Hospital Board will have made provision for its sick, then we may expect to see a marked decrease in the incidence of the disease. A considerable amount of money has been spent on such places, and now and then the question is asked—and it is quite proper that it should be asked—“Are we getting a fair return for our expenditure?” At the request of the Nelson Hospital Board I drew up a statement covering this aspect of the question, which was delivered in the form of an address at Nelson on the 5th May. The following account is taken from the *Nelson Evening Mail* :—

FIGHTING CONSUMPTION.

Visit of the Chief Health Officer.

Dr. Mason met the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board yesterday afternoon, and gave a most interesting and comprehensive address on consumption. Owing to the vast importance of the subject and the eminence of the speaker, the address is reproduced in full, with the exception of a few comparative tables.

GENTLEMEN,—I am glad, indeed, to have this opportunity of meeting you. The question which has arisen in your minds is one which is worthy of the consideration of any Board which takes more than a passing interest in the welfare of those who come under its care. Like many other methods of treatment, the so-called “open-air treatment of consumption” was urged by its authors sometimes in such language as to make the public believe that in it was to be found a method by which not only