

LOCAL SANITARY CONDITIONS.

Greymouth.

Drainage here is on the combined system. Most of the sewers are earthenware pipes, and are laid so as to discharge into the Grey River and a lagoon respectively. Some of the main sewers are ventilated at intervals of 3 to 4 chains apart. The old system of drainage of house premises will soon be a thing of the past, for a start has now been made to put proper house-drains in on modern lines; but, as the by-laws only give minor details, I have to spend a good portion of my time in advising and superintending the work.

Rubbish-collection.—This is undertaken by the Borough Council in the thickly populated parts of the town for household refuse only. Until a few months ago house-refuse was tipped into the sea, and often got washed ashore. The same change has taken place with this as with the night-soil, and all is now satisfactory.

Water-supply.—This is raised from the Grey River by means of pumps, which lift the water to a high enough altitude to supply the whole of Greymouth. A screen of shingle is fixed in the river near the pumping-station, but there are no proper filter-beds to the system, nor yet settling-tanks; consequently the interior of the pipes are coated with a thin film of river-mud, which gives the water a dirty appearance. I took samples of this water in February last and forwarded same for analysis, and received a reply that the water was of good quality.

Westport.

Water-supply.—This is taken from a creek about four miles from the township, the reservoir being constructed at such a height as to give a very high pressure in the town. Samples of this water were taken prior to the installation of the water-service, and were found to be very good for a town supply. As there is no possible source of pollution from the catchment-area, filters are not necessary.

Night-soil Collection.—The method of collection here is satisfactory so far, but the town is growing on all sides, and becoming more thickly populated; in fact, at the present time one back street (especially at one side) is almost a continuous string of pan-closets and urinals. I am pleased, however, to be in a position to state that the sanitary night-service is performed in a very satisfactory manner, and certainly leads (in the way of cleanliness and efficiency) for the whole of the West Coast District. The system is practically the same as the sealed-pan system. The pans are treated separately, and afterwards, as required, dipped in boiling tar, and allowed to drain; these being then ready for another night's work.

Drainage.—The present system of drainage consists of earthenware drain-pipes which serve to take storm-water, household wastes, and urinals. No night-soil is supposed to be taken into the drains. The Hospital is an exception, as all the sewage from here is drained to a septic tank, which, in turn, has an outlet into the Council's sewers. The present system of drains cannot be said to be modern, as they are not properly trapped or ventilated, and if these drains are not suitable for carrying discharges from water-closets, then they are scarcely suitable for the discharge of household waste-water. The present Councillors are alive to this question, and have recently instructed the Borough Engineer to prepare plans and specifications with an estimate of cost of a new and up-to-date scheme. Estimates (which are detailed fully) were put before a Council meeting, and it was decided that, if the Government would advance the necessary capital to carry out the scheme, a poll of the ratepayers be taken. Should the poll prove favourable, it will never be regretted by the residents.

Hokitika.

Water-supply.—A water-supply has been installed here recently. It is taken from Lake Kanieri (about eleven miles from the township), and is brought part of the way in earthenware pipes to a reservoir, then in wooden pipes to the town. The reticulation was completed recently, but the wooden pipes did not give satisfaction, and the contractors decided to remove the defective ones and install others in their places. There are also other defects in the service which have to be remedied. Prior to the installation of this service, water was obtained either from the roofs of the habitations or wells, and, considering that privy-pits exist in the locality of these wells, it seems strange that the town has remained so healthy.

Sanitary Conveniences.—These are antique, and consist mostly of privy-pits on very small areas of ground.

It would be almost useless to recommend pan privies, unless a system of collection and removal were installed by the Council, as the contents of many would certainly be dumped on the beach, which is bad enough as it is, owing to the deposit of rubbish of all descriptions.

Rubbish.—The Council has also been requested to provide a rubbish-depot, but nothing has been done in the matter, with the result that what ought to be a pleasant sea-beach is now an elongated rubbish-depot.

Drainage is chiefly absorbed on the gardens of the occupiers.

Water-supply.—None, except roof-water.

Ross.

This township has recently been reached by railway.

Sanitary Conveniences.—Very few of these are privy-pits. The owner or occupier is instructed to provide a pan privy parallel with a main street, and about a chain and a half distant therefrom is a water-race into which all the house-drains discharge, including the privies. These privies are simply seats erected over the house-drain, which is in many cases of wood.

Small rubbish-tips exist in different parts of the borough. The town would be much better from a sanitary point of view if the borough would define a rubbish-depot, and compel all rubbish to be deposited therein.