

Owing to a statement that the drought made the attainment of our standard for butter-fat practically unobtainable an inquiry was made, and it was shown from the factory returns in the Auckland Province that the tendency was for an increased percentage of butter-fat, and that only rarely did the dry weather produce decrease, and then not below the standard.

Labelling has also received a good deal of attention, but the majority of firms now place their proposed labels before the Department previous to their being put in the printer's hands. This procedure will greatly tend to uniformity and correctness in labelling.

Under the Amendment Act of 1915 regulations for the branding of imported eggs have been prepared, and were gazetted on the 2nd March last.

In accordance with the expression of opinion by the representatives of the Beekeepers' Association of the Dominion, a regulation was prepared to lower the standard of the water-content of honey.

The possibility of the deterioration of infants' food through keeping was attended to, with the result that a large quantity of old stock was taken out of sale in different parts of the Dominion.

As in the past, the greatest amount of samples taken have been in connection with the supply of milk for direct human consumption.

THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ACT, 1914.

Two meetings of the Medical Board constituted under the above Act were held during the year, and granted registration to twenty-three applicants. Amongst various matters dealt with, steps were taken to purge the Medical Register of nearly four hundred names of men who were either dead or had ceased to practise.

The Board also considered many matters relating to ethics and other subjects relative to the medical profession. The members are unanimous in their opinions that it would be well to extend the scope of the Board's authority with equal advantage to the public and profession.

PLUMBERS REGISTRATION ACT, 1912.

Ten meetings of the Plumbers' Board of New Zealand were held during the year.

The Board held examinations under the Act in March and December, 1915. At these examinations thirty-one candidates passed or completed same, and were admitted to registration.

Fourteen persons were admitted to registration during the year under the other provisions of the Act.

To date the names of 1,187 persons have been entered in the register.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE AID.

I am unable to comment upon the above until full and correct returns from the Boards are received. Although I am pleased to say that nearly all the returns are now to hand from the various Boards (at least three months earlier than they have formerly been received), yet there are numerous corrections and queries which have to be undertaken before a complete compilation can be presented. You have been asked to provide on the permanent appropriations a sum of £235,000 for subsidies, the amount paid in connection with which last year was £228,756. Since the amount was placed on the estimates, the estimates and apportionments of the Boards' expenditure have been received, and show that the amount provided should cover the needs.

The new regulations governing the accounts of Hospital Boards came into force on the 1st April last. Under your direction an explanatory pamphlet regarding these regulations has been circulated to the various Boards, and should do much to remove the misapprehension that the new regulations are going to entail either extra or unnecessary work upon Board Secretaries. The requirements of the Department in this respect are only what would be considered reasonable, necessary, and natural by any business man or accountant, and should result in the yearly transactions of Boards being recorded and summarized in a clear and businesslike manner.

CONCLUSION.

I cannot conclude this report without thanking those who so very cheerfully and so very ably assisted me during those stressful times. Conscious of so much help direct and indirect it is indeed hard to know where to begin. That my thanks are due to Dr. Frengley and the officers, medical and clerical, of the Department goes without saying. Of the many officers of the Defence Department who worked as one man I am specially indebted to Major Francis. To Captain Harrison in the early stages of the Trentham crisis and to Lieut.-Colonel Andrew in the latter I cannot sufficiently express my thanks. Of these, the former, as might be expected by those who know him, exercised the greatest care and gallantry during the "Marquette" disaster. The latter has more than justified the confidence imposed in him by making Trentham a model camp. Of my many colleagues in the Civil Service who were ever ready to help I am specially grateful to Mr. Hiley and his assistant (Mr. Hornibrook), and to Mr. Furkert, of the Public Works Department. Nor will be forgotten the assistance I received from the settlers of Waikanae, Levin, and Masterton in the eventful days in July. The committees of the Wellington and Wairarapa Racing Clubs are deserving of our gratitude for so readily placing their buildings at our disposal, which probably was the means of saving many soldiers' lives, and special thanks are due to Messrs. A. and G. Pearce, of Levin and Co., for so readily placing their wool-store at Kaiwarra at the disposal of the Department, and to Mr. Charles Izard for allowing his beautiful house and grounds at the Upper Hutt to be used for an infectious-diseases hospital. The readiness with which the members of the Wellington Golf Club handed over their club-house for hospital