

Examining the administration of the Department at the various centres it appears to us that generally there was delay in taking precautionary action at the earliest period. The District Health Officers seemed to wait for directions from the Head Office, which commenced to arrive about the 5th November. In Dunedin Dr. Faris had been busy taking prophylactic measures for some days before the 5th. There seems to have been doubt in the mind of the Health Officers as to the action required of them. When the trouble became serious in each district the Health Officer had more to do than he could possibly accomplish, and in several districts the assistance of laymen from outside the Department had to be accepted in order to carry on the administration. There is no doubt but that all officers worked unceasingly when the trouble became acute, but the Department as a whole seemed to have lacked the foresight which should have impelled it to initiate general organization in October.

PORT SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS.

From the evidence given before the Commission it would appear that during the time of the epidemic a great deal more attention was given to sanitary and hygienic conditions attaching to ships and wharves, especially at the principal ports, than ever previously occurred. Very strong reflections had been made upon the health conditions of the crews' quarters on a number of ships. Through correspondence and consultation with the general secretary of the Federated Seamen's Union, Mr. W. T. Young, the Union Steamship Company took the matter up very actively, and we were assured that considerable improvements were being effected in that company's vessels. It still remains to institute a regular procedure of constant supervision over the sanitary and hygienic conditions of the wharves and shipping, and in this connection it might be well to extend the provisions of section 5 of the Public Health Amendment Act, 1918, and appoint special Advisory Committees to report from time to time on the health conditions of the ports—at least, the chief ports of the Dominion.

It would appear that the duties of the Port Health Officers have consisted chiefly in examining the passengers and crews of ships for the purpose of knowing whether any infectious disease is on board same, but so far as the general sanitary and hygienic conditions are concerned it does not appear to be the specific duty of any officer to overlook these matters. Of course, such matters may be said to be under the control of the District Health Officer, but that officer has so many widely scattered and varied affairs to look after that we cannot be surprised if the health condition of our ports and shipping is not given very direct and regular attention. We urge in respect to the chief ports, at least, that constant inspection should be made of the ships, wharves, and adjuncts of the waterfronts under the direction of a Medical Officer of Health.

Mr. W. T. Young, secretary of the New Zealand Federated Seamen's Union, submitted to the Commission a schedule of detailed recommendations which might be considered by the Health Department as to whether these are of practical application and could be adopted.

ADMINISTRATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN RELATION TO THE EPIDEMIC.

Hospital Boards.

The Hospital Boards, as the chief local authorities charged with the safeguarding of the public against infectious diseases, were not wanting in the fulfilment of their duty at the time of the epidemic. The Boards were amongst the first to take practical steps towards combating the disease, and though in connection with many of the hospitals both doctors and nurses were stricken down in comparatively large numbers, those remaining gave heroic service. The Auckland Board found the accommodation of their main hospital too restricted. Mr. Wallace, Chairman of the Board, says they differed with the Health Department over the using of the building at Point Chevalier, as "it was in a state of dilapidation." "The Board has under consideration at the present time the erection of an infectious diseases hospital." To meet the special demand the Board had six temporary hospitals established within the city and outside the city, in various localities as far north