

is a very serious want of the ordinary requirements attached to really healthy dwellinghouses, such as properly placed water-supply, flushed closets, proper ventilation, baths, washhouses, and yard-space.

Evidence was supplied to us that in Auckland and Wellington over an extended period of time a considerable number of old houses had been demolished and many repairs effected. In Auckland at the close of this last year some thirty houses were condemned. It was acknowledged by sanitary experts that there are hundreds of houses standing in the cities which might with advantage to the public health be demolished, and that many more demolitions would take place but for the acute difficulty of rehousing displaced tenants. We find that there has hitherto been practically nothing done in the way of carrying out any large improvement schemes by the municipalities, though the matter of adopting schemes has been discussed by the Auckland, Wellington, and other Borough Councils. In considering the great importance of proper housing and sanitary conditions as affecting the general health of our people, how the constitutions of mothers and their offspring are subject to degeneration in unhealthy environment, and having in mind the lesson conveyed in the military returns showing the high proportion of unfits under medical examination of recruits, we urge most strongly that there is need for the closest combination between the General Government and the local authorities towards the institution of complete national plans for dealing promptly with this most serious national and municipal problem. In connection with this we draw attention to the policy that is being projected by the British authorities, according to a short report which appeared in the London *Weekly Times* of the 7th February, 1919, which states "that plans are being prepared by the Local Government Board for 300,000 houses. The Government are to lend the money to the local authority, and at the end of seven years the houses are to be valued, and if any loss is sustained the State is to provide 75 per cent. of such loss, and 25 per cent. of the loss is to be provided for out of the local rates." It would be well if some similar steps were taken in New Zealand.

As the general health of our people is undoubtedly the Dominion's greatest asset, reform of existing bad conditions should be entered upon even if the initial financial cost is great, as the added efficiency of a completely healthy people would replace the expenditure entailed in carrying out the much-delayed schemes of reconstruction.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ARISING OUT OF THE EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION PLACED BEFORE THE COMMISSION.

Our order of reference being very wide in its scope has necessarily elicited a great variety of valuable information from many sources, and in this connection the Health Department has supplied the Commission with many important returns and reports. In this mass of information there are special questions relating to the influenza epidemic and to public health generally which merit particular consideration, and these we here present:—

Personal Habits and Education.

In all four centres evidence was given by voluntary workers and professional witnesses indicating that there exists very widespread ignorance of the simplest rules of personal hygiene and ordinary housekeeping, including therein cooking, cleaning, attention to bedrooms, or care of members of family suffering the slightest illness. It would appear that a large proportion of girls are not receiving in their homes that teaching which would enable them to maintain a well-directed healthy home life in the later period which must follow. As the nation is built on the homes of its people, this neglect of teaching both boys and girls the rules necessary for living clean healthy domestic lives must seriously affect our standard of public health. Whilst nothing can fully take the place of good home teaching, we counsel that both in the primary and secondary schools much more attention should be given to domestic science, hygiene, first aid, and home nursing as subjects for girls, and in respect to the last three for boys also. In the secondary schools these subjects should be made compulsory for girls. We note that the South African