

SECTION 7.—GENERAL.

During the year the usual routine work of the Department has been carried out in the direction of supervision of water-supplies and of refuse and sewage-disposal schemes, inspection of buildings, abatement of nuisances, &c. Comprehensive sets of regulations have been prepared and issued by the Department dealing with—(1) Drainage and plumbing; (2) the manufacture and sale of flock; (3) the cleansing, ventilation, sanitation, and disinfection of theatres, picture-halls, and concert-rooms; (4) the registration, construction, and sanitation of cattle sale-yards; (5) the importation into New Zealand of second-hand rugs and clothing, flock, shaving-brushes, wool or hair from certain specified countries in which anthrax is endemic, and any toilet-brushes or toilet articles made from such hair; (6) the treatment and sale of second-hand clothing and bedding; (7) the registration of eating-houses by local authorities. At the time of writing a very full and complete series of regulations under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act is in the course of preparation.

In connection with the operation of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act and the vigilance necessary in carrying out the regulations, I desire to place on record my great appreciation of the work of the Comptroller of Customs and his officers. It is due certainly in no small degree to the watchfulness at ports of entry that much imported foodstuff which offends in some way against the regulations is located, and its distribution throughout the country thereby prevented.

The Department is also specially indebted to the Dominion Analyst, in whose laboratory a very large number of samples are dealt with annually. The advice received by our officers in connection with the framing of regulations is of inestimable value, and with the co-operation of the Dominion Analyst we are able to deal more efficiently and effectively with the various phases of food sophistication that develop from time to time.

During the year it was decided to revert once more to the old system whereunder New Zealand was divided into four health districts with headquarters in the four main centres. In this way the available Medical Officers are concentrated where their services are most valuable. Pursuant to this policy the North Auckland Health District was merged in the Auckland District as from the beginning of 1924, while the Hawke's Bay and Wanganui-Taranaki Districts have been incorporated in the Wellington Health District as from the 1st April, 1924.

The discovery of insulin and the development of laboratory methods as an aid in the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes necessitated the Assistant Bacteriologists located at the hospitals in the secondary centres being sent to Dunedin for a short course in blood-chemistry. Thanks are due to the staff of the Otago Medical School, and particularly to Professors Drennan and Hercus, for their ready assistance in undertaking this task at short notice. The course proved an undoubted boon to and was much appreciated by those officers who went to Dunedin.

Extracts from the reports of the various Medical Officers of Health which appear in another part of this report show a progressive improvement in the sanitary conditions generally throughout the Dominion, and an ever-growing appreciation on the part of local authorities of their responsibilities and duties under the Health Act.

In conclusion, I desire to put on record my appreciation of the very loyal co-operation afforded me by the Medical Officers of Health and the staff under their control in what was in many respects a particularly onerous and trying year.

M. H. WATT,
Director, Division of Public Hygiene.

PART III.—CHILD WELFARE.

SECTION 1.—PROGRESS IN INFANT-WELFARE WORK.

During the year progress in child welfare throughout New Zealand has been fully maintained. The more our statistics for the last twenty years dealing with the infant from one month to a year or two years of age are studied and investigated, the more encouraging are the results seen to be. This will be realized by a glance at the following statistical table and approximate comparative graph:—

DEATHS FROM INFANTILE DIARRHOEA AND ENTERITIS OF CHILDREN UNDER TWO YEARS OF AGE :
ANNUAL MORTALITY PER 1,000 BIRTHS FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS (1918–22), ACCORDING TO
THE LATEST AVAILABLE STATISTICS.

	Deaths per 1,000 Births.	Remarks.
New Zealand	3.5	
New Zealand (four main cities)	3.4	
Dunedin	0.8	No deaths in last two years.
Australian Commonwealth	18	Dunedin is the seat of the
New South Wales	19	longest and most intensive
Sydney	22	education of mothers
Tasmania	14	in New Zealand.
Hobart	18	
Great Britain	15	
English cities—		
Liverpool (highest) } For the last three years available	21	
Bournemouth (lowest)* }	5	
Canada (Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver) }	24	*Ideal residential centre for
South Africa (White)	23	the south of England. A
Netherlands	18	kind of garden city for the
Switzerland	14	well-to-do.
United States of America—Average of seven cities: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco }	15	No returns available for U.S.A. as a whole, or for States.