

As in the previous year, owing to the accommodation at some of the isolation hospitals being taxed to the utmost, the discharge of selected cases somewhat earlier than the usual six-weeks period was permitted, provided the parents were agreeable and the Inspector of Health was satisfied that adequate precautions would be taken in the home for the remainder of the period of isolation.

Diphtheria.—The number of cases reported was one more than in 1928—ninety-seven, with two deaths, as compared with ninety-six, with five deaths.

Enteric Fever.—Five cases, one death. The majority of cases of this disease occur amongst Maoris. With a view to eliminating the condition as far as possible, preventive inoculation is being given to all those who are willing to submit themselves.

Leprosy.—One case of leprosy was discovered. This was a Maori who had been under treatment and discharged from the Leper Station on parole. Before steps could be taken for his return to the Leper Station he contracted pneumonia, which terminated fatally. Constant supervision of all patients discharged from the Leper Station, with periodic examination, enables the small percentage who suffer from a recurrence of the disease to be quickly placed again under control.

SANITARY WORKS.

Senior Inspector Gardiner reports as follows on sanitation, water-supplies, &c. :—

Rubbish and Refuse Collection, Removal, and Disposal.—Collection : Ten boroughs and two town districts have systems of refuse-collection. In six this collection is done periodically, usually weekly ; in the remainder collection is undertaken at the request of the householder. In two boroughs and one town district, although a tip is provided, the householder has to make his own arrangements for disposal. Two town districts provide no facilities at all.

Disposal : With the exception of Palmerston North, where refuse is disposed of by destructor, all local authorities dispose of it by dumping at tips. Wanganui has a destructor, but has reverted to tipping. English practice, notably at Bradford, has demonstrated that controlled tipping can be made a perfectly sanitary method of rubbish-disposal, and that the refuse can be economically used in reclaiming certain lands for recreational purposes. Controlled tipping means supervision, and such supervision over both collection and this method of disposal could well be part of the duty of the Sanitary Inspector.

Nightsoil Collection and Disposal.—Although the boroughs of Palmerston North, Patea, Marton, and Foxton have sewerage systems, there are localities not served by such systems, which are dependent on nightsoil-disposal in some form or other. Palmerston North and Marton provide a service. In Patea and Foxton householders not served by the sewerage system are compelled to carry out disposal on their own sections. Shannon and Levin (sealed-pan system), Rongotea and Ohakune (nightsoil-cart), have contract systems for collection and disposal. Waverley compels its householders to provide septic tanks or dispose of nightsoil on their own sections.

Sewerage Systems.—The boroughs of Patea, Wanganui, Feilding, Marton, Foxton, Palmerston North, Taihape, and Raetihi all have sewerage systems. With one exception, Wanganui, which discharges its crude sewage into the Wanganui River, the method of disposal is by treatment in septic tanks, with final disposal of the effluent into a near-by stream.

Levin should have a sewerage system for the central portion of the town. There are, however, difficulties in the way of providing a system of disposal which will not be too costly to kill any such scheme. In the meantime the procedure of allowing every one who wishes to do so to install a septic tank in lieu of making use of the provided nightsoil-collection system is likely to furnish a number of opponents to any loan for the provision of a sewerage system. Most of the installed systems have been inspected from time to time during the year, and have been found to be functioning satisfactorily.

WATER-SUPPLIES.

With the exception of Rangataua, a small town district on the Main Trunk line, and Bulls, all the boroughs and town districts are furnished with water-supplies.

Wanganui.—The work of stopping a leak in the abutment to the dam on the Okehu supply is proceeding and will be apparently successful. This summer there has been no necessity to make use of the Virginia Lake supply to maintain the supply to the city. Whilst this supply has been in use monthly samples have been taken to ensure that a reasonable standard of purity has been maintained. 600 ft. of sub-mains have been put in during the year. The daily consumption of water in this city has averaged over 1,000,000 gallons per day.

Palmerston North.—Following on the carrying of a poll in October, 1929; a contract was let for the sinking of a 6 in. artesian bore, and to date the bore is down 447 ft. The water has been tested and has been found to be of good quality. The installation of this bore is for the purpose of augmenting the town supply, and it is hoped that it will deliver 30,000 gallons per hour into a storage reservoir, from which the water will be pumped under pressure into a series of feeder mains. Contracts have been let for the supply of 33 chains of 18 in. diameter and 86 chains of 12 in. diameter steel mains, and 73 chains of 9 in. diameter cast-iron mains, together with all necessary valves and fittings, to improve the town reticulation. A contract has also been let for the supply of eight additional filters of the Bells type of mechanical wash filters, which it is hoped to have in operation before the winter.