1867.

VICTORIA.

CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.

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REPORT.

To His Excellency Sir John Henry Thomas Manners Sutton, K.C.B., &c., &c., &c.

May it please Your Excellency,—

We, the Central Board of Health, constituted under the provisions of the Act 18 Vic., No. 13, beg to submit to Your Excellency our Eleventh Annual Report on Sanitary Administration in the Colony of Victoria.

In presenting our Report for the Year 1865, we regret to have again to record the failure of our efforts to procure those amendments in the laws relating to the public health, the necessity for which we have so often pointed out. In our last Report, we ventured to express our hope that the speedy passing into law of the measure which we had prepared with this object, would soon place in the hands of the Local Boards of Health powers enabling them to deal satisfactorily with those evils affecting the public health which they were unable to cope with under the limited powers conferred on them by the present defective enactment; and it was our expectation that, in chronicling our proceedings for the year 1865, we should have been enabled to report on the working of those amendments in the law which we have, time after time, shown to be imperatively called for. The lapse of another year, however, during which we have had to administer the present defective Statute, has served only to illustrate more and more its many and important deficiencies, and to show more and more how urgent is the necessity which exists for its amendment.

We have not, however, pending the amendment of the existing law, relaxed our efforts to impress unconsciously on the various Local Boards of Health the great importance of giving their constant attention to the enforcement of such sanitary measures as even the present law places it in their power to compel, and we are much gratified in being enabled to state that generally our instructions and advice to those bodies have met with a proper amount of attention, and that, as a rule, the Local Boards of Health continue to evince a praiseworthy desire to avail themselves of the limited powers placed at their disposal by the present Statute. We, therefore, feel assured that the Local Boards generally would hail with satisfaction the enactment of those amendments in the law which we have proposed, and which would enable them effectively to deal with those nuisances and causes of injury to the public health which in many cases they are now powerless to prevent.

We still indulge the hope that before long we shall see passed into law those amendments which our experience of the working of the present Statute abundantly proves to be urgently demanded, and, pending the attainment of this long-looked-for and much-desired result, we propose at present to confine ourselves to a review of our proceedings during the year as regards their general relation to the public health of the colony, referring only to individual districts where such were for the first time inspected under our directions, or where any special circumstances call for particular remark.
During the year 1865 the provisions of the Public Health Act were extended, by proclamation in the Government Gazette, to the boroughs of Craigie, Echuca, Jamieson, Raywood, Sebastopol, and Wood's Point, and to the shires of Stawell and Yackandandah. The provisions of the Act were also extended during the year to the whole of the shires of Avoca, Kyneton, and Maldon, in portions only of which districts it had previously been in operation. There were thus, at the close of the year 1865, sixty-six separate districts, including every town of any importance in the colony, in which the Public Health Statute was in operation and administered by a Local Board, and of these, forty-seven towns were visited and inspected by our superintending inspector during the year. Of the places inspected, the boroughs of Portland, Belfast, Warrnambool, and Hamilton, were those which, on receiving our inspector's reports, we drew the attention of the Local Boards concerned.

In our last mention of the town of Portland (in our Report for the year 1863), we stated that the reports of the Local Board of Health led us to conclude that some attention had been given by the local authority to the sanitary requirements of the district, more especially in regard to improved construction of cesspits, drains, &c. This conclusion was confirmed by the report of our superintending inspector, which showed that very considerable progress had been made in the prosecution of those public works of street formation and drainage which conduce so much to the cleanliness and salubrity of a town; but, notwithstanding this attention to the actual construction of sanitary works, the inspection now under notice disclosed an almost total neglect of such important sanitary details as the maintenance of cleanliness on private premises, the removal or abatement of nuisances, and the prevention of offensive practices injurious to the public health. We accordingly made a strong representation to the Local Board of Health, in the early part of the year, as to the necessity for attention to these very important sanitary requirements, and we were much gratified to find, by the subsequent reports of the Local Board, that our remonstrances had the effect of inducing a very praiseworthy degree of activity on their part in the removal of those nuisances and causes of offence or injury to the public health, the existence of which we had brought under their notice. The reports of the Local Board of Health which we have received since our inspection of the town, show that they are now fully alive to the necessity for a stricter enforcement of sanitary regulations, and that they have appointed an inspector of nuisances, who served as many as 110 notices to remove nuisances and causes of injury to the public health during the last half of the year. The necessity for this action on the part of the Local Board is well shown by the result, as given in their last report, namely, the cleansing and repairing (and in many instances the construction of new ones) of 110 privy cesspits, and the removal of 150 loads of refuse from private premises, during the last half of the year.

We would particularly point to this inspection of Portland as markedly illustrating the advantages arising from the periodical inspection of the towns of the colony by the central authority. It is obvious, from this instance, that the periodical reports of the Local Boards cannot be always relied on for such detailed information as will enable us to ascertain to what extent the provisions of the Public Health Act are enforced, to draw the attention of the local authorities to existing nuisances or matters of defective sanitary regulation, and to indicate the necessary remedies. Nuisances and sources of injury to the public health will often attain a magnitude startling to one not accustomed to their presence, while to those on the spot their gradual growth prevents, in too many cases, their recognition altogether, until possibly the appearance of some epidemic arouses attention to their existence, and induces some spasmodic efforts for their removal. To
the inspection of the town of Portland made under our direction, is clearly owing the removal of the many nuisances and causes of offence to which we have referred, and the arousing of the Local Board to the great importance of that regular attention to the details of sanitary requirement, without which the mere construction of works of street improvement and drainage is of but little avail in the prevention of nuisances. The fact that, of the large number of notices served by the local inspector of nuisances, all were at once complied with, save in one instance, indicates a willingness on the part of the residents of the borough to comply with the requisitions of the local sanitary authorities, and gives an assurance that the Local Board of Health have only to exercise ordinary vigilance to keep their town free at all events from that large class of removable nuisances which the regular enforcement of sanitary regulations will always prevent.

The existence of such extensive accumulations of refuse on private premises in the town as we have noticed, pointed forcibly to the want of some appointed and recognised place for the reception of house refuse; and although such refuse matter is of ready demand for fertilising purposes in the neighborhood of the town, we pointed out to the Local Board of Health that a manure depot, in which it could be collected, and the existence of which would remove any excuse for accumulating filth or refuse matter in private yards, was, nevertheless, a positive sanitary necessity.

During the first half of 1865 the health of the borough was remarkably good, and the mortality small, but in the last six months of the year there was a large amount of sickness, principally amongst children, attended with increased mortality. Diphtheria, from which thirteen deaths are reported by the Local Board as occurring during the last mentioned period, was very prevalent at one time; but nearly all the cases occurred in the suburbs, where the population is scattered, and at the close of the year it had gradually disappeared from the town.

The first inspection of Belfast made under our direction, in April, also revealed the existence of very considerable neglect of sanitary details. We had occasion, in our Report for 1863, to advert to the very lamentable apathy which then existed on the part of the Local Board of Health of this town in regard to the sanitary interests of their district; and although we have reason to believe that a marked improvement has since taken place in this respect, we were sorry to find that our inspection of the town disclosed the existence, to a large extent, of preventable nuisances and sources of injury to the public health. We accordingly communicated at considerable length with the Local Board, pointing out those sanitary deficiencies which had come prominently under the notice of our inspector, and indicating the means by which those defects might be removed, and a better sanitary condition of their town attained. The reports which we have since received from the Local Board of Health do not, however, inform us to what extent our suggestions and recommendations have been carried out, those reports being defective in not giving that "Return of Nuisances dealt with," which is so important a feature in those documents; and as we find that there is still in existence the objectionable arrangement to which we adverted in our last mention of this town, whereby the local inspector of nuisances has the duties of another borough office to attend to, there is reason to fear that little, if any, improvement has been made in the direction of that frequent and regular inspection of the town which is so essential to its maintenance in a proper sanitary condition. The Local Board, indeed, in one of their reports for the year, state that "the cesspools and receptacles for filth in private premises are not interfered with by the Local Board," an omission which evinces either a neglect on the part of the Local Board which is very much to be regretted, or an ignorance of their proper duties which is very much to be wondered at, after the distinct instructions as to their duties and functions with which we have from time to time furnished them. The soil of the site of this town is in most parts of a very porous nature, readily absorbing drainage and surface water, so that it is no matter of surprise that the Local Board should state, in
reporting on their sources of water supply, which is principally from wells, that such supply is "liable to pollution by percolation." It is a matter of surprise, however, as well as of regret, that the Local Board of Health, while admitting the liability of their water supply to pollution in this manner, should take no steps whatever to insure that proper construction of privy cesspits, and their maintenance in proper condition by regular cleansing before they become full, which alone can prevent the percolation or overflow of the contents of those receptacles, and the consequent saturation of the soil of the town, and the pollution of their sources of water supply.

The most serious individual nuisance in the town of Belfast arises from the condition of an unoccupied piece of land in the centre of Block No. 7, which, being lower than the surrounding ground, is the receptacle for the drainage of the adjoining houses, while from its situation, there are no means of readily draining the partial swamp which has thus been formed. On the matter being brought under our notice, we wrote to the Local Board of Health, urging them no longer to neglect enforcing the powers which the 22nd section of the Public Health Statute placed at their disposal, and which, we presumed, would enable them to deal with this particular evil; and in this instance we must give the Local Board credit for a prompt attention to our communication, and for a desire to rid their town of this serious nuisance. It appeared, however, that the only way to deal with this nuisance effectually, was to fill up the ground in question to the level of the adjacent streets, a work which would cost at least £200, and the owners of the allotment being absent from the colony, the Local Board were, in consequence of a defect in the clause of the Public Health Act, we have mentioned, unable themselves to have the work legally carried out. The Local Board of Health, having taken counsel's opinion on the case, communicated with us, pointing out the defect in the law to which we have alluded, and the difficulty they encountered in consequence in endeavoring to carry out our suggestions. We have accordingly, in our proposed amendments of the existing law, remedied the defect we have referred to, and, pending the enactment of the amended measure, we very much fear nothing can be done to get rid effectually of the very serious nuisance we have mentioned.

Warrnambool.

In our last mention of the sanitary condition of the town of Warrnambool (in our Report for 1863), we were enabled to report that a commendable amount of attention to sanitary requirements had latterly been shown by the Local Board, whose attention we had previously directed to the grave responsibility devolving on them if they should fail to remedy those sanitary defects which we brought under their notice as then existing in their town, and to which there is no doubt that much of the serious mortality which occurred from zymotic disease in the early part of 1862 was to be attributed. We are much pleased now in being able to report continued activity on the part of the Local Board in regard to the suppression of nuisances, and that, as a consequence of the improved sanitary condition of the town, the public health has for the last two years maintained a fair standard. The report of our superintending inspector on his inspection of the borough in April, 1865, however, revealed the existence of several sanitary defects, and showed that much remained to be done before the town could be said to be in a proper sanitary condition; and on receipt of our inspector's report we drew the attention of the Local Board of Health to such nuisances, and matters of defective sanitary regulation as had come prominently under notice at the time of our inspection, pointing out the means by which a remedy was to be obtained, and urging on the Local Board the necessity for increased activity on their part in the enforcement of the powers entrusted to them for the sanitary regulation of the borough. The subsequent reports of the Local Board of Health, show that some attention has been paid to our recommendations, a considerable number of nuisances having been removed or abated during the year, on action taken by the local inspector of nuisances. The Local Board also report that they purpose carrying out a recommendation which we made to them in regard to the slaughter-yards,
and erecting proper abattoirs at a considerable distance from the town, in lieu of the present place, which is not only badly constructed, and consequently difficult to keep free from offence, but is so situated that the offensive effluvia therefrom are wafted over the town by the prevailing winds.

The greatest sanitary evil of the town, however, is the faulty construction of privy cesspits, those receptacles being in almost every instance destitute of any provision whatever against the percolation of their contents into the adjacent ground. As in Belfast, the sandy nature of the soil admits of the absorption of the contents of those receptacles so rapidly as to prevent the formation of visible nuisance, unless where very great carelessness or neglect is evidenced; but this very absorbent quality of the soil of the site of a town, which, like Warrnambool, is dependent for its water supply on wells or rainfall, would, it might reasonably be supposed, have led the inhabitants to adopt long ago such a construction of cesspits as would prevent the pollution of their main source of water supply with matter so noxious as the emanations from those receptacles. Nothing, however, had been done up to the time of our inspection towards the adoption of any improved plan of construction, although we gather from our inspector's report that the inhabitants of the town had been aroused to the danger of 'drinking' the polluted well-water, as we find that several houses had of late been provided with tanks in which to collect sufficient rain-water for domestic purposes. A very significant fact in connection with this subject is, that the local Officer of Health in part attributes the very much improved state of the public health, during the last two or three years, to the more extended use of tanks as a means of obtaining water supply, and the proportionate disuse of the polluted water obtained from the wells in the town. The fact that the Local Board of Health for Warrnambool have recently applied to us for information and suggestions as to the best mode of constructing earth-clossets, induces us to hope that they are at length alive to the necessity for taking some active measures to put a stop to that wholesale saturation of the soil of their town with offensive matter which is certain to result from a continued toleration of the present imperfect cesspit system; and as the reports of the Local Board for 1865 show that the numerous notices to remove nuisances which were served by their inspector during the year, were in every instance complied with, without the necessity for recourse to further measures, we apprehend that the Local Board of Health have only to earnestly exert themselves to secure, with but little opposition or difficulty, the much needed sanitary reform we have indicated.

The visit of our superintending inspector to the western towns afforded an opportunity for making an inspection of the sanitary condition of the borough of Hamilton, to which town the provisions of the 'Public Health' Act were extended in 1860, but which had not yet been inspected under our direction.

The periodical reports of the Local Board of Health hitherto received by us, appeared to warrant the conclusion that a fair amount of attention was paid to the sanitary requirements of the town, and, considering the rural character of the borough, we did not deem it necessary to do more than place the Local Board of Health in possession of general instructions in regard to sanitary administration. Our recent inspection, however, satisfied us that the town was in anything but a creditable sanitary condition; and as experience had lately shown that epidemic diseases visiting the district had evinced a disposition to assume a severe type, we made a special communication to the Local Board, pointing out those particular sanitary defects which our inspection of the town had disclosed, and urging on them the necessity for greater attention to those measures of sanitary regulation so essential to the maintenance of the public health. The principal matters of sanitary deficiency to which we felt it necessary to direct the attention of the local authorities, were—the want of efficient drainage in the public thoroughfares; accumulations of manure, refuse, and stagnant drainage in private yards; the defective construction and filthy condition of privy cesspits; and the deficient accommodation, as
regards sleeping space and ventilation, afforded in the common lodging-houses. In all these respects it was manifest, from our inspector’s report, that there was room for much improvement, but we regret to say that the neglect of the Local Board of Health to furnish us with any report of their proceedings for the year 1865, leaves us ignorant how far our representations have met with attention, or to what extent, if any, sanitary improvements have been effected.

In Hamilton occurred two of the cases of typhus fever mentioned in another portion of this Report as having been brought to the town by one of the immigrants by the Golden Empire early in the year, and communicated by the immigrant to her sister, who nursed her during her illness. Immediately on the appearance of the disease being reported to us, we placed ourselves in communication with the Local Board of Health, directing what precautions should be taken against the spread of the disease; and in this instance we must give the Local Board of Health credit for their promptitude in reporting the case to us on its appearance, and in at once taking precautions against the spread of the disease, which, we are happy to state, did not extend beyond the two cases mentioned.

An occurrence took place in the early part of the year 1865, which, though it did not materially affect the health of the colony, yet caused such wide-spread alarm as to make it desirable that we make some observations on the facts of the case, with the view of preventing, as far as possible, the creation of such unfounded alarm in future.

The occurrence to which we refer is the introduction into the colony of a number of cases of typhus fever by the ship Golden Empire, which arrived at Port Phillip Heads on the 2nd January, after a passage of eighty-four days from Liverpool, with 357 passengers, principally assisted immigrants, on board. The vessel was placed in quarantine immediately on arrival at the Heads, and the Acting Health Officer there reported—"The hospital room is confined and inadequate, the ventilation generally bad, the compartments crowded, dirty, and damp."

When the ship left Liverpool typhus fever was prevalent there, and though it does not appear that any of the passengers were exposed to the disease, or contracted it, before the vessel sailed, they were principally composed of the class of persons among whom typhus fever generally prevails; and the fact of the disease not breaking out in the ship till sixty-two days had elapsed since her leaving Liverpool, would tend to show that it did not arise from contagion. The first case of fever appeared on the 12th December, 1864, when the ship had passed through the tropics, and was then in very cold weather in a high south latitude. The coldness of the weather seems to have had a very considerable influence in producing the fever, by causing the passengers to keep constantly huddled together in their berths, which they could not be induced to keep clean; and the air between decks became consequently more and more contaminated, and the berths more and more filthy, till at length typhus fever, the usual result of these conditions, made its appearance. The first case of the disease was soon followed by others, till, on the 2nd January, 1865—the day the vessel arrived here—twenty-five cases, one of them fatal, had occurred, the date of the last case being the 28th December.

The vessel was, as we have stated, immediately placed in quarantine, and the sick landed at the Sanitary Station, and as soon as possible afterwards the whole of the passengers were landed, with their clothes and bedding, and the ship was cleansed and purified. On the 10th January, the Resident Surgeon of the Sanitary Station reported:—

"The ship is thoroughly cleansed and fumigated. All the clothes and bedding have been passed through boiling water or the disinfecting house." The passengers were then re-embarked, and on the 12th January—ten days after her arrival, and fifteen days after the occurrence of the last case of fever on board—the ship was released from quarantine, as, the usual period (nine to eleven days) of the incubation of typhus fever having elapsed, the disease was supposed to be extinct.
The vessel arrived in Hobson's Bay on the evening of the 12th January, and during the two succeeding days the passengers were landed in Melbourne. On the 14th one of them was taken to the Melbourne Hospital, ill with typhus fever, and died there an hour after admission; and during the next five days, seven more cases—eight in all—were admitted to the hospital. Of these eight cases, five were placed in separate wards, where four of them died; the other three were distributed amongst the ordinary patients in the various wards of the hospital, and all three recovered. No other person in or belonging to the hospital was affected by the disease.

Fresh cases of typhus fever continued to occur, however, outside the Hospital, amongst the passengers by the ship. Thirteen were admitted to the Immigration Hospital in Melbourne between the 19th January and the 23rd February, when the disease became extinct in Melbourne, and all of these thirteen recovered; five cases occurred at Geelong, and five others in different towns of the colony; of these latter, two occurred at Hamilton, and one of these two was the only case in which the disease was communicated to any person who came in contact with the fever cases of the *Golden Empire*. The first of the two cases just mentioned was a passenger by that vessel, who arrived at Hamilton about the 16th January; she was laid up with an attack of typhus fever about the 27th of that month, and during her illness was attended by her sister, who slept at the foot of the same bed for two nights during the patient's illness; and this sister, who was an old resident in the colony, was taken ill on the 24th February with typhus fever, evidently contracted by sleeping in the same room with her sister; both the women recovered, however, and the disease did not extend any further.

These are the whole of the facts in connection with the cases of typhus fever brought into the colony by the ship *Golden Empire*. A great deal of unnecessary alarm was created, and representations were made that the ship had been released from quarantine too soon; in consequence, the Government appointed a commission to enquire into the quarantine of the *Golden Empire*, and generally into the working of the Sanitary Station; and the report of this commission, which was sent to the Chief Secretary on the 29th March, and ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed on the 18th July, 1865, condemned the Resident Surgeon of the Sanitary Station for allowing the passengers of the *Golden Empire* to leave quarantine without proper examination.

With regard to the danger to which the colony is exposed from the importation of typhus fever by passenger ships, there is just sufficient ground to enable persons ignorant of the topographical range of the disease to create a considerable amount of alarm, while there is, in fact, no reason whatever for concluding that typhus fever is ever likely to become epidemic, or to spread to any extent by contagion, in this colony. The disease is, no doubt, contagious, and, under the influence of close crowding, impure air, and filth, in cold climates it has spread extensively; but it is essentially a disease of cold climates, and it has never been known to spread to any extent in any part of the world having the temperature of this colony. Typhus fever has never but once (at the siege of Granada, in 1489) been known in Europe, south of 40° north latitude, whilst all the northern parts of Europe have suffered constantly and severely from its attacks; the terrible outbreak of typhus in Russia during the early part of 1865, with its frightful attendant mortality, being a recent instance of its severity in high latitudes.

But with reference to this colony, there is, in the experience of the last fourteen years, abundant proof that typhus fever cannot spread to any extent by contagion, or exist for any lengthened period in this climate. In the end of 1852 the *Ticonderoga*, immigrant ship, arrived here with typhus and scarlet-fever raging on board, ninety-eight deaths from those diseases having occurred during the voyage from Liverpool. She was placed in quarantine at the Heads, and remained there a little more than six weeks, during which time the captain of the vessel was the only person on board who escaped the disease,
and seventy-two additional deaths took place. The ship was released from quarantine on the 20th December, but the disease broke out again among the passengers in the steamer, whilst coming up the bay, and one child died on board; thirteen others were attacked with typhus, and were placed in the Immigration Hospital, where they all recovered. Typhus fever in this ship was probably more virulent and intense than it has ever been in any part of the world, every soul on board—with one exception, as before stated—being attacked, and the mortality being enormous. The isolation of the passengers at the Sanitary Station was merely nominal, constant communication being kept up between them and the residents at the Heads, as far as Cape Schanck. Dr. Taylor, then the Surgeon of the Sanitary Station, indeed, has stated that he found it impossible to prevent intercourse between the females of the Ticonderoga and the limeburners at the Heads; the immigrants were actually hired in considerable numbers by the farmers and limeburners in the neighborhood; and one single female formed an intimacy and absconded from the Sanitary Station with one of the limeburners; yet, notwithstanding this almost unlimited intercourse, the disease did not spread beyond the passengers and crew of the ship, not a single person at the Heads taking the fever, nor did the thirteen immigrants treated in the Immigration Hospital in Melbourne communicate the disease to anyone else. The Priscilla, immigrant ship, with typhus fever on board, was placed in quarantine a month after the Ticonderoga, and the surgeon of the ship complained that the immigrants were hired by farmers at the Heads, fifteen miles away from the Sanitary Station, but in no instance was the disease communicated. The Bombay was placed in quarantine with typhus fever on board on the 14th December, in the same year, and was released on the 20th; and on her passage up the bay the disease broke out again, the fresh cases being treated in the Immigration Depot here, without typhus fever being communicated to anyone. The ship Allison, after a short detention in quarantine for typhus fever, arrived in Hobson's Bay on the 20th December, 1852, and free communication took place between her passengers and their friends on shore; two days afterwards typhus fever was discovered on board, and two deaths took place from it; the vessel was ordered back to quarantine in consequence, but neither in this case was the fever communicated to any one. In 1857, four vessels; in 1858, three; in 1860, one; in 1862, one; and in 1863 one vessel, arrived here with typhus fever on board, and were placed in quarantine. In 1857, twenty-three cases of typhus fever; in 1861, three cases; in 1862, three cases; and in 1863, five cases, were successively treated without isolation in the Immigration Hospital, Melbourne, all occurring amongst immigrants after their landing in the colony, without the disease being communicated to any other of the inhabitants; and besides these, a great number of cases occurred among immigrants after they were scattered in various parts of the colony.

During all these fourteen years four persons caught the disease from nursing the sick—two at the Sanitary Station, one at Geelong, and one at Hamilton; but the fever never spread beyond these four cases, and has never established itself as an endemic or epidemic disease in this colony. This experience we therefore take to be ample to show, that the geographical position and climate of this colony are not such as to encourage the spread of typhus fever, and that the inhabitants of the colony have nothing to dread from the occurrence of cases of this disease among immigrants newly arrived.

Towards the close of the year, the existence of cholera in India, and in many parts of the Mediterranean with which this colony is in communication, rendered it not improbable that this much dreaded disease might find its way to these shores at any moment. Accordingly, we lost no time in pointing out to the various Local Boards of Health that the towns of the colony generally abound in those local causes which are known to favor the spread of cholera, and in urging on them the necessity for promptly taking active measures for their suppression or abatement. We pointed out that amongst the principal
of those local predisposing causes of cholera were:—1st, the defective construction, and frequently neglected condition, of privy cesspits, resulting in the contamination of the water and soil by percolation, and the atmosphere by evaporation; 2nd, the emanations resulting from the decomposition of animal refuse, an evil painfully conspicuous at most of the slaughtering places and butchers' premises in the colony; 3rd, defective drainage, and collections of impure water in stagnant open pools or under houses; and, 4th, overcrowding and defective ventilation in dwelling-houses and buildings where numbers of persons are congregated. We endeavored to make it clearly understood that all these evils, defects, and nuisances, were known to be local predisposing causes of cholera, and that where they were suffered to exist cholera would most assuredly make its appearance, should that disease be unfortunately brought into the colony; while we did not fail to point out that they were all of them removable, and that with the Local Boards, as the local guardians of the health of their towns, rested the responsibility of enforcing their removal or prevention. We also specially drew the attention of the Local Boards of Melbourne and Geelong, and the more important of the metropolitan suburbs, to the pressing necessity for using every means in their power for the discovery and suppression of those nuisances and sanitary evils which are known to foster the intensity of infectious disease, and to favor its spread; and feeling that most valuable aid might be afforded by the police in discovering and reporting on existing nuisances, we placed ourselves in communication with the Chief Commissioner of Police, who at once courteously acceded to our request that the police in the city, and the several places we have indicated, should be instructed to note during their rounds of duty any nuisances or matters affecting the public health which might come under their observation, and report their existence at once to the Local Board of Health.

There is no doubt that our representations, and the imminence of the threatened danger, had the effect of temporarily inducing a considerably increased degree of attention to matters of sanitary requirement in many of the towns of the colony, and that for a time the laws relating to the suppression of nuisances and sources of injury to the public health were enforced somewhat more rigidly in many of the towns; but there is also, unfortunately, too much reason to fear that but little permanent good was effected; that the passing away for the time of the threatened danger was followed too generally by a return to the old laxity in the enforcement of those sanitary laws and regulations which are intended for the preservation of the public health at all times; and that at the present moment the towns of the colony generally are but little better prepared to meet such a visitation as that which then threatened us than they were at the time to which we refer.

That such is the case is, we fear, in a great measure attributable to that indifference to sanitary considerations on the part of the local authorities and the public generally of which we have so often had to complain, and which would appear to warrant the conclusion that the actual presence or the threatened invasion of some serious epidemic is necessary in order to obtain for even the most obvious sanitary principles any practical and effective recognition. There is no doubt, however, that to the difficulties encountered by the Local Boards of Health in dealing with sanitary offences under the present defective Health Statute, is to be largely attributed the present objectionable condition of many of the towns of the colony, and that laxity and indifference on the part of the Local Boards which have led to it.

As regards the possibility of preventing by measures of quarantine the communication of cholera to the inhabitants of this colony, should, unhappily, the disease be brought hither by any vessel coming to these shores, we might not, perhaps, by such measures be able to prevent its communication to the colonists; but we do not think the people of the colony would be satisfied, nor do we think they ought to be satisfied, if the most stringent measures of quarantine were not put in force, and every means tried to prevent the introduction of this disease amongst us. Our opinion is, that proper quarantine
measures, properly enforced in a suitable locality, at a sufficiently remote distance from population, would serve to extinguish the disease on the spot, should any vessel bring it hither.

The case of the Ocean Monarch, immigrant ship, which arrived at Port Phillip Heads in June, 1856, will serve to illustrate our meaning. This vessel, on her voyage hither from Plymouth, put into Rio Janeiro, and while in that port, cholera, which had been prevalent there for some time, broke out on board the vessel. Five days afterwards (on the 11th April) she sailed for this port. After leaving Rio Janeiro, twenty-three cases of cholera occurred on board, sixteen of which were fatal; the last case sickened on the 18th May, and the ship arrived at Port Phillip Heads on the 3rd June, when she was placed in quarantine, but the disease did not reappear. From this, it seems very clear that the fifteen days which elapsed between the 18th May and the 3rd June were sufficient to clear the ship from this dangerous disease, and prevent its introduction here; and there would appear to be, therefore, good reason to conclude, that if a vessel bringing cholera to these shores be thoroughly isolated, at a sufficient distance from population, and in a proper locality, the disease can be extinguished.

Whether the Quarantine Station at Point Nepean is sufficiently remote from population to serve this purpose, remains to be proved; but as there was some reason to fear that it is not sufficiently isolated, or removed from population, it was suggested by the President of this Board to the Government of this colony that they should unite with that of Tasmania in forming a small quarantine station for cholera on King's Island, which belongs to the latter colony. We regret, however, to have to state that the Tasmanian Government did not see fit to accede to the proposition made to them by the Government of this colony on the subject, as the formation of a small quarantine establishment on King's Island would not have involved any serious expenditure, and would, in our opinion, have afforded both colonies a means of probably perfect protection against the introduction to either of this fearful scourge.

Measures, however, are in progress for supplying the Quarantine Station at Point Nepean with such additional sanitary appliances as the recent researches and experience of the home authorities have shown to be necessary for properly dealing with this disease and procuring its extinction; and we may venture to hope, with some degree of confidence, that should this dire epidemic be brought to our shores, we may be able to prevent its spread beyond the limits of our Quarantine Station. We can, however, only venture to hope we have attained this much; and with the Local Boards of Health in the various towns of the colony still rests the grave responsibility of freeing their towns from those removable nuisances and sources of offence or injury to the public health which, as we have pointed out to them, are known to be local predisposing causes of this disease.

Occasion arose, in the beginning of September, for taking action under the 13th and 14th clauses of the "Public Health Statute 1865," which authorises the making of such regulations as shall seem fit, "for the prevention, as far as possible, or mitigation of epidemic, endemic, or contagious disease," under the sanction of a special order by the Governor in Council.

The Resident Surgeon of the Pentridge Stockade reported to us, on the 8th September, that an outbreak of malignant scarlet-fever had occurred in the immediate neighborhood of the Stockade, attended with unusual and serious mortality, the deaths from the disease up to the date of his report being four out of the eight persons attacked in the immediate locality where the disease first appeared, while a fifth case was also hourly expected to terminate fatally, and the disease was spreading on all sides. Immediately on the receipt of Dr. Reed's report, the President of this Board visited the place, when it was found that, while the disease was more or less prevalent throughout the district, the eight most serious cases, and all the deaths, had occurred in the immediate neighborhood.
of a butcher's premises, which were situated close to the main road, and closely surrounded by dwellings. On inspection, the premises in question were found to be in a very filthy and offensive condition, principally from very defective drainage, and the consequent lodging about of blood and refuse matter on the ground adjoining, where it remained to be absorbed or evaporated, to the pollution of the surrounding atmosphere. As the district of Pentridge was not under the jurisdiction of any Local Board of Health, we at once took the necessary measures to obtain an Order from the Governor in Council, enabling us to deal with the existing offence under the clauses of the Act to which we have referred, and on obtaining such Order we lost no time in enforcing the removal of the nuisance, and the placing of the premises where the offence was occasioned in a proper sanitary condition.

There is no doubt that much of the nuisance which arose in this instance might have been prevented, had the drains from the premises where the offence was created been kept in proper condition and cleanliness, and the "Police Offences Statute" gives power to enforce the cleanliness of all such drains and premises in those districts to which certain of its provisions have been extended. There appeared, however, to be some doubt as to whether the precise locality where this outbreak of disease took place was within any district to which those provisions of the Police Act had been extended, and accordingly no action had been taken under them to remove or prevent the occurrence of the nuisance now under notice. By an Order in Council, however, of the 30th October, 1865, sections 5 to 10 of this Act were extended definitely to the township of Pentridge, and any doubt on this point set at rest.

The reports of our superintending inspector show, that what we consider, without doubt, the most serious sanitary evil in the colony, still obtains, in nearly every town, with almost undiminished intensity, notwithstanding our earnest and repeated efforts to effect some improvement. We allude to that faulty construction of privy cesspits which permits the percolation of the contents of those receptacles into the adjacent ground, and the consequent saturation of the soil with offensive matter injurious in the highest degree to the health of any populous town.

It is now long since we first drew the attention of Local Boards of Health to the very great importance of this subject. We pointed out to them, as forcibly as we could, the serious evils of necessity arising from a defective construction of privy cesspits, and the grave responsibility which rested on them if they suffered the continuance of such a serious and constantly operating cause of injury to the public health. At the same time we placed in the hands of the Local Boards a plan of a cheap and effective mode of constructing those receptacles, whereby the percolation of their contents might be entirely prevented, and the evils almost inseparable from the privy cesspit system in any shape thus reduced to a minimum. The plan we recommended (which is given in our Report for the year 1862) was of the most simple description, and involved such a trifling outlay as placed it within the reach of every householder; and we were also at considerable pains to show the Local Boards of Health how, by the adoption of a suggested bye-law, they could enforce some such construction as we recommended.

Notwithstanding all this, however, the number of cases in which any improved construction of privy cesspits has been attempted, is lamentably small, and the old objectionable plan still prevails in almost every instance. In most places, in the country towns more especially, cesspits are formed by merely digging a hole in the ground, without any attempt whatever to render the sides or bottom impervious to water, and thereby prevent the escape of the liquid portion of their contents by percolation into the adjoining ground. Occasionally a cask is placed in the hole thus formed, but this device, while it may for a time prevent percolation, soon ceases to be of any service in this respect, unless, which is rarely the case, puddling around the outside of the cask is
resorted to. This defective construction of privy cesspits, even when they are periodically emptied, displays either a most deplorable ignorance, or a very reprehensible disregard of the injury resulting to the public health of any town from the saturation of the soil with matter so noxious as the contents of those receptacles; but the evil, serious as it is, even where periodic cleansing is resorted to, is, in some towns, alarmingly increased by the practice, which, it will hardly be credited, is suffered by the local authorities, of covering over those holes when full, and opening others alongside, to be filled and replaced by others in their turn. No more effectual plan for the complete saturation of the soil of a town with offensive matter could well be devised were this the object sought to be attained, and that it has been suffered in any town possessing a Local Board of Health may well be a matter of surprise. The fact that such a proceeding is in any case tolerated by a Local Board of Health entrusted with the conservation of the health of their town, will afford one illustration of the many difficulties we have to contend with in obtaining recognition for even the most obvious principles of sanitary economy, and will show how hopeless it is, with only the limited powers afforded by the existing law, to expect to be able to enforce attention to minor sanitary requirements where the existence of such a serious sanitary evil is tolerated by the local authorities.

The defective construction and arrangement of the privy accommodation at some of the public schools in the colony having previously attracted our attention, we considered it desirable to make this matter a subject of special enquiry in the inspections made under our direction during the year, in order that we might ascertain to what extent this evil obtained, and accordingly the reports of our superintending inspector give a detailed description of the privy accommodation at the Common Schools in the several towns visited by him during the year. We were sorry to find from these reports that that neglect of sanitary requirements in this respect which in some cases had come under our notice, obtained generally in the Common Schools of the towns inspected. Not only was that defective construction of the cesspits of which we have already spoken, of common occurrence; but in most cases a disregard of cleanliness was painfully conspicuous, some of the cesspits being found full to overflowing, and the condition of the privies generally being very far from creditable. Besides this, the requirements of the Public Health Statute, as regards the provision of adequate accommodation, were found to be almost universally neglected, and not only was the privy accommodation, in nearly every instance, insufficient in extent for the numbers attending the school, but the requirements of decency, in regard to the separation of the sexes, were very frequently overlooked, in some cases, indeed, to a very shameful extent.

Believing that such institutions as the Common Schools of the colony should be amongst the first to set an example of attention to sanitary requirements, we were surprised to find so generally in those establishments that disregard of them in this respect which the reports of our inspector disclose. We, therefore, deemed it desirable to make a special representation to the Local Boards of Health on this subject, and accordingly we addressed to them a circular, reminding them that it is their duty to enforce the provisions of the 25th section of the Public Health Statute, which directs that sufficient privy accommodation, separate for each sex, be provided at all places where numbers of persons are congregated. We also wrote to the Board of Education, enclosing a list of the Common Schools visited by our inspector during the year, in which were shown the many instances where the privy accommodation at those places was insufficient, and the requirements of cleanliness and decency neglected, and urging that body to use their influence in aiding the Local Boards of Health to effect some improvement. We have since ascertained that in some towns action has been taken by the Local Boards in this direction, and we are induced to hope that our next inspection of the towns of the colony will show that our representations to the Local Boards have had some effect in obtaining attention to this important matter.
In our last Report we stated that a manufactory of earth-closets had been established, and was in operation at Richmond, for the purpose of rendering available in every house the use of dry, powdered earth as a deodorizer of night-soil. Since then, other similar manufactories have been established, where earth-closets of varied construction are made, the principle being the same in all, namely, the immediate application of the earth each time the closet is used, the variations in construction consisting in the different modes by which the earth is deposited in the closet-pan. Already several houses and some large offices and establishments in the city are supplied with these closets, but in order to render their adoption general legislative interference is obviously required, for manifest as are the many advantages of the system in comparison with that of privy cesspits, the indifference on the subject which is evinced by the public generally shows that the extension of this important sanitary reform will be but slow, unless by some legislative enactment power be given to local authorities to enforce it. Accordingly, in the Amended Public Health Bill, which was submitted to Parliament during the last Session, we made provision for conferring some such powers on the Local Boards of Health, and it was our hope that by this time we should have seen this great sanitary reform initiated, and in a fair way for speedy accomplishment. The loss of the Amended Public Health Bill, however, has for the present postponed this, though we earnestly hope that another Session of Parliament will not be allowed to pass without the enactment of some measure authorising Local Boards of Health to compel the substitution of earth-closets for privy cesspits in every town of the colony. We have not the slightest doubt that if the earth-closet system were once fairly established in any one town under the sanction of legislative enactment, its many advantages over the present cesspits would be so manifest that its adoption in every town in the colony would speedily follow, for we are convinced that there are no difficulties in the way that may not readily be overcome, after a little experience shall have indicated those trifling defects of detail which have to be encountered in the initiation of any new project.

Before proposing that Local Boards of Health should be empowered by law to compel the substitution of earth-closets for privy cesspits in any town, we made enquiry of the principal men engaged in the removal of night-soil from houses in the city as to the terms on which, if the earth-closet system were established in Melbourne, they would undertake the periodical supply of dry, powdered earth to each house in sufficient quantity, and the removal therefrom of the contents of the closets. Our enquiries elicited the fact, that one of the individuals most largely engaged in the business of removing night-soil from privy cesspits, was already contracting for the weekly removal of the contents of earth-closets, and the supply at the same time of dry earth, at several houses in the city and suburbs, and that his charge for this service, with but comparatively a few houses to contract for, is but thirty shillings per house per annum. This individual, in reply to our enquiries, stated his willingness, should the earth-closet be at all generally adopted, to contract for the performance of the required service at least once in each week, and as much oftener as might be necessary, for the sum of twenty shillings a year for each house; and the rate named by another extensive contractor for the removal of night-soil was twenty-six shillings per annum for the like service. So far, therefore, as regards the cost of emptying the earth-closets, and supplying dry, powdered earth for use therein, it will be seen that there is nothing to deter from the immediate adoption of this great sanitary reformation. Nor need the first cost of converting into earth-closets the existing privies be in any case more than trifling. The main portion of the work would consist in emptying, and then filling up with earth, the present cesspit, and boarding it over at the top; and this done, all that is actually required is the alteration of the present seat, so as to admit of the closet-pan being put underneath and removed from time to time, and the provision of a closet-pan or bucket, and a box or other receptacle for the dry earth, with a scoop for its application. In the better class of tenements, or wherever thought desirable,
there might be adopted one of the various descriptions of self-acting earth-closets which are now manufactured, and in which the required quantity of earth is precipitated into the closet-pan by the action of the seat, or lid, or other machinery each time the closet is used; but no elaborate machinery is at all essential to the proper working of an earth-closet, the very simple appliances we have mentioned being all that are really necessary.

We have alluded above to the weekly removal of the contents of the earth-closets, and possibly to some who are not aware that the immediate application of dry earth to night-soil has the effect of at once preventing all offensive smell, and who think only of the nuisance periodically created by the visits of the night-man under the present system, this frequent cleansing of these receptacles may seem alarming. It may be as well, therefore, to state here, that where the dry, powdered earth is regularly and immediately deposited in the closet-pan, in sufficient quantity to perfectly cover the excreta each time the closet is used, not only is the escape of any unpleasant smell at once prevented, but the contents of the pan or bucket are very soon rendered innocuous, and can be removed at any time in a few minutes without giving rise to any offence.

In our last Report we stated that, in order to bring the earth-closet into general use, the provision of an open shed in each yard was necessary, in order to preserve the dry earth from rain before its use in the closet, and to dry the compound afterwards so as to fit it for use again and again in like manner as the original supply of earth in the first instance. Such a shed is no doubt an essential where the mixture of dry earth and night-soil is intended to be dried on the premises, with a view to its repeated use in the same manner, and the production thereby of a valuable manure; but in the great majority of houses this would neither be attempted nor desired; and we have since ascertained, as we have here shown, that arrangements can readily be made for the weekly removal of the contents of earth-closets from every house, and the supply of dry earth thereto, at a very reasonable rate; so that this aspect of the question does not now present any difficulty.

We have not here dwelt on the advantage which the earth-closet possesses over the privy cesspit, in the production, without offence, of a valuable manure from material which is not at present utilised to any extent, although we consider this by no means an unimportant feature of the system, and one the pecuniary benefits of which will before long become manifest. It is our wish now to point merely to the purely sanitary advantages which the earth-closet presents in providing us with a means of at once putting a stop to what there is no doubt is the greatest sanitary evil of the colony, namely, that saturation of the soil of our towns with night-soil, which, under the present defective privy cesspit system, is constantly going on, to the certain, though not always visible, injury of the public health.

The seriousness of this evil cannot well be exaggerated. It obtains, to a greater or less extent, in every town in the colony, even, as we have shown, in those where the water supply of the inhabitants is drawn from wells, and where it might be supposed efforts would be made to prevent the saturation of the soil through which that water percolates with matter so noxious and offensive as the emanations from privy cesspits. That the evil exercises a decidedly baneful effect on the health of any town where it exists there cannot be a doubt, and a very striking illustration of this in-towns where the water supply is obtained from wells sunk on the spot, is to be found in a recent report of an officer of the Privy Council of Great Britain on the sanitary condition of the city of Chichester. In this city, which possesses almost unequalled sanitary advantages—wide open streets, healthful situation, great drainage facilities, ample house space unusually well provided with gardens, the absence of all offensive trades or occupations, in fact, almost every conceivable condition necessary for the maintenance of a high standard of public health—the mortality, nevertheless, was excessive, as high as that of the worst parts of London, and higher than that of nine of the Metropolitan unions; and this mortality arose from diseases—typhoid and other fevers—clearly pointing to the presence of some constantly operating
cause of injury to the public health, in the midst of all the unrivalled sanitary advantages we have mentioned. Investigation disclosed the fact that all these advantages were more than neutralised by the privy cesspit system in operation, whereby the soil of the city was saturated with the contents of those receptacles, and the water supply of the inhabitants, which was drawn from wells sunk in the yard of each house, consequently polluted to an extent that left no doubt as to the cause of the excessive mortality, or the general sickness and invaliding, which characterised what ought to have been one of the healthiest towns in the kingdom; in fact, the mortality and sickness were distinctly traced in several instances to the consumption of the polluted well-water. In Chichester, the sides of the cesspits were lined with brick and mortar, but this did not prevent their contents from percolating through the ground beneath, or overflowing in wet weather, and thus saturating the adjoining ground: it may therefore be readily imagined to what extent the soil of a town is thus saturated where cesspits are formed, as is the common practice here, by digging mere holes in the ground, destitute of even the slightest protection against percolation which we have mentioned.

There is no doubt that a proper construction of privy cesspits, such as we have for years been trying to get the Local Boards of Health to enforce, and their regular and systematic cleansing, would go a long way to mitigate the sanitary evils inseparable from the privy cesspit system, in any shape; but our efforts to effect an improvement in the construction of those receptacles have not met with such success as to lead us to hope for any permanent or appreciable amendment so long as privy cesspits are tolerated at all.

We have shown, we conceive, that there exists no serious difficulty in the way of enforcing the general adoption of the earth-closet in every town of the colony, and we now venture to hope that before long we shall see placed on the Statute-book of the colony an enactment authorising the accomplishment of this most important sanitary reform.

An objection has been raised to the use of the earth-closets in public hospitals, on the ground that the greater fluidity of the stools of the patients rendered their use impracticable in those institutions. This objection, however, will appear more imaginary than real, when it is stated that night-soil generally contains, on the average, about 95 per cent. of water, and that consequently the increase of fluid in the stools of hospital patients could not cause an increase of more than 5 per cent., which is, for all practicable purposes, inappreciable, and would require only a little more earth to absorb the additional moisture. Moreover, there is no doubt whatever that the managers of any hospital could readily contract with the farmers in the neighborhood to supply any quantity of earth for use in the closets, and take away the resulting compound as often as might be required.

In our Report for the year 1863 we mentioned that we had every reason to expect vaccination. the most valuable results in the promotion of vaccination from the revival of a plan, formerly followed, but latterly allowed to fall into disuse, whereby the police authorities in each district were furnished with periodical returns by the deputy registrars, showing the number of cases where the provisions of the Act, as regarded vaccination, had not been complied with. We are glad now to be able to report that the revival of this plan, which has since then been steadily in operation, has been of very marked advantage in the general promotion of vaccination, by systematically bringing under notice those cases in which vaccination happens to be neglected. The police being placed in possession of the names of those persons who have registered their children's births, but who have not registered their vaccination within the period the law allows, are instructed to make enquiry as to the cause of this neglect in each instance; and while they are cautioned that they are not to make the Vaccination Act a means of oppression in any case, they are directed to warn all those concerned of the penalties the Act prescribes for neglect of its requirements, and where this neglect is wilful to take the necessary steps to procure compliance with the law.
We observed the law imposed a penalty for neglect of vaccination; it would appear that nothing more is needed to secure the vaccination of nearly every child in the colony than the provision of adequate vaccination facilities in every district. Formerly, such facilities were afforded to the greatest extent practicable by the appointment as public vaccinators, in districts where no qualified medical man resided, of persons who, though not qualified medical practitioners, were ascertained to be competent to properly perform the operation of vaccination. Recently, however, on the ground that the Vaccination Act contemplates only the appointment of duly qualified medical men as public vaccinators, the Government declined to appoint any but medical men to that office, even in districts where no medical man is to be had, and considerable difficulty was thus for a time experienced in extending the operations of the Act to many of those outlying districts of the colony which are many miles distant from a medical man. We are, nevertheless, of opinion that the Vaccination Act does admit of the appointment of other than duly qualified medical men, as public vaccinators; and that in fact as the Act prescribes no penalty for non-vaccination, and directs the appointment of such medical officers and practitioners, and of such other officers as may be necessary for carrying out its provisions, the appointment of such persons in places where a medical man is not to be had is expressly contemplated, and was, as we have reason to know, the fact, intended to be provided for in that enactment, by its framers. The difficulty to which we have alluded has, however, been since obviated by the Government placing on the Estimates a sum of money to meet the expense of having those outlying districts in which are unprovided with a medical man periodically visited by the nearest public vaccinator, for the purpose of affording the inhabitants the necessary facilities for complying with the requirements of the law.

In our Report for 1863 we also remarked, with regard to the subject of vaccination, that efforts had been made to secure, to the largest extent as possible, the benefits known to result from re-vaccination, in the additional protection from the attacks of small-pox which the practice affords. As re-vaccination is not, however, like primary vaccination, compulsory, and can only, therefore, be recommended by those to whom the administration of the vaccination is intrusted, we are, not in a position to know to what extent the practice has actually been adopted. The importance of re-vaccination has, however, been forcibly urged on the attention of the various public vaccinators throughout the colony, who have it as part of their general instructions to promote the practice by every means in their power. In the sample re-vaccination account and in the two instances of vaccination mentioned in the preceding section, it was observed that children successfully vaccinated on one day were found to be susceptible of successful vaccination a week afterwards, and in two instances vaccination even a third time, after the lapse of a second week, was also successful. In order, therefore, to secure to the public the largest attainable amount of immunity from small-pox which can be afforded by vaccination properly and effectively performed, instructions were issued in June, 1865, to all public vaccinators in the colony, directing them to perform the operation of vaccination in future by making four distinct punctures in every case, and requesting them, whenever they should be able to secure the attendance of the children for the purpose, to re-vaccinate the successful cases each successive week so long as re-vaccination should prove successful.

With respect to vaccination by four separate punctures, some difficulty was at the outset experienced, owing to the objection of the mothers of the children in many cases to allow the operation to be thus performed; but wherever this difficulty was reported by the public vaccinators, they were instructed to inform the parents that vaccination by less...
than four distinct punctures was not a "successful" vaccination, and that therefore, for any vaccination performed by making less than that number of punctures, the certificate of successful vaccination required under the Act would not be given. At the same time, public vaccinators were required to forward, with their periodical accounts for their vaccination fees, a declaration that all such vaccinations were performed in the manner prescribed.

So far, therefore, as regards vaccination by the public vaccinators of the colony, it will be seen that measures have been taken to ensure, as far as is practicable, that vaccination shall be effectively performed. With regard, however, to the large number of cases which are vaccinated by private practitioners, there are not, of course, the same means of securing that thorough vaccination which, as we have stated, has been proved to be necessary to give effective protection against smallpox. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that, from the frequent unwillingness of mothers to allow their children to be vaccinated with more than one puncture, vaccination with one, or at most two punctures, is the rule with a large number of private practitioners, and that, consequently, many children in the colony are left without that full measure of protection against smallpox which is only to be attained by thorough and efficient vaccination.

We regret to have to report that we still experience very great difficulty in obtaining from the Local Boards of Health those periodical reports on the sanitary condition and progress of their districts, which they are required to make under the 10th section of the Public Health Statute.

The Act directs that these reports should be furnished to us "at least once in every three months," but does not provide any means for enforcing compliance with the direction. We have endeavored, at very considerable pains, to facilitate the preparation of the required reports by the Local Boards of Health, by placing them in possession of clear and precise instructions as to the nature of the reports required from them, giving them the headings of the different subjects on which they should furnish information; but, notwithstanding this, and also that we have required the Local Boards to report to us only twice in each year—instead of four times—we have in many cases to make repeated applications before we can obtain their reports, which, when received, are often found to be drawn up in almost total neglect of our instructions, while in some cases our applications have altogether failed to obtain for us any reports whatever. For instance, up to the present time we have not received any reports of the proceedings of the Local Boards of Health of Ballarat, Brown's and Scarsdale, Brunswick, Essendon and Flemington, Geelong, Hamilton, Raywood, Richmond, or St Kilda, for the year 1865, although in each of these cases we have made repeated applications for the required information, and pointed out to the Local Boards the inconvenience to which we were subjected by their neglect. We are consequently, as regards some of the towns in the colony, left altogether without authentic information as to their vital statistics or sanitary condition and progress, while, in respect to others, we have to make repeated applications for this important information, to be in the end supplied with meagre and imperfect particulars. The importance to the Central Board of Health of being regularly placed in possession of precise and authoritative information in regard to the sanitary condition and progress of every district under the operation of the Public Health Statute is, of course, manifest, and the difficulty we experience in obtaining this information under the present Statute affords another illustration of its many defects, and of the impediments we encounter in its administration. We consider there exists a proved necessity for amending the present law in this particular; and we have accordingly proposed an alteration to that effect in the amended 'Bill,' to which we have already alluded. "We do not consider, however, that quarterly reports, as required by the present Statute, are really needed, as all necessary purposes would be served if the Local Boards of Health were to furnish,
Defective as the present Public Health Statute is in many important respects, and limited as are the powers it places in the hands of those intrusted with the guardianship of the public health, the difficulties encountered by the Local Boards in endeavoring to enforce compliance with its provisions, are, we regret to say, frequently much enhanced by the apathy of the magistrates before whom complaints under the Act are brought. It is too often the case that offences against the laws made for the preservation of the public health are looked on with indifference; but this indifference is doubly to be regretted, when shown by those to whom the administration of the law is intrusted, and whose duty it is to punish those offending against it. During the year embraced in our present Report, several cases occurred where, notwithstanding that the nuisance complained of was of a really flagrant description, the offender was suffered to escape with the infliction of a merely nominal fine—in some cases only a shilling! It must be manifest that such leniency on the part of the Bench amounts to an actual encouragement to the offender to persist in his violation of the law, more especially where that violation is, as in many instances, attended with pecuniary benefit to himself, either in the actual making of profit from an offensive business, or in the saving of expense by the non-removal of a nuisance; and that while the Local Boards of Health, by this indifference of the local Benches to sanitary offences, are thwarted in their efforts to enforce observance of the law, it is hopeless to expect from them that zeal and activity in the discharge of their functions as local guardians of the public health for which we might otherwise look. On the contrary, and as might be expected, this difficulty in obtaining the infliction of adequate punishment, or in some cases in obtaining a conviction at all, for breaches of sanitary regulations, induces a like apathy on the part of the Local Boards, and leads, as a necessary result, to the creation and toleration of nuisances and causes of offence or injury to the public health which a vigorous administration of the law would have checked at the outset.

There are inherent difficulties enough in the way of enforcing compliance with sanitary laws and regulations under even the most perfect enactment that can be framed, without those difficulties being increased by any laxity in the enforcement of the law; and much benefit as we expect to result to the public health from the passing of the amended measure to which we have before alluded, and which we hope shortly to see become law, there is no disguising the fact, that, if those who have to adjudicate on complaints made under its provisions render those provisions practically ineffectual by the infliction of merely nominal fines, the amount of good to be derived from the measure will be very seriously diminished.

Having spoken of the difficulties which are in some cases thrown in the way of the Local Boards of Health by the leniency of the magistrates before whom their complaints under the Act are brought, we desire, in conclusion, to point to another manner in which the provisions of the Act are rendered practically of little use, and this by the Local Boards themselves: In accordance with our instructions, the Local Boards generally have provided their inspectors of nuisances with forms of “notices” with which to serve persons on whose premises nuisances are found to exist, or by whom nuisances are occasioned, and such notices specify a certain period within which the nuisance complained of is to be removed or abated.” In most cases these notices are complied with within the stated period, and so far, the removal or abatement of the nuisance having been accomplished, enough would at first sight appear to have been done. But in numerous instances it is found that as the inspector does not serve his “notice” until the nuisance to which it refers has become sufficiently serious to come prominently under observation, the offender has only to remove,
within the given time, the nuisance complained of, and thus escape any punishment for having occasioned what must have been for some time a cause of offence, and possibly serious injury to the health of those in his neighborhood.

It is obvious, therefore, that if no punishment be inflicted for a repetition of offences of this nature, but the offender be allowed to escape each time on a mere compliance with the inspector's notice of removal, but little good, and none of a permanent nature, is accomplished. In fact, the offender is encouraged to disregard the nuisance he creates until it attains from time to time such a magnitude as to call for the inspector's intervention, when he has then, at most, to remove the offence complained of. The only proper way to deal with such cases as those to which we have alluded, is to inflict a fine in every instance where a nuisance is a second time complained of, and to increase such fine for every repetition of the offence. We have, from time to time, pointed out to the Local Boards of Health that this is the only really effectual method of dealing with such offences, and we are confident that the adoption of this course would speedily have the effect of diminishing the large class of removable nuisances to be found in every town from time to time, thereby contributing largely to the health and comfort of the community, and, we may add, considerably lessening the labors of the Local Boards themselves, and their officers.

W. McCREA, M.B., President.
RICHD. YOUH, M.D.
J. T. SMITH, M.P.
W. M. BELL.
W. W. WARDELL.

T. R. WILSON, Secretary.
APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

LIST OF LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH, 31st DECEMBER, 1865.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Melbourne.</th>
<th>Boroughs—continued.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town of Geelong.</td>
<td>Eaglehawk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Boroughs:**
- Amherst.
- Ararat.
- Ballarat.
- Ballarat East.
- Beechworth.
- Belfast.
- Brighton.
- Brown's and Scarsdale.
- Brunswick.
- Buninyong.
- Carisbrook.
- Castlemaine.
- Chewton.
- Chiltern.
- Clunes.
- Craigie.
- Creswick.
- Daylesford East.
- Dunolly.

**Boroughs—continued.**
- Emerald Hill.
- Essendon and Flemington.
- Fitz Roy.
- Footscray.
- Gisborne.
- Hamilton.
- Hawthorn.
- Heathcote.
- Hobom.
- Inglewood.
- Jamieson.
- Kew.
- Kilmore.
- Maldon.
- Maryborough.
- Newtown and Chilwell.
- Portland.
- Prahran.
- Queenscliff.
- Raywood.
- Richmond.

**Shires:**
- Arca.
- Banyon.
- Carisbrook.
- Castlemaine.
- Chewton.
- Chiltern.
- Clunes.
- Craigie.
- Creswick.

**Boroughs—continued.**
- Rutherford.
- Sale.
- St. Arnaud.
- St. Kilda.
- Sandhurst.
- Sandridge.
- Sebastopol.
- Smythesdale.
- South Barwon.
- Taradale.
- Tarnagulla.
- Wangaratta.
- Warrnambool.
- Williamstown.
- Woodend.
- Wood's Point.

**TOWNS INSPECTED DURING THE YEAR 1865 UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amherst.</th>
<th>Daylesford.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ararat.</td>
<td>Dunolly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoca.</td>
<td>Eaglehawk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beechworth.</td>
<td>Fitz Roy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast.</td>
<td>Geelong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown's and Scarsdale.</td>
<td>Gisborne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buninyong.</td>
<td>Hamilton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carisbrook.</td>
<td>Heathcote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlemaine.</td>
<td>Inglewood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewton.</td>
<td>Kilmore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiltern.</td>
<td>Kyneoton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clunes.</td>
<td>Maldon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craigie.</td>
<td>Malmsbury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creswick.</td>
<td>Maryborough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX B.**

By Authority: JOHN FERRE, Government Printer, Melbourne.