

**Report of the Commission of Public Health to the Minister of Public Health /
Department of Public Health, Victoria.**

Contributors

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1962
VICTORIA

FORTIETH REPORT OF THE

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

FORTIETH REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TO THE

MINISTER OF HEALTH



Wilson, senior bacteriologist, Department of Agriculture.

under the supervision of Dr. Kenneth Bennett, District Health Officer, and Mr. H. H. Wilson, senior bacteriologist, Department of Agriculture.

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The Council of the City of Moorabbin agreed to co-operate in the experiment which included a cross section of residential, offensive trades and other areas.

As this was not possible in the Moorabbin survey, the Commission would have been able to carry out a survey in a more extensive area.

through the survey an intensive educational campaign on fly control was conducted through the available publicity media and with the generous assistance of a public relations firm a limited campaign was extended to the whole of the State.

The Moorabbin survey clearly demonstrated that there is no easy way to control flies and that the most effective method of control is good hygiene practices. It was also established that the publicity employed stimulated the interest of the residents in that there was an overall improvement in hygiene. The Commission is now of the opinion that a State-wide educational drive for improved hygiene is essential if any appreciable reduction of the fly population is to be effected. It is recommended however, to point out that municipalities have the responsibility of ensuring that the provisions of the Health Act and Regulations are observed in all areas.

By Authority:

A. C. BROOKS, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

FORTIETH REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF PUBLIC HEALTH 1961-62

To the Honorable Ronald Mack, M.L.C.

SIR,

We have the honour to submit in accordance with Section 23 (3) of the *Health Act* 1958, our report for the year ended 30th June, 1962.

During the period under review the Commission directed special attention to the problems of fly control and the contamination of milk due to the excessive use of antibiotics.

FLY CONTROL.

In the last report mention was made of the prevalence of flies in the metropolitan area which led to the formation of an expert Committee to advise on fly and insect control.

In its first report to the Commission, the Fly Control Committee recommended:—

- (1) The appointment of an Entomologist to advise Government Departments and municipalities on control measures and to undertake special research into bush flies and further investigations of house and other flies and mosquitoes.

It is anticipated that this appointment will be made in the near future.

- (2) Publicising the danger of flies to public health and the means of their control through the distribution of informative literature and pamphlets, special articles in the press, talks on radio and television and lectures to municipal health inspectors.

If more funds had been available, the Commission would have been able to carry out the form of publicity recommended by the Committee. As this was not possible it was decided to conduct during the summer and autumn months a pilot survey in a metropolitan municipality which included a cross section of industrial, offensive trades and residential areas. The Council of the City of Moorabbin agreed to co-operate in the experiment, the detailed organization of which was shared by departmental and municipal officers under the scientific supervision of Dr. Kenneth Brennan, District Health Officer, and Mr. H. Wilson, Senior Entomologist, Department of Agriculture.

During the survey an intensive educational campaign on fly control was conducted through the available publicity media and with the generous assistance of a public relations firm, a limited campaign was extended to the whole of the State.

The Moorabbin survey clearly demonstrated that there is no easy way to control flies and that the prime method of control is good hygienic practices. It was also established that the publicity employed stimulated the interest of the residents in that there was an overall improvement in hygiene. The Commission is now of the opinion that a State-wide educational drive for improved hygiene is essential if any appreciable reduction of the fly population is to be effected. It is important, however, to point out that municipalities have the responsibility of ensuring that the provisions of the Health Act and Regulations are observed in so far as they relate to fly control.



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COMMISSION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

- KEVIN BRENNAN, F.R.A.C.P., M.B., B.S., D.P.H.** .. Chief Health Officer (*Chairman*).
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- CR. ARTHUR SYDNEY THOMSON, J.P.** Representing Shires other than Metropolitan Municipalities.
- CMR. THOMAS RICHARD FLOOD, J.P.** Representing Cities, Towns and Boroughs other than Metropolitan Municipalities.
- CMR. FRANCIS JOHN CUTTS, J.P.**

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The pilot survey also disclosed that the battery laying cage system in use on poultry farms leaves a lot to be desired. This problem has been examined by a sub-committee of specialist officers of the Departments of Agriculture and Health who have reported that the battery laying cage system is a major source of fly breeding and contributes to an appreciable extent to the fly nuisance in Victoria. In view of the economic importance of this method of production to the poultry industry, further investigations of the problem of disposal of waste matter and dead birds are to be undertaken. In the meantime, however, arrangements are being made for the publication in the *Journal of Agriculture* and trade magazines of special articles stressing the necessity of proper hygiene on poultry farms.

PENICILLIN IN MILK.

In recent years the attention of scientists and the medical profession has been drawn to the dangers to the public in the sale of milk contaminated by antibiotics, especially penicillin, and this has been emphasised by the Department of Agriculture, the Australian Veterinary Association and the Public Health Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

In view of the medical implication of these reports a special meeting of the Commission was held which was attended by the Director of Agriculture and the Superintendent of the Division of Dairying.

The Commission recommended—

- (1) That penicillin for mammary infusion of dairy cattle remain available to dairy farmers without prescription ;
- (2) That the dose of penicillin in each preparation be limited to a maximum of 100,000 International Units of penicillin ;
- (3) That all penicillin preparations for mammary infusion for the treatment of dairy cattle shall contain the food dyestuff " Brilliant Blue FCF " in the proportion of 0.125 grams per 100,000 International Units of penicillin.

Before making this decision the Commission acknowledged a recommendation against this procedure by the Food Additives Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council but considered that the advantages of dye-marking penicillin outweigh theoretical objections. The Commission also noted that to be fully effective the action proposed would require uniform adoption in all States but considered it would be unreasonable to postpone action in Victoria until all States accepted the procedure.

The Commission also expressed the view that the use of a marker dye was only one of the measures necessary to deal with the problem of penicillin in milk and it should be reinforced by field work and farm hygiene together with spot testing. A combination of all these measures would reduce both the incidence of mastitis and the occurrence of penicillin in milk to the lowest possible level.

To implement the above the Commission recommended that the Pharmacy Board amend the Dangerous Drug Regulations under the *Poisons Act* 1958 to require penicillin for mammary infusion to be limited to 100,000 International Units per dose and to contain a marker of " Brilliant Blue FCF " to a concentration of 0.125 grams per 100,000 I.U. The necessary amendments were approved by the Governor in Council on 19th June, 1962, to be effective as from 1st September, 1962.

POLIOMYELITIS.

Incidence of Poliomyelitis :

The number of cases reported during this period shows a decrease when compared with the previous twelve months. In 1961-62 there were 21 cases including two deaths, as compared with 82 cases in 1960-61.

The statistical tables form a summary of these 21 cases, showing chronological, locality and age incidence, vaccination status and virus isolation. It will be noted that the greatest incidence is in the pre-school age group and the lowest incidence in those with a high vaccination status namely the 6-26 age group.

Notifications each calendar year over the last six years are as follows :—

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1956 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 252 |
| 1957 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12 |
| 1958 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 60 |
| 1959 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 30 |
| 1960 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 23 |
| 1961 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 68 |
| 1962 (to 30th June, 1962) | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 13 |

After-care of Poliomyelitis Patients.

Referrals from private practitioners which include Multiple Sclerosis and other chronic neurological diseases continue to increase and there are now 1,776 patients under treatment.

Over the past twelve months there were 2,500 medical consultations at 90 metropolitan clinics and 1,838 at 75 country clinics.

As at the 30th June, 1962, there were 20 physiotherapists and 9 physiotherapy assistants in the Division providing physiotherapy at Lady Dugan Red Cross Home, Fairfield Hospital and an itinerant service throughout the State.

Sixteen wheelchairs and three hydraulic hoists are available for loan to patients. The hydraulic hoists have been purchased for loan in instances where the care of a patient at home involves heavy nursing particularly where the relative is old or infirm. The supply of these hoists has enabled the patients to be cared for at home, otherwise some institutional care would have to be provided for them.

The Lady Dugan Red Cross Home continues to provide in-patient and out-patient facilities for poliomyelitis aftercare. 360 patients were admitted for periods up to six weeks during the past year and 810 out-patient treatments were carried out.

During the year 26 patients received out-patient treatment at the Rehabilitation Centre at Fairfield Hospital, the majority of them attending the centre two to three times a week. Transport for these patients from their homes to the hospital is provided by the hospital.

Poliomyelitis Vaccine.

Salk.—Following the breakdown of supplies of Salk Vaccine in December, 1960, it again became available in August, 1961, and since last December all requests for vaccine have been fulfilled. Over the last six months the supply of the vaccine to Municipal Councils has averaged 11,200 doses per week.

The success of the Salk Vaccine is evident from the low number of cases that have occurred since its introduction in the latter half of 1956.

None of the 21 cases in 1961-62 had completed a course of Salk vaccination.

Sabin (Oral Vaccine).—The Commission endorses a recommendation by the National Health and Medical Research Council that “supplies of Sabin Vaccine should be imported as soon as possible, to be available either for use in possible emergency or for any pilot studies on administrative procedures that may be called for.” In the event of an emergency such as epidemic, Sabin Vaccine would be available for administration orally.

VICTORIA—POLIOMYELITIS CASES 1961-62.
(1st July, 1961—30th June, 1962.)

| Age Group. | Total Cases. | Vaccinated. | Unvaccinated. | Virus Isolation. |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 0-5 years | 7 | .. | 7 | 1 Type III., 4 Type I. |
| 6-10 | 3 | .. | 3 | 1 Type III., 1 Type I. |
| 11-15 | 1 | .. | 1 | Nil |
| 16-20 | 1 | .. | 1 | Nil |
| 21-25 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 26-30 | 5 | .. | 5 | 1 Type III., 3 Type I. |
| 31-35 | 2 | .. | 2 | 1 Type III. |
| 36-40 | 1 | .. | 1 | 1 Type III. |
| 41-45 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| 46-50 | 1 | .. | 1 | 1 Type III. |
| Totals | 21 | .. | 21 | 6 Type III., 8 Type I. |

SUMMARY.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of cases | 21 |
| Number of patients vaccinated with 3 doses of Salk | Nil |
| Number of cases where Type I. isolated | 8 |
| Number of cases where Type II. isolated | Nil |
| Number of cases where Type III. isolated | 6 |

Locality Incidence: 18 metropolitan (3 Fitzroy, 2 Camberwell, 1 Broadmeadows, 2 Melbourne, 1 each—Moorabbin, Keilor, Springvale, Essendon, Doncaster and Templestowe, St. Kilda, Brunswick, Altona, Preston, Caulfield.) 3 country—(1 each—Mildura, Walpeup and Berwick.)

TUBERCULOSIS.

During 1961 there were 698 notifications of tuberculosis. This is the lowest recorded figure for many years. Case finding methods used have remained the same. Whilst this gives some satisfaction, there are certainly no grounds for complacency in dealing with this disease. For instance—

- there were 82 notifications of children under the age of fifteen;
- the attendance for routine chest X-ray conducted by the Mass Surveys Division has been disappointing, and approximately only 25 per cent. of the people aged 13 years and over in areas visited have taken advantage of this service;
- there is a lack of co-operation in treatment and conduct by certain known patients who have active disease and must be constituting a risk of infection to their contacts;
- of all new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis notified, 45 per cent. presented with the disease in a moderately or far advanced stage. Frequently there was a long history of ill-health and absence of previous chest X-rays.

Whilst these situations continue to exist, one cannot feel confident of gaining tuberculosis control in Victoria.

TUBERCULOSIS (ALL FORMS).

| Year. | Population. | Notifications. | Rate per 100,000 | Deaths. | Rate per 100,000 |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|---------|------------------|
| 1952 | 2,366,719 | 1,013 | 42.80 | 346 | 14.62 |
| 1953 | 2,416,035 | 1,121 | 46.40 | 279 | 11.55 |
| 1954 | 2,477,986 | 1,143 | 46.13 | 245 | 9.89 |
| 1955 | 2,546,332 | 974 | 38.25 | 222 | 8.72 |
| 1956 | 2,618,112 | 885 | 33.80 | 194 | 7.41 |
| 1957 | 2,680,555 | 813 | 30.33 | 145 | 5.41 |
| 1958 | 2,745,165 | 776 | 28.27 | 145 | 5.28 |
| 1959 | 2,811,429 | 862 | 30.66 | 153 | 5.44 |
| 1960 | 2,888,290 | 863 | 29.88 | 138 | 4.78 |
| 1961 | 2,949,354 | 698 | 23.67 | 127 | 4.31 |

Population figures from 1954 revised as a result of 1961 Census.

MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY.

Mortality.

Of the 127 death certificates including tuberculosis as a cause of death, only 27 listed tuberculosis as the prime cause of death. In a small number, although the prime cause of death was not tuberculosis, active tuberculosis was still present at the time.

DEATH CERTIFICATES.

| | Male. | Female. | Total. | Average age at Death. | Rate per 100,000 |
|----------------------------|-------|---------|--------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Pulmonary T.B. | 84 | 32 | 116 | 62 years } } | 4.31 |
| Non-Pulmonary T.B. | 7 | 4 | 11 | | |
| Total | 91 | 36 | 127 | | |

Morbidity.

The total notifications of new cases of tuberculosis in all forms were 698 which represents a rate of 23.67 per 100,000. Of these, 111 patients were non-pulmonary.

NOTIFICATIONS.

| Age Groups. | Pulmonary. | | | Non-Pulmonary. | | | Total all Forms. |
|-----------------------|------------|---------|--------|----------------|---------|--------|------------------|
| | Male. | Female. | Total. | Male. | Female. | Total. | |
| 0-14 | 20 | 16 | 36 | 20 | 26 | 46 | 82 |
| 15-24 | 29 | 32 | 61 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 71 |
| 25-34 | 58 | 38 | 96 | 3 | 13 | 16 | 112 |
| 35-59 | 198 | 63 | 261 | 11 | 23 | 34 | 295 |
| 60 and over | 107 | 22 | 129 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 134 |
| Total | 412 | 171 | 583 | 40 | 71 | 111 | 694 |

* 4 Pulmonary Cases Unstaged.

Attention is drawn to the large proportion of notifications that occur in males over 35 years of age.

Of the patients reported with non-pulmonary tuberculosis, there were 41 infected with tuberculosis of the lymph glands. For the past two years this figure has been higher than usual. Bacteriological examinations have established that the cause of some of these cases of glandular disease results from an atypical acid fast organism (referred to as "anonymous Mycobacteria") similar to tuberculosis but not identical. This is the first time that these organisms have been found to produce disease reported in this State in such numbers. Only one case of pulmonary tuberculosis was found to have "anonymous Mycobacteria". The problem with this organism has been known to exist in Queensland and Western Australia for some years.

Bovine tuberculosis, the infection of which is through food and not respiratory means, now appears to be non-existent in Victoria the last known case being reported in 1950.

Tuberculin Rates.

Routine tuberculin (Mantoux) testing of school children aged 10 years and over has shown a natural positive reactor rate of 4.12 per cent. in the metropolitan area and 3.13 per cent. in country municipalities. This is a low rate. However, the rate of decline from 7.5 per cent in 1954 is not marked.

Tuberculosis Allowance.

Review of the numbers of people receiving Tuberculosis Allowance during the years 1951-1961 is shown. Of the 406 patients receiving the allowance at 31st December, 1961, 71 per cent. were being paid for less than one year, 11 per cent. between one and two years and 18 per cent. for longer than two years.

| Year. | 1950 | 1952 | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960 | 1961 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| No. of Allowances .. | 1,840 | 2,039 | 1,302 | 1,121 | 793 | 582 | 495 | 444 | 406 |

Chest Clinics.

The services provided through clinics still continue to be in demand from doctors in private practice, from known patients and their contacts. Isoniazid prophylactic therapy for various groups of contacts and patients continues.

In the sphere of preventive work, surveys have been extended to more groups of people who have been known contacts of tuberculosis.

| | Attendances. | Number of X-rays taken. | Mantoux Tested. | B.C.G. Vaccinations. |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Central Chest Clinic | 44,108 | 33,336 | 4,371 | 2,551 |
| Prahran Chest Clinic | 7,722 | 8,285 | 946 | 244 |
| Bendigo Chest Clinic | 3,245 | 1,921 | 662 | 141 |
| Ballarat Chest Clinic | 1,588 | 860 | 92 | 56 |
| Geelong Chest Clinic | 3,463 | 3,243 | 562 | 100 |
| | 60,126 | 47,645 | 6,633 | 3,092 |

Clinics held in late afternoon and evening are still in great demand and provide a convenient service for a large number of people to attend for medical reviews without lost time for work.

The clinics held at Traralgon, Yallourn and Wonthaggi and those clinics attached to the Chalets in the country provide an essential service.

Sanatoria, Chalets and Hospitals.

Seven hundred and forty-four beds were available in the State for tuberculosis patients. Admissions to sanatoria and chalets and "approved" tuberculosis beds at hospitals numbers 1,132. These figures include 25 males and 26 females treated for non-pulmonary tuberculosis.

| Institutions. | Admissions. | Discharges. | Deaths. | Average length of stay in days. |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| Gresswell | Males 263 | 270 | 16 | 147 |
| Heatherton | Males 108 | 9 | 9 | 162 |
| | Females 195 | 200 | 6 | |
| Austin | Both sexes 358 | 357 | 5 | 75 |
| Country Chalets | Both sexes 208 | 192 | 11 | 164 |
| | Total 1,132 | 1,109 | 47 | |

A ward of 22 beds at Heatherton Sanatorium continues to be available to Prince Henry's Hospital for accommodation of female convalescent patients.

Two 24-bed wards at Mont Park Mental Hospital are functioning very satisfactorily and it is pleasing to note that the Mental Hygiene Authority have concentrated all cases of known active tuberculosis for treatment in these wards. The co-operation afforded by the Staff of the Mental Hygiene Authority is appreciated.

Treatment.

Treatment has continued along the lines established in recent years. The use of "second line" anti-tuberculosis drugs has been extended. It is encouraging to see that a number of patients who have had active infectious disease for many years have been readmitted to Sanatorium for treatment with these drugs and have become non-infectious. There are, however, a certain number of patients in this category who are unable to tolerate the side effects from these drugs or whose organisms have developed resistance to the drugs, and so treatment has failed.

Mantoux Testing and B.C.G. Vaccination in Schools.

This work consists of tuberculin skin testing of children and gives a sensitive incidence of the amount of tuberculosis infection in the community. School children eleven years and over are offered the test and those who at some period have been in contact with tuberculosis, show a positive reaction. These and their home contacts are advised to have chest X-rays. The negative re-actors are offered protection against tuberculosis with B.C.G. vaccine. The work continues to be well received and the consent rate of parents is still over 90 per cent. During the year 47,145 Mantoux tests were carried out and B.C.G. vaccination was administered to 40,044 children.

Mass X-ray Surveys.

During 1961, 405,913 persons attended the services provided by the Division of Mass X-ray Surveys, from whom 190 cases were referred for investigation as having active or possibly active tuberculosis, 1,562 were regarded as having healed or quiescent tuberculosis lesions, and 1,941 had abnormalities which were considered as non-tuberculous.

Persons granted Aged and Invalid Pensions during 1961 have been written to and invited to attend for routine chest X-ray. Of these, 2,844 were identified amongst those attending Mass X-ray Surveys, and 8 were found to have possibly active tuberculosis and 129 healed or quiescent disease. This relatively high incidence of tuberculosis is in keeping with the general findings that the incidence of tuberculosis continues at a high rate amongst the older adults, especially men.

Miniature X-ray Units for routine chest examinations have now been installed at the Alfred, Queen Victoria, St. Vincent's, and Box Hill Hospitals, in the metropolitan area.

Rehabilitation and Almoner.

The services provided by the Medical Rehabilitation Officer and the Almoner continue to be appreciated. Classes in English are still being conducted for patients at the Sanatoria. The Burge Estate continues to be the main source of funds for rehabilitation training.

Post-Graduate Training.

Training of Nursing Aides continued at the Sanatoria and ten received their certificates. Seven trained nurses completed the course in post-graduate tuberculosis training during the year.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT.

Infectious Hepatitis.

Notified cases of this disease for 1961 were 3,515 compared with 2,385 cases for the previous year. This represents the second highest incidence since infectious hepatitis became a notifiable disease in 1952, the highest occurring during 1955 when 3,776 cases were notified.

The situation in Victoria differs little from that occurring in other States, or for that matter in most countries in the world. It is of interest to note that the two peaks of incidence in the U.S.A. were in the years 1955 and 1961.

The disease is still mainly confined to children and young adults, and there does not appear to be any particular correlation between lack of efficient sewerage and incidence. Whilst isolated outbreaks occur due to contaminated food, water &c., the bulk of the cases are apparently person to person spread. It is common in situations such as new housing areas where there is a preponderance of young parents and young children.

The reported isolations of the virus in the U.S.A. with the hopes of a vaccine being evolved have not materially progressed over the past six months.

Diphtheria.

The reported incidence of diphtheria, only two cases during the year, is the lowest yet recorded in Victoria. It is only since 1944 that the annual number of cases has fallen below 1,000. This is largely a reflection of immunization and is a striking example of preventive medicine in a disease once a major threat to life now effectively controlled. However, the level of immunization must be maintained to ensure that the present satisfactory position continues.

Typhoid Fever.

A total of eleven cases was the highest since 1956. Several of these patients acquired their infection outside Australia or from carriers from other countries. Considering that this disease is endemic in certain countries, it is surprising the incidence has not markedly increased as a result of migration and the popularity of overseas travel.

Rubella-like Illnesses.

During the latter part of 1961 an outbreak of virus infections occurred in Melbourne, many of which were accompanied by a rubella like rash which posed a diagnostic problem. In view of the congenital defects associated with rubella in the early months of pregnancy, it was of considerable importance to decide whether these cases were a form of true rubella. Investigations by departmental officers and the virus laboratory at Fairfield Hospital showed that the majority of these cases were due to E.C.H.O. 9 virus.

Respiratory Infections.

There was an increase in the prevalence of whooping cough, 1,187 cases were notified which was the highest for three years.

A sharp outbreak of influenza due to Type B occurred towards the end of winter, mainly affecting the younger age groups. The Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) which was reported from Fairfield Hospital in the previous year has again been responsible for certain respiratory infections, mainly bronchiolitis in young children and infants. A small number of cases was caused by adenoviruses.

Venereal Diseases.

During the year 2,635 males and 538 females (total 3,173) attended the Government Clinic in Fitzroy.

The number of cases of gonorrhoea and syphilis seen at the Clinic in this period was as follows:—

| | Gonorrhoea. | Syphilis. |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| Men | 800 | 41 |
| Women | 231 | 6 |

Gonorrhoea notifications were about the same as in previous years but the cases of syphilis were fewer (1961 : men 80, women 19) even though the total number of new patients is of the same order (1961 : 2,937, 1962 : 3,173).

Leukaemia Survey.

The experience in collecting Leukaemia Blood Summary Case Histories on a voluntary basis from hospitals and medical practitioners during 1961 proved disappointing. Omissions in completing the questionnaire led to the rejection of 20 summaries out of the 79 submitted and the remaining 59 showed some deficiencies. Unsatisfactory statements regarding occupation in 9 cases, domicile in 6 and exposure to X-rays in 29 were instances of the incompleteness of the procedure in filling in the forms.

For this reason, a meeting of representatives of Metropolitan Hospitals, the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria and medical practitioners concerned with this work was held in December, 1961, to devise a uniform method for obtaining information on Leukaemias. Most hospitals preferred to be responsible for filling in the blood summaries initially with a

representative from the Health Department to take over the follow-up of the histories. The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Peter MacCallum Clinic and Repatriation Hospital, Heidelberg, elected to have the Health Department Medical Officer assume full responsibility and interview the patients himself.

Both systems are operating satisfactorily. For six months to the end of June, 1962, a total of 75 Blood Summaries had been completed on the first form, including ten (10) which had been finally completed (i.e., on the death of the patient). These figures do not include the Royal Children's Hospital where an independent arrangement exists.

Notification of Leukaemia has not been good; a total of 103 cases were notified during the year against an expected number of at least 180 cases. Several country areas have been incorporated in the scheme but the absence of notifications has proved a hindrance in the execution of the survey.

It is anticipated that a complete coverage of the State will be effected by the end of this year as the departmental medical representative makes further personal contacts.

DISTRIBUTION OF IMMUNIZING MATERIAL.

The total quantity and doses distributed during 1961-62 is as follows, figures for 1960-61 being shown for comparison:—

| Material. | 1960-61. | | 1961-62. | |
|--|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| | Quantity cc | Doses. | Quantity cc | Doses. |
| Salk Vaccine | 187,769 | 375,538 | 472,293 | 944,586 |
| Triple Antigen | 152,265 | 152,265 | 161,519 | 161,519 |
| Combined Diphtheria and Tetanus Toxoid | 37,473 | 74,946 | 36,286 | 72,572 |
| Purified Tetanus Toxoid | 18,733 | 37,466 | 17,540 | 35,080 |
| Smallpox Vaccine | .. | 22,199 | .. | 31,075 |
| Diphtheria Prophylactic (P.T.A.P.) | 1,890 | 5,040 | 2,127 | 5,672 |
| Schick Test Toxin | 388 | 1,940 | 923 | 4,615 |
| Quadruple Antigen (available only from March-September 1961) | 43,711 | 43,711 | 25,017 | 25,017 |

Inoculations.

Quadruple Vaccine.—This preparation was used in Victoria until supplies were exhausted. Objection to the use of this combination has been expressed mainly on the grounds that the pertussis component is administered too late to be of value.

It is suggested that triple antigen and Salk Vaccine used separately have practical advantages.

A more useful preparation than Quadruple Vaccine would be the combination of Salk Vaccine with Diphtheria and Tetanus Toxoids.

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY.

Examinations carried out in the laboratory during the year (Table I.) show a further reduction on last year's figures, although there was a considerable increase in the number of faecal cultures (enteric infections). Study of the table shows a steady drop over the past five years in the number of the examinations for diphtheria and streptococcal infections offset by an increase in serological work and faecal examinations. Bacterial enteritis, particularly in the very young, remains a major problem.

Salmonella.

The combined figures of isolations and cultures submitted for typing rose from 171 in 1960 to 210 in 1961. *Salm. typhi-murium* and *Salm. saint paul* showed a rise, whereas *Salm. bovis-morbificans* and *Salm. newport* were less common.

Three sporadic unrelated cases of *Salm. paratyphi B* occurred. Two strains of *Salm. derby* and one of *Salm. adelaide* were isolated from samples of sausages; one strain of *Salm. adelaide* from flies.

Typhoid.

Salm. typhi was isolated in the laboratory or sent from hospitals for phage typing from nine persons; three were symptom-less carriers.

Of the six patients involved one probably acquired his infection on an Italian ship en route to Australia, another whilst holidaying in Queensland. The source of infection of three boys attending a day school was traced to a woman who had a past history of typhoid in Rumania; an Italian child was a contact of her grandmother who was a carrier of the same phage type as the patient.

Another infection in a woman was diagnosed on clinical and serological grounds in the absence of isolating the organism. A New Australian woman who was a contact was found to be a carrier.

It is evident that undetected carriers are present in the community and that the routine search for a source in every new case of typhoid fever is worthwhile; the Vi agglutination test has proved particularly useful in this regard.

Several known typhoid carriers in mental institutions underwent cholecystectomy in an effort to clear up their infection. Serological and cultural follow-up have been disappointing to date. Possibly the nidus of infection may be higher up the biliary tree than the gall-bladder.

Shigella.

Bacillary dysentery continues to cause trouble in children's homes and institutions. In one mental institution *Sh. sonnei*, *dysenteriae* type 2 and *flexner* 4a are apparently deeply entrenched. Fortunately, these children do not appear to suffer more than a mild diarrhoea when infected with the current strains.

Sh. sonnei is by far the common species in the general community.

Amoebiasis.

One case of amoebiasis was detected.

Brucellosis.

The number of requests for Brucella agglutination tests has increased, probably because of the growing awareness of this disease among practitioners. It is not always possible to be certain of the diagnosis but serological findings indicate that more cases than ever have appeared.

TABLE I.—ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS 1957-1961.

| | 1957. | 1958. | 1959. | 1960. | 1961. |
|--------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| Diphtheria— | | | | | |
| Cultures | 3,796 | 3,771 | 2,892 | 2,975 | 2,472 |
| Animal inoculations | 45 | 10 | .. | 6 | 1 |
| Vincent's organisms | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Streptococcal Infection— | | | | | |
| Cultures | 4,037 | 4,984 | 4,072 | 3,783 | 3,442 |
| Grouping | 957 | 1,205 | 830 | 745 | 577 |
| Antistreptolysin titre | 751 | 713 | 976 | 722 | 819 |
| Enteric Infections— | | | | | |
| Cultures | } 3,307 | 4,556 | 3,524 | { 3,610 | 3,994 |
| Identifications | | | | | |
| Widal agglutinations | | | | | |
| Other Serology— | | | | | |
| Brucella | } 1,918 | 1,502 | 1,471 | { 780 | 822 |
| Glandular fever | | | | | |
| Typhus fever | | | | | |
| Toxoplasma | | | | | |
| Leptospira | | | | | |
| Anthrax antibodies | | | | | |
| Miscellaneous | | | | 41 | 25 |

TABLE I.—ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS 1957-1961.—*continued.*

| | 1957. | 1958. | 1959. | 1960. | 1961. |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| General— | | | | | |
| Cultures | 881 | 1,127 | 1,124 | 1,015 | 774 |
| Drug sensitivities | 2,769 | 4,163 | 3,709 | 2,766 | 2,604 |
| Gonorrhoea— | | | | | |
| Direct examination | 887 | 846 | 758 | 632 | 543 |
| Cultures | 3,558 | 2,852 | 1,597 | 1,741 | 659 |
| Trichomonas and Monilia | 40 | 41 | 21 | 19 | 32 |
| Medical Mycology— | | | | | |
| Microscopic and culture | .. | .. | 796 | 424 | 287 |
| Water— | | | | | |
| Bacteriological analyses | 224 | 264 | 224 | 247 | 336 |
| Research Projects— | | | | | |
| Brucella | .. | .. | 249 | 386 | 66 |
| | 23,178 | 26,039 | 22,244 | 21,816 | 19,138 |

CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

The Health Section of the State Laboratories has functioned satisfactorily throughout the past year. The number of samples analysed was approximately the same as for the previous year, namely, a little under 2,000. The bulk of these samples consisted of municipal food samples, the remainder including materials of widely varying natures. Approximately 13 per cent. of foodstuffs submitted failed to comply with Food and Drug Standards Regulations as compared with 14 per cent. in 1960-61.

On two occasions during the year the laboratory was called upon to analyse "umpire" samples after disputes had arisen during legal proceedings.

A summary of the year's work is given below.

Dairy Products.

Figures are as follows:—

| Food. | Number of Samples submitted. | Number not complying with Regulations. |
|----------------|------------------------------|--|
| Milk | 402 | 11 |
| Cream | 31 | Nil |
| Butter | 22 | 1 |
| Cheese | 13 | 1 |

Of the milk samples, 4 were deficient in fat only, 3 in total solids and fat, and 3 in solids not fat. The remaining sample, in addition to being deficient in total solids and fat, gave a freezing point higher than the prescribed standard. Both of the non-complying butter and cheese samples contained excessive moisture and insufficient fat.

Meat and Meat Products.

The over-all position has not changed to any great extent the position being as follows:—

| Food. | Number of Samples submitted. | Number not complying | Proportion not complying. | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| | | | 1961-62. | 1960-61. |
| Meat— | | | % | % |
| Fresh | 107 | 29 | 27 | 20 |
| Chopped | 275 | 60 | 22 | 26 |
| Manufactured | 36 | 8 | 25 | 13 |
| Canned | 5 | 1 | 20 | .. |
| Sausages and Sausage Meat | 354 | 58 | 16 | 17 |
| Tripe | 13 | 10 | 77 | 100 |
| Meat Pies | 4 | 1 | 25 | 53 |

Other Foods.

Excess preservative was found in samples of soft drink, cordial and flavoured syrup. Two samples of vanilla essence and one each of lemon essence, olive oil, brandy, and margarine failed to meet specifications.

The following cases of serious contamination were confirmed in the laboratory—

| <i>Food.</i> | <i>Contaminating Substance.</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bread | .. Cigarette butt |
| Bread | .. Rodent excreta |
| Bread roll | .. Rodent excreta |
| Butter | .. Cockroach leg |
| Milk | .. Rodent excreta |
| Polished rice | .. Larvae |

Coal Tar Dyes.

Non-permitted coal tar dyes were identified in samples of frankfurts and saveloys, and in two samples of imported smoked fish.

Miscellaneous.

Analyses of a fly spray and a detergent were carried out in connection with successful legal proceedings instituted by the Department for contraventions of the requirements of the Labelling of Poisonous Household Substances Regulations.

FOOD STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

The Food Standards Committee held two meetings during the year under review and considered a number of important matters relating to amendments to existing standards and the preparation of new standards for foods. In an endeavour to achieve uniform food standards throughout the Commonwealth, State Departments of Health have sponsored a Commonwealth Advisory Committee the function of which is to formulate uniform draft standards for ultimate adoption by all States. Much of the work of the Food Standards Committee has been concerned with consideration of these drafts, both in their initial and final forms. Over the past few years, a number of these have been incorporated in Victorian Food Standards Regulations.

During the past year, uniform drafts were discussed dealing with eleven types of food including meat and meat products, fish and fish products, food additives, vitamins and minerals and jelly crystals.

One matter that has concerned the committee arises from the increasing use of sulphur dioxide as a preservative in chopped meat, a practice forbidden by the Regulations.

At the request of the Commission, the Committee prepared a paper on the general question of the use of sulphur dioxide as a preservative in food and reported as follows:—

The Committee is satisfied that—

- (i) the use of sulphur dioxide, as permitted at present in the limited number of foods and at the concentrations specified in the regulations, does not involve any hazard to the consumer. In fact, in some circumstances the presence of sulphur renders a food less harmful than would be the case in its absence;
- (ii) with the present limited use of sulphur dioxide, there is no evidence to suggest that harm would come to the consumer if the amount present occasionally exceeded the maximum prescribed by regulation.

However, the Committee does not suggest that sulphur dioxide is a completely harmless substance which may be used indiscriminately in foods without control, particularly in fresh meats, which are a significant source of vitamin B1 in the ordinary diet. The Food Standards Committee considers that the present position in Victoria probably provides a reasonable balance between the use of this preservative and the prevention of food spoilage; there is no intention at present of widening the use of sulphur dioxide in foods and any suggestion to do so would require very careful consideration.

PROPRIETARY MEDICINES ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

From the coming into operation of the Proprietary Medicines legislation in February, 1948, until the 30th June, 1962, 12,691 applications for registration have been received and of this number 10,386 have been registered. Applications are being received at an average rate of 65 per month which is an increase of five per month on last year's figures.

During the past year, 29 meetings have been held which has made it possible for all applications to be finalized with a minimum of delay. A consolidation of the Register of Proprietary Medicines was published during the year together with a consolidation of the Proprietary Medicines Regulations.

THE HOME HELP SERVICE.

The 1961-62 Budget provided for increases in the wage ceiling for subsidy purposes payable to home helps employed by Municipal Councils, the increase to date from 1st October, 1961. As a result the interest of many country municipalities not conducting services was aroused and a number have already instituted services or are considering doing so.

During the last twelve months there has been an increase in the number of householders given home help assistance, an increase due not only to the additional services operating but to a larger number of elderly persons assisted by the established services. However, there are still a large number of Councils not providing this type of assistance and others providing only very limited help. This frequently means that elderly patients must be retained in hospital or their health declines and they must seek institutional care.

The following subsidies were granted during the year:—

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----|-------------------|-----|--|-------------------|-----|--|----------------|-----|
| Maintenance subsidies for new services | 16 | | | | | | | | | |
| Special grants for individual cases | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Total number of special grants for private transport (including five upward revisions and one non-continuing grant) .. | 17 | | | | | | | | | |
| Total number of Councils granted subsidies for Home Help Services | 131 | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of services at present operating | 118 | | | | | | | | | |
| Home Helps engaged 1,090 | <table border="0" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">{</td> <td>Full time</td> <td>310</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Part time</td> <td>436</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Hourly</td> <td>344</td> </tr> </table> | { | Full time | 310 | | Part time | 436 | | Hourly | 344 |
| { | Full time | 310 | | | | | | | | |
| | Part time | 436 | | | | | | | | |
| | Hourly | 344 | | | | | | | | |
| Total number of householders assisted for six months period ending 31st December, 1961 | 6,856 | | | | | | | | | |
| (27 per cent of the above cases were elderly). | | | | | | | | | | |
| A further 161 householders applied for assistance during the six months period but none was available | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total cost to the Government for twelve months period .. | £215,693 | | | | | | | | | |

ELDERLY CITIZENS' CLUBS.

During the year, 14 Municipal Councils have applied for and been granted subsidies towards the cost of establishing or maintaining 23 new Elderly Citizens' Clubs. Also a number of Councils were granted additional capital grants or maintenance subsidies towards clubs for which a subsidy had already been granted.

The subsidies granted are as follows:—

| | | |
|--|---|---------|
| 22 Capital Grants .. | { 12 New Clubs, 10 additional in respect of existing clubs. | |
| 19 Maintenance Subsidies | { 11 New Clubs not granted capital subsidy. 8 also granted Capital (including 2 increased maintenance). | |
| Total number of Clubs now granted Capital and/or Maintenance Subsidies | | 97 |
| Total Capital Grants approved | | 83 |
| Total Maintenance Subsidies approved | | 70 |
| The Capital Expenditure for the twelve months period .. | | £30,215 |
| The Capital Commitments at end of period | | £58,836 |
| Maintenance Expenditure for twelve months | | £33,467 |
| Total Cost to Government for twelve months | | £63,682 |

The cost to the Government during the last twelve months dropped by £13,000 from the preceding 12 months. However, the balance of commitments increased by £25,101.

The present position regarding the subsidized clubs is as follows:—

53 Clubs are situated in the Metropolitan Area (including Frankston and Fern Tree Gully).

34 Clubs are situated in Country Towns.

61 Clubs are now operating in premises especially built or remodelled as clubs, whilst fourteen other clubs have received approval for Capital Grants towards the establishment of new premises.

Another fourteen clubs will probably seek Capital Grants through their Municipal Councils within the next five years. The remaining eight clubs have satisfactory accommodation and a number of these have received small Capital Grants towards the cost of furniture and equipment.

The facilities offered by the clubs vary greatly and may include not only recreational facilities but meal services, foot clinics, handicraft classes, libraries and bathing facilities.

The majority of the clubs operating in their own club premises arrange for the rooms to be open on at least 3 days each week.

The number of clubs providing hot midday meal services has increased to 26. Some of these clubs serve meals at the club and conduct a "Meals on Wheels" service.

To stimulate interest in the Home Help Service and in Elderly Citizens Clubs, the Departmental Adviser Community Welfare Services, has visited many municipalities throughout the State. This involved inspections of Elderly Citizens' Clubs (whether subsidized or not) and discussions with municipal officers.

During the last twelve months:—

97 Country Municipalities were visited; 64 visits were made to Councils, Clubs or Home Help organizers in the Metropolitan Area; and 43 meetings were attended (an address given to 25).

INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE DIVISION.

During the first six months of the year the extensive testing program for phosphine gas at the Grain Elevators Board wheat terminal at Geelong was continued. As a part of this program, the Laboratory in conjunction with the Defence Standards Laboratories and the State Laboratories produced and calibrated a standard colour-chart for use in the determination of phosphine in air. A technique was also developed for the production of satisfactory test-paper which has allowed the easy application of the field test on a large scale.

At the request of shipowners, an investigation was made into the air supply of the supplied-air respirators used by wharf labourers when loading bulk wheat. This necessitated the development of a special instrument to measure the air supply to respirators.

NOISE.

Following a survey done in 1957, work in this field has been mainly confined to general education and a small number of noise hazard assessments made at the request of interested parties.

However, during the year certain Unions have become much more interested in the compensation aspect of industrial deafness and it is anticipated that as this interest becomes more widespread, the demands on the services of the Division in this field will increase considerably.

BENZENE AND OTHER SOLVENTS.

Amongst the solvents, benzene continues to cause the most concern. However, inspections have shown that industry is complying satisfactorily with the Benzene Regulations and the trend away from the use of benzene in industry is continuing.

The Amending Benzene Regulations 1962 were gazetted in May of this year to allow a special label for motor racing fuel containing more than twenty per cent. of benzene.

ORGANIC PHOSPHATE PESTICIDE.

In the past the Division has been handicapped in dealing with the problem of organic phosphate poisoning by the inability to make determinations of the cholinesterase content of blood. Since early this year equipment has been available to enable the Division to perform these determinations and the number done has already amounted to over 200.

During the summer period a survey was made in a fruit growing district and also an investigation of cases of poisoning occurring amongst employees of a firm engaged in packaging organic phosphates.

Medical practitioners both in hospital and private practice are taking advantage of the Division's cholinesterase determination service to assist them in the diagnosis of cases of poisoning.

In conjunction with the Mental Hygiene Authority, the Division proposes to investigate the possible relationship between exposure to organic phosphate and certain types of mental disorder and is at present engaged on the task of collecting data on the consumption of these pesticides on a geographical basis.

RADIATION.

The numbers of license issued to various sections of the community with respect to the possession and use of irradiating apparatus and radio-actives substances under the Irradiating Apparatus and Radioactive Substances Regulations for the period covered by the Report are as follows:—

Irradiating Apparatus—

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Medical | 361 |
| Dental | 363 |
| Industrial | 29 |
| Chiropractor | 32 |
| Chiropodist | 1 |
| Educational | 8 |
| Veterinary | 3 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 797 |
| | <hr/> |

Radioactive Substances—

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Medical | 52 |
| Industrial | 94 |
| Educational | 29 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 175 |
| | <hr/> |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| <i>Transport</i> | 6 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | 978 |
| | <hr/> |

On the industrial side, opportunity has been taken at the time of application for a licence to acquaint the prospective licensee of the pertinent features of the Regulations and to make appropriate recommendations with respect to design, shielding, technique, &c. In this field the Division has been fortunate in being able to call upon the expert assistance made available by both the Commonwealth X-ray and Radium Laboratory and the Defence Standards Laboratories.

The use by industry of radio-active substances is increasing and is likely to receive an impetus from the commercial activities of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission.

Under the Regulations, film badge reports from approximately 120 radiation workers have been forwarded per medium of the Commonwealth X-ray and Radium Laboratory. In a few cases the reports have indicated a somewhat excessive dose and whenever this has occurred the case has been thoroughly investigated.

This has resulted in improved design or more rigid safety precautions being adopted.

During the year an accident occurred to a transport vehicle carrying a radioactive substance, but it was determined by careful investigation that no person received any significant dose of radiation as a result.

In December, the *Health (Dangerous Substances) Act, 1961*, was enacted and this has the effect of greatly extending the powers to make regulations respecting irradiating apparatus and radio-active substances. The Division is satisfied that in general the requirements of the Regulations are being satisfactorily observed.

LEAD.

During the year 4,866 medical reports concerning 1,540 lead workers made in pursuance of the Lead Workers (Medical Examination) Regulations were received.

Of these 47 were classified as having absorbed lead in amounts sufficient to warrant temporary removal from the lead hazard.

Of the associated stippled cell counts, 2,157 were carried out in our own laboratory.

The investigation of suspected cases of lead poisoning and of possible lead hazards in industry involved the performance of a further 191 stippled cell counts as well as the following estimations :—

352 for urinary porphyrin
286 for urinary lead
18 for atmospheric lead

BOARDING HOUSE REGULATIONS.

As a result of representations made to the Commission concerning the need for reduced standards of accommodation in respect of boarding houses situated in alpine areas the Commission resolved that the regulations be amended to permit more realistic standards for boarding houses in these situations, limiting the application to areas 4,200 feet above sea level.

One of the principal objections to the present regulations is the requirement that buildings of two-story construction must be of incombustible materials; the other more onerous requirement was that requiring 60 sq. ft. of floor area and 600 cubic feet of floor space per inmate. The Commission will consider proposed amendments at an early date.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The number of approvals of plans and specifications of public buildings increased to 1,080; the figure for new buildings was 652 and for alterations and additions 428. Included in these were 140 new pre-school and infant welfare centres and 12 elderly citizens' clubs. Day inspections of public buildings were 5,128 for the year and during public occupation 694. This latter figure was a reduction on the figure for the previous year. No instance of overcrowding of a picture theatre was reported, attendances generally being low.

SEWERAGE.

Three new provincial sewerage schemes commenced operation during the year, namely Corryong, Kaniva and Sale. It is expected that an additional eight schemes will commence operations during the next twelve months. Site inspections required for consideration of applications for the establishment of new sewerage authorities numbered eight and in connection with authorities constituted some years previously and desiring an amended treatment scheme numbered five.

SEPTIC TANK INSTALLATIONS.

Plans examined for new septic tank installations were again high at 310. This figure comprises in the main septic tank installations in public buildings and by municipal councils. Inspection of completed installations numbered 161. Included in the new installations approved were mass installations at three provincial towns, viz., Peshurst, Port Franklin and Port Albert.

STREAM POLLUTION.

Approvals for the disposal of trade waste from new industries to streams, issued by the Commission pursuant to Section 82 of the Health Act, numbered fourteen and there were 23 inspections conducted in connection with reports of stream pollution.

SWIMMING POOLS AND WATER SUPPLY.

The number of inspections carried out in connection with provincial water supply installations was 48. These inspections are made in accordance with an agreement with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission that a qualified chemist of the Department supervise the management of treatment installation with particular reference to the chlorination equipment. During the year seven additional supplies were provided with satisfactory plant for chlorination of the water. One hundred and sixty-four inspections of swimming pools were made during the year, the great majority of the pools inspected being municipal undertakings. As a result of the advice given most of the swimming pool managers now endeavour to use break point chlorination effectively. The Commission's recommendations on testing procedures and safety precautions at swimming pools have been adopted by the Local Government Department as conditions of subsidy for municipal swimming pools.

AIR POLLUTION.

The Air Pollution Survey undertaken by the Clean Air Section now includes 42 deposit gauge stations; Anglesea (2), Brunswick (2), Collingwood (1) and Richmond (1) were added during the last twelve months. Three further smoke density and sulphur dioxide monitors were installed in South Melbourne, Sunshine and Port Melbourne, making a total of eight.

Preliminary discussions with owners of industrial premises prior to installation of new plant are becoming common and considerable time is being taken up in dealing with queries by industry on air pollution control methods and equipment.

Complaint investigation is increasingly being assisted by the use of high volume sampling and stack testing equipment and other instrumental methods. During the year officers of this Section attended in Sydney the Clean Air Conference and a Symposium on "Oil Fuels and their Utilization" and also took part and assisted in a one week's Course on "Combating Air Pollution in Industry" at the University of Melbourne.

SEWER COLLAPSE—MILDURA CITY.

The collapse of two 15-inch sewer mains in Mildura during November (1961) posed some problems from both engineering and public health viewpoints. One-third of the city's sewage was cut off from the treatment works.

Emergency measures consisted of running the sewage over a 5-acre grassed paddock, temporary chlorination of the effluent and the damming up of approximately 1 million gallons of raw sewage in a storm water drain.

The levels of chlorination in the water supplies at Merbein 7 miles downstream and Mildura less than 1 mile downstream, were raised to cope with 75,000 gallons of "treated" effluent from the paddock which found its way into the River Murray.

A close check on infectious diseases transmitted by the gastro-intestinal route failed to reveal any increased incidence in the Mildura-Merbein areas. It was fortunate that a large volume of water was flowing in the river at the time thereby increasing the dilution factor.

The breakdown was the result of corrosion of the concrete due to sewer gases under pressure. The damaged sections have been replaced.

GENERAL ITEMS.

Diphtheria.

The State of Victoria is now practically free from diphtheria. As a consequence some apprehension arose on the arrival in Melbourne by ship (*Patris*) of a child with severe diphtheria which proved fatal. It was not unlikely that other passengers especially children disembarking from the ship may have contracted the same infection.

Warning letters were sent to all passengers who disembarked in Melbourne according to the addresses given on the ships passenger list, but, between 30 and 40 letters were returned because the address was incorrect.

The above experience indicates the difficulty which may confront health officers engaged in the search for say, cholera or smallpox contacts.

The child was Australian born but not immunized against diphtheria.

Leper Cases from Nauru and Ocean Island.

Two cases of leprosy from Ocean Island have been treated in the Exotic Diseases Block at Fairfield. The patients both men, were employed for short periods with the British Phosphate Commission. The circumstances surrounding the notification of these cases have been brought to the notice of the Commonwealth Authorities.

Fresh Egg Pulp.

This material is frequently found to contain Salmonella organisms. It is understood that the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry samples bulk consignments for export. This check for contamination should be extended to the local trade unless the pulp is pasteurized.

Vending Machines.

The Commission has sought the introduction of legislation to control the sale of food from automatic vending machines.

It would be appropriate for the local municipal authority to licence the operator to enable the installation of these machines on approved sites.

LEGISLATION.

During the year, the following legislation was given Royal Assent:—

Health (Dangerous Substances) Act 1961 (No. 6818).

This Act extends the provisions of Division 2 of Part V. of the *Health Act 1958* relating to Dangerous Trades to include Dangerous Substances.

Health (Tattooing) Act 1962 (No. 6878).

This Act extends the regulation making powers of the *Health Act 1958* to include establishments where tattooing is performed.

Health (Sampling) Act 1962 (No. 6883).

This Act provides for an alternative sampling procedure in the case of any food, drug or substance and its provisions will shortly be extended by proclamation to include meat pies.

Cemeteries Act 1959 (No. 6530).

This Act sets out the procedure to be adopted in applications for cremation and requires the licensed Medical practitioner authorizing a cremation to view the remains of the deceased.

The following regulations were also approved:—

Amending Food and Drug Standards Regulations 1961 (No. 1).

These regulations amend the requirements which apply to poison in or on food and the marketing of gelatine, edible fats and oils and cocoa and cocoa products.

Amending Food and Drug Standards Regulations 1962 (No. 1).

These regulations as well as introducing provisions for the use of artificial sweetening substances other than a Saccharide extend the requirements which apply to the marketing of fish and fish products.

Amending Infectious Diseases Regulations 1961 (No. 2).

These regulations amend the exclusion table for patients and contacts in respect of scabies, ringworm and pediculosis (head lice).

Clean Air Regulations 1961 (No. 2).

These regulations fix the daily fee in respect of the attendance of members at meetings of the Clean Air Committee and Sub-committee and the travelling expenses to be paid to the member appointed on the nomination of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization when visiting Victoria for meetings.

Amending Public Building Regulations 1962.

These regulations permit the voluntary attendance of a second licensed cinematograph operator or an approved trainee in the projection cabin of a picture theatre whereas the original regulations required his compulsory attendance.

Amending Benzene Regulations 1962.

These regulations extend the labelling requirements to special motor racing fuel or liquids containing more than twenty parts per centum by weight of Benzene.

Amending Meat Supervision Regulations 1961 (No. 2).

These regulations provide for the rental to be paid by Councils for brands used for the branding of lamb which was made necessary by the coming into full operation of strip branding of lamb on 1st January, 1962.

Proprietary Medicines Regulations 1961.

These regulations authorize the Chairman of the Proprietary Medicines Advisory Committee to convene meetings of the Committee, fix the fees for attendance of members of the Committee at meetings and set out the procedure to be adopted in the registration of proprietary medicines and the fees to be paid.

Proclamations and Orders in Council.

Separate new Meat Areas were gazetted for the Town of Cohuna and the whole of the Shire of Winchelsea. Following the reconstitution of the former Shire of Frankston and Hastings to the Shire of Frankston and the Shire of Hastings, separate Meat Areas were proclaimed. The whole of the Shire of Werribee was brought into the Metropolitan Meat Area.

The offensive trades provisions of the Health Act (so far as those provisions are applicable to piggeries) were extended to the whole of the Shires of Ballan, Waranga, Stawell, and Arapiles.

The maximum fees for meat supervision which may be charged by municipalities were extended to include piece meat and edible offal.

In order to facilitate administration, the boundaries of the Health Areas were re-defined to provide for the transfer of the Shire of Leigh, formerly in the Western Health Area, to the North-Western Health Area.

An Order in Council was issued discontinuing burials in the Inverloch Public Cemetery and consent was granted to the trustees of the Williamstown and Wangaratta Public Cemeteries to borrow £30,000 and £2,000 respectively for developmental works.

Approval was granted to the Borough of Swan Hill to establish a Garbage Depot within the boundaries of the Shire of Swan Hill.

GENERAL.

During the period under review Mr. G. V. Stafford, a former Secretary to the Commission, retired as Secretary and Permanent Head of the Department of Health and Mr. G. W. Rogan, also a former Secretary of the Commission, was appointed as his successor.

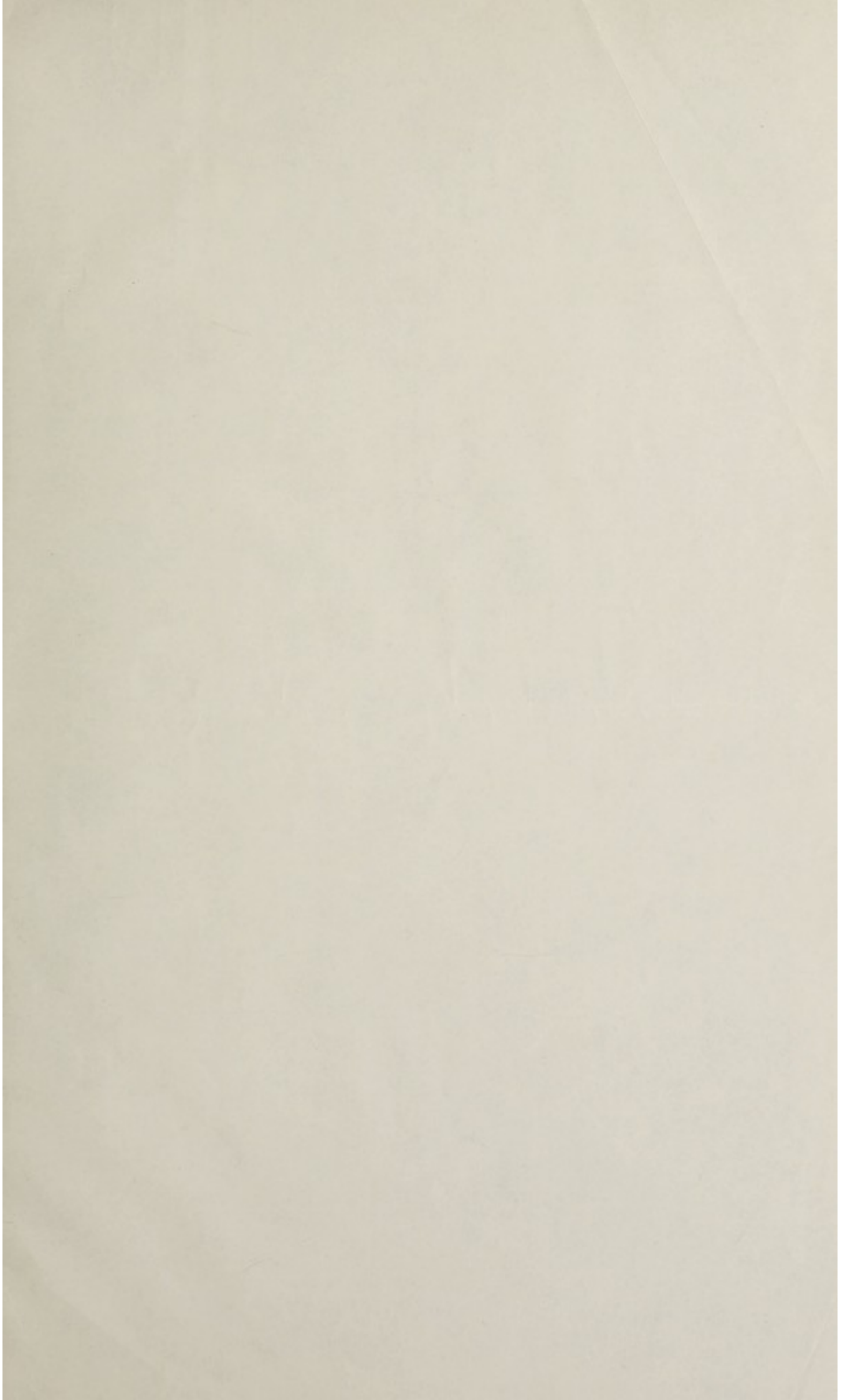
In November, 1961, Mr. C. E. B. Waldron, Senior Building Surveyor to the Department of Health, retired after 36 years service.

The Commission desires to place on record its appreciation of the long and loyal service of both Mr. Stafford and Mr. Waldron during their terms of office with the Department of Health.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|
| KEVIN BRENNAN | } | Members of the Commission. |
| WALTER SUMMONS | | |
| FRANK J. CUTTS | | |
| A. S. THOMSON | | |
| T. R. FLOOD | | |
| H. McLORINAN | | |
| A. K. LINES | | |

A. T. GARDNER, Secretary,
Melbourne, 18th September, 1962.



GENERAL

During the period under review Mr. W. Y. Stafford, a former secretary to the Commission, acted as Secretary and Permanent Head of the Department of Health and Mr. G. W. Dunn, also a former Secretary of the Commission, was appointed as his successor.

In November, 1931, Mr. G. E. B. Wallton, Public Building Surveyor to the Department of Health, retired after 20 years service.

The Commission desires to place on record its appreciation of the long and loyal service of both Mr. Stafford and Mr. Wallton during their terms of office with the Department of Health.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

KURT HRENZAK
WALTER SUMMERS
FRANK J. JETS
A. J. THOMAS

Members of the Commission



A. J. GARDNER, Secretary