



GOVERNMENT GAZETTE,

PROVINCE OF TARANAKI,

NEW ZEALAND.

Published by Authority.

NEW PLYMOUTH, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 1860.

THE following letter from the Colonial Surgeon, to His Honor the Superintendent, is published for general information.

J. C. RICHMOND,
Provincial Secretary.
New Plymouth, 20th June, 1860.

Colonial Hospital,

New Plymouth, 18th June, 1860.

SIR,—Probably your Honor is aware that, with the exception of the year 1850, there has been no winter, since say that of 1847, in which some cases of typhus fever have not occurred within the bounds of this community. It is to be observed, however, that the disease has invariably manifested itself, not as an epidemic, but sporadically; and, generally, of so mild, though lingering a stamp, that, of the several individuals attacked, from the above noted period to the present date, four cases only are recorded in our bills of mortality, two of which have been registered within the last month, and I may add that two or three other members of the same family, now labouring under the disease, are, it is apprehended, not unlikely to fall victims also.

Hitherto, nothing of a contagious character has been traced to account for the various outbreaks of the disease here; though at its earliest recognised epoch it was alleged to have been introduced by the arrival of a young gentleman from Auckland, at which place the same type of fever occurs, in scattered cases, every winter.

Before going farther I would premise that eleven years ago I took considerable pains to investigate as to the promoting cause of this fever in our settlement; and found what farther annual experience and observation have most satisfactorily confirmed, that, not only had it never progressed as a contagious malady would, but on no occasion, had it ever developed itself than in those houses where free perflation betwixt the ground and the timber flooring was altogether, or even, in some instances, only partially obstructed.

Such, then, is the important fact that, as above intimated, I have never yet seen a case of the disease, whether in the town, or its adjacencies, where an *uninterrupted* current of air passes betwixt the ground and the timbers and flooring—and hence the explication why the fever in question has

merely dotted here and there, and never yet assumed the indiscriminate spread of an epidemic among us.

The cause, then, is not only local, but in a manner is of domestic production—to wit—a *malaria* proceeding, I believe, from the moist rotting, or dry decaying of the timbers of dwellings circumstanced as I have stated; and not improbably strengthened in the degree of its poisoning influence by the oozing of indoor soil emanations also.

The first of these presumed causes I have seen demonstrated, in fever invaded habitations, repeatedly, or since my attention was first drawn to the subject; but in none more remarkably than in that cottage recently occupied by Richard Foreman, whose case, indeed, has been mainly the motive of my now addressing you. In consequence of our war troubles he abandoned his farm at Tataraimaka upwards of three months ago, and with his family—eleven in all, came into town and occupied a cottage, situated in a low district thereof, on the right bank of the Mangotuku stream. The cottage is built of sawn timber, but on the plan which I complain of; and though it may not be so old an erection as it looks to be, yet the wood, in several places, is in the state of honeycomb rottenness, and the basement, all around, is carefully closed up by turf and earth against the admission of fresh air. Moreover, it is considerably sheltered from our prevailing winds by the high land of the opposite bank of the stream; and, altogether, the site, in a health point of view, cannot be regarded as favorable, particularly in the present undrained state of the ground. But not to occupy much more of your Honor's time and attention, I would beg to recommend that the cottage, which, no doubt, has been the cause of so much sickness, be not again inhabited until thoroughly and sanitarily modified, by being disencumbered of all decayed and decaying timber, and so elevated from the ground as to allow the free transmission of air betwixt that and the floor.

In conclusion, I would remark that the cause of this afflicting, and, as we have occasionally to witness, fatal disease, is easily obviated. But, hitherto, *malaria*—in plain English, fever-exciting, or health-poisoning effluvia emitted from decaying timber, as also other innocuously-seeming terrestrial exhalations, is a doctrine, not like that of contagion, readily comprehensible by the meanest mental capacity, but requiring research into circumstances for its inductions, and a careful consideration besides. Such, at least, my experience testifies; for though my Report on the sub-

ject has been before the public, in printed form, for upwards of the last ten years; and, that, on all our fever occasions, I have verbally drawn attention to the preventive means stated, yet I am not aware that I have succeeded, even once, in persuading any one of the really concerned, to attend practically to the suggestion. It appears to me, therefore, that nothing short of inculcating coercively is applicable; say by an exertion of your Honor's authority, or by legislative enactment.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

P. WILSON,

Col. Surgeon and Health Officer.

His Honor

The Superintendent,

New Plymouth.

TENDERS FOR MEAT.

TENDERS will be received at this office until Wednesday, the 27th instant, at noon, from persons willing to contract with the Provincial Government for the supply of Meat during the two months commencing 1st July next. Further particulars may be obtained on application.

G. CUTFIELD,

Superintendent.

Superintendent's Office,

18th June, 1860.

TENDERS FOR CARTING.

TENDERS will be received at this office until SATURDAY next, the 23rd instant, at noon, for carting SHINGLE from the beach and depositing the same on the town footpaths. Particulars may be had at this office.

J. C. RICHMOND,

Provincial Secretary.

Provincial Secretary's Office,

New Plymouth, 20th June, 1860.

CUSTOMS' SALE.

THE following Goods will be sold by Public Auction on FRIDAY, the 29th day of June, at noon, for Duty and Warehouse Rent, under clause 89 of the Customs' Regulation Act of 1858, unless cleared for Home Consumption or Exportation previous to the above date:—

K B 37.—1 Quarter Cask Old Tom (sweetened spirits), ex Esther, J. Blair, @ Wellington, Warehoused 18th May, 1857.

W. LEECH,

Collector.

Custom House,

New Plymouth, 23rd May, 1860.