

1901.
NEW ZEALAND.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS OF THE COLONY

(REPORT ON THE), BY THE INSPECTOR OF HOSPITALS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The INSPECTOR of HOSPITALS and CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS to the Hon. the MINISTER of
EDUCATION.

SIR,—

Charitable Aid.

10th June, 1901.

The past year presents no new feature in regard to charitable-aid administration. The country is prosperous, work of various kinds not difficult to obtain; and these facts, together with the reduction effected by old-age pensions, has reduced the amount distributed in outdoor relief from £50,850 in 1899 to £42,181 for year ending 31st March, 1901.

Speaking generally, local Boards and their secretaries are doing their best to keep down the outdoor relief that leads to permanent pauperism. The Wellington Benevolent Trustees have shown themselves progressive during the past two years. They have restricted a too lavish outdoor relief and improved the quality of the rations given. In 1899 their expenditure on out-relief was £5,664; in the year ending 31st March, 1901, it was £3,968. The Dunedin Benevolent Society changes not; its policy is conservative. Outdoor rations are supplied on the contract system. It is the only large city where a woman visitor is not employed, although experience teaches us how advantageous both to ratepayer and to relief applicant is a careful investigation of cases by the right sort of woman. The expenditure of this society on outdoor relief in 1900 was £5,715; this year it is £5,831.

The remedy for the disease of pauperisation rests solely with citizens. Government has no power over relief-distributing bodies. In the case of "separate institutions," such as benevolent societies and some of our hospitals, the Charitable Aid Board or Hospital Board of the district has merely to provide the money required by the separate institution and claim Government subsidy of pound for pound on rates collected. This amount is then placed in the hands of the committee of the separate institution, and neither the central Government—which furnishes half the money—nor the District Board have any power to check wastefulness or mismanagement. It rests, therefore, with the people to choose wise and humane men and women, having some knowledge of social needs, to act as their representatives on local administrative bodies. As I have stated in former reports, outdoor relief should be a local charge unsupported by Government subsidy, whilst to counterbalance this Government could take over such proportion as Parliament might fix of the maintenance of the institutions. Tables of statistics in regard to outdoor relief will be found on page 35 of this report.

The institutions to provide indoor relief to aged and destitute persons attain a fair average of excellence. The Caversham Home (Dunedin) and the Costley Home (Auckland) are fine buildings, each containing over two hundred inmates. More comfort in the way of furnishing the rooms and wards is to be desired. Both these institutions, as I have frequently pointed out, are situated on parcels of land much too small, and at no very distant date they must be removed, and the money spent on building them lost. I am tired of pointing out how short sighted has been the