

1907.  
NEW ZEALAND

# MENTAL HOSPITALS OF THE COLONY

(REPORT ON) FOR 1906.

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

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF MENTAL HOSPITALS to the Hon. the MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

SIR,—

Wellington, 20th July, 1907.

I have the honour to lay before you the statutory report on the mental hospitals of the colony for the year ended on the 31st December, 1906. To bring the information up to date, a brief reference is made where necessary to subsequent events of importance.

The period covered by the main report is determined by the statistical year recognised in the United Kingdom and other countries, because, after making due allowance for many sources of error (not the least of which may be found in our relatively small numbers), a critical comparison of our statistics with those of the parent stock is sufficiently important to outweigh the convenience of a financial year ending the 31st March, or, for parliamentary purposes, of a July-to-June year.

It has also been the custom to compare the statistics of the year reported on with those of past periods, and on this occasion I propose to deal more particularly with the changes of the last twenty-one years, from the time that the late Dr. MacGregor, then Professor of Mental Science in the University of Otago, relinquished one distinguished career to enter upon another to the date of his death at the end of last year.

It will be noted from the expansion of the Department administering the Lunatics Act between these years that the time had come for its cleavage from that administering the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act and its allies. The Departments had grown almost imperceptibly, and their responsibilities received increments without apparently burdening the broad shoulders accustomed to the weight; but these responsibilities, once laid down, were wisely deemed too heavy for a single load. The late Inspector-General was no ordinary man: his mind, as massive as his frame, his nobility of thought, his geniality, his forcefulness in action, made up a personality which, I believe, has left its mark on the Civil Service of the colony. To the Department he bequeathed a part of himself, a tradition of justice, of courage to do what is right without the thought of applause or blame, and of a righteous regard for the public purse.

I trust it may be my lot, as it shall be my endeavour, to maintain that tradition, and to justify the confidence placed in me when appointed to succeed my honoured chief.

It will be seen by referring to the statistical tables in the Appendix that the number of registered insane persons on the 31st December, 1906, was 3,206—males 1,900, females 1,306—being an increase of 94—males 64, females 30—over the previous year. Registered insane persons are those who are officially known to the Department, being placed on its register, and only to such do the statistics refer. At the end of the year they were distributed as follows:—

|                                        | Males. | Females. | Total. |
|----------------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| Auckland                               | 406    | 269      | 675    |
| Christchurch                           | 276    | 253      | 529    |
| Dunedin (Seacliff)                     | 477    | 277      | 754    |
| Hokitika                               | 127    | 39       | 166    |
| Nelson                                 | 91     | 59       | 150    |
| Porirua                                | 342    | 280      | 622    |
| Wellington                             | 159    | 109      | 268    |
| Ashburn Hall (private mental hospital) | 22     | 20       | 42     |
|                                        | 1,900  | 1,306    | 3,206  |

Owing to the accommodation at particular mental hospitals becoming taxed by the larger admission-rate, or the smaller death and discharge rate, in some districts there has been an adjustment by transfer to hospitals having accommodation available. With the added residuum