

REPORT.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS AND CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER to the Hon. the MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HOSPITALS, AND CHARITABLE AID.

Department of Public Health, Hospitals, and Charitable Aid,

SIR,—

Wellington, 3rd September, 1914.

I have the honour, in the absence of Dr. Valintine, Inspector-General and Chief Health Officer, to lay before you the annual report of the Department for the year ending 31st March, 1914.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The past year has been a somewhat eventful one in the history of the Department, owing to the epidemic of smallpox which broke out amongst the Maoris north of Auckland in May, 1913, and which extended to Marsden, Kaipara, Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Thames, and Waikato. Further particulars of the epidemic will be found in the appendices to the report of the District Health Officer, Auckland. It is satisfactory to note that no case of the disease has been notified since the 5th April, 1914. As a continuing precaution three specially appointed Medical Officers have been engaged in patrolling and vaccinating in the lately infected districts, and will continue to do so during the ensuing winter.

Smallpox excepted, the general health of the Dominion has been good. The general death-rate is 9·47, as against 8·87 last year. The infantile-mortality rate for New Zealand was 59 deaths per 1,000 births, an increase upon that of the two previous years. The following table shows the rates of infantile mortality in New Zealand and four chief centres each year 1903–1913.

Number of Deaths per 1,000 Births.

Year.	New Zealand.	Auckland and Suburban Boroughs.	Wellington and Suburban Boroughs.	Christchurch and Suburban Boroughs.	Dunedin and Suburban Boroughs.
1903	81·08	121·48	92·76	100·52	62·30
1904	70·98	70·12	95·33	102·96	93·02
1905	67·52	91·52	96·21	88·99	67·13
1906	62·10	85·80	71·88	74·37	72·60
1907	88·78	97·19	117·80	126·16	95·36
1908	67·88	81·87	81·67	67·82	74·54
1909	61·60	61·85	84·21	62·78	48·52
1910	67·73	79·02	84·59	69·40	79·08
1911	56·31	63·02	73·36	62·90	43·42
1912	51·22	56·95	61·32	60·03	38·11
1913	59·17	80·81	60·23	63·49	73·42

Further particulars with regard to the vital statistics of the Dominion are attached, through the courtesy of the Government Statistician, as an appendix to this report.

The following table shows the death-rates for the more prevalent infectious diseases per 10,000 of the population :—

					Proportion of 10,000 of Mean Population.				
					1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.
Enteric	..	..	..	..	0·57	0·62	0·66	0·44	0·56
Scarlet fever ..	..	..	..	..	0·27	0·13	0·09	0·07	0·10
Diphtheria	..	..	..	..	0·66	0·76	0·61	0·44	0·57
Phthisis	..	..	..	..	6·05	5·54	5·28	5·04	5·41
Other forms of tuberculosis ..	..	..	..	..	2·18	1·82	1·99	1·85	2·19

The interest of the Hospital Boards and public regarding the care of sufferers from tubercular diseases, especially phthisis, and the precautionary measures against the spreading of such diseases augur well for a still more successful outcome being demonstrable in the future for the campaign that has been so well initiated generally throughout the Dominion.