

1916.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC HEALTH

AND

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE AID.

REPORT THEREON BY THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS AND CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER.

Presented in pursuance of Section 76 of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1909.

REPORT.

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

Department of Public Health, Hospitals, and Charitable Aid,

SIR,—

Wellington, 22nd June, 1916.

I have the honour to lay before you the report of the Department for the year ending 31st March, 1916. It is hardly necessary to say that the past year has been the most eventful one in the annals of the Department.

MILITARY HOSPITALS.

Early in the year, on the request of the Minister of Defence, the officers of the Department undertook new duties and responsibilities in connection with the sanitation of the Trentham and Featherston Military Camps, and the hospital accommodation of the sick from those camps as well as that of the sick and wounded from the seat of war. These additional duties took up a deal of the time of the officers of the various branches, which, as the staff had been seriously depleted by so many of its members being absent on active service, taxed the resources of the Department to the utmost. Happily, however, the Department rose to the occasion, and I cannot speak too highly of the manner in which the officers of all branches embarked on their new duties and the cheerfulness with which they worked after office hours to maintain the credit of their Department. There is no need to recapitulate the stress that arose at Trentham Camp in the early days of June last and the circumstances that led to my being appointed Director of Military Hospitals. That matter was dealt with by the Royal Commission which the Government saw fit to set up to report on the question. To the military capacity referred to a great deal of time had to be given until the arrival of General Henderson in September relieved me of a considerable portion of those duties.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Unfortunately, the military duties referred to were not the sole causes of additional and unusual stress on the Department during the year. Hardly had the epidemic at Trentham been successfully coped with than an outbreak of cerebro-spinal meningitis occurred at that camp; this was speedily followed by an epidemic of infantile paralysis, the first case being notified on the 28th January, and has continued up to date. A special report on these outbreaks has been made by Dr. Sydney Smith, and will be issued as an appendix to this report.

Unfortunately, there have also been epidemics of enteric fever at Auckland and in the far North. Scarlet fever in epidemic form has been reported at Auckland and Christchurch, and at the time I write an epidemic of diphtheria is raging in Napier and Hastings.