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REPORT.

The Hon. the Minister of Health, Wellington.

SIR,—

The Committee of the Board of Health appointed by you to inquire into and report upon the subject of venereal diseases in New Zealand have the honour to submit herewith their report.

PART I.—INTRODUCTORY AND HISTORICAL.

SECTION 1.—ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF INQUIRY.

A perusal of departmental files reveals that many persons and bodies have during recent times urged upon the Government the desirability of setting up a Committee or Commission of Inquiry to go into this subject. The appointment of the present Committee, however, arose out of a suggestion forwarded to the Chairman of the Board of Health, under date of the 20th June, 1922, from the Council of the New Zealand Branch of the British Medical Association. The Board of Health duly considered the representations of the Association and passed a resolution recommending the Minister to set up a committee to gather data and to make recommendations as to the best means of preventing and combating venereal diseases. The proposal thereafter took concrete form, following the receipt by the members of this Committee of the under-quoted letter, dated 13th July, 1922, sent out under your direction by the Secretary of the Board of Health:—

"I am directed by the Hon. the Minister of Health, Chairman of this Board, to inform you that, acting upon the recommendation of the Board, he has decided to appoint a special Committee from among the members of the Board to conduct an inquiry into the question of venereal diseases in New Zealand. The following members are being asked to become members of the Committee, and the Chairman trusts you will see your way to accept the position: Dr. Valentine, Dr. Elliott, Lady Luke, Hon. Mr. Triggs, Sir Donald McGavin, Mr. Fraser. The Hon. the Minister has asked the Hon. Mr. Triggs to accept the chairmanship of the Committee.

"I am further directed to state that the function and duty laid upon the Committee is as follows:—

"(1.) To inquire into and report upon the prevalence of venereal disease in New Zealand.

"(2.) To inquire into and report any special reasons or causes for the existence of venereal disease in New Zealand.

"(3.) To advise as to the best means of combating and preventing venereal disease in New Zealand, and especially as to the necessity or otherwise of fresh legislation in the matter.

"The Minister of Health is anxious that the Committee should hear such evidence and representations on the above-mentioned matters as may be necessary to fully inform the Committee on the items referred to it, and with respect to which it is asked to report, and he further suggests to the Committee that the various organizations and persons likely to be interested should be notified that the Committee will, at a certain place and date, in Wellington, hear any evidence they may desire to tender."

The Committee regrets that owing to ill health Dr. Valentine, Director-General of Health, was unable to act as one of its members. His place was taken by Dr. J. P. Frengley, Deputy Director-General of Health. Unfortunately, illness also overtook Mr. Murdoch Fraser, who has been unable