

1939.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF HEALTH.

Presented in pursuance of Section 100 of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1926.

HON. P. FRASER, MINISTER OF HEALTH.

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REPORTS.

The ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF HEALTH to the HON. THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, Wellington.
I HAVE the honour to lay before you the annual report of the Department for the year 1938-39.

PART I.—GENERAL SURVEY.

INTRODUCTION.

Progress in the State of the Public Health.

In the report, coming as it does just prior to the Centennial celebration, it was thought fitting to include in the various sections a short historical account of the activities and development of the Department of Health.

The distinction of being the first medical man to set foot in New Zealand belongs to Mr. Monkhouse the “sensible and skilful surgeon” of Captain Cook. Since that day in the year 1769 vast changes have taken place in the development of New Zealand, and particularly so since 1840, when it was proclaimed as being under the sovereignty of Queen Victoria. The population in that year has been estimated at 110,000 Maoris and 2,000 Europeans. To-day there are some 86,000 Maoris and over 1,500,000 Europeans, to whom some twelve hundred qualified practitioners render medical care.

It is doubtful whether prior to the advent of the Europeans epidemic diseases existed among the Maoris. Influenza (*rewharewha*) was introduced by the pakeha; and also venereal disease, but leprosy appears to have been endemic among the Maoris prior to their arrival. There is evidence that measles was raging amongst the Maoris about Foveaux Strait in 1835 and again in 1837, probably introduced by the whalers.