

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

AUCKLAND HOSPITAL COMMISSIONERS

(REPORT OF THE).

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

The HOSPITAL COMMISSIONERS to the Hon. F. WHITAKER.

SIR,—

Auckland, 17th July, 1877.

In compliance with your letter, dated 3rd January last, wherein you request us to report upon the present condition of the Hospital, and offer suggestions for its future management, we beg to inform you that we have inspected the old buildings as well as the new one about to be occupied; we have examined witnesses orally, and the medical profession in this provincial district by circular; and have collected such other information, as to the administration of these institutions in the neighbouring colonies, as the time at our disposal would admit of, in order that we might reap the results of their experience, and be enabled to avoid offering suggestions which, however suited to Home circumstances, it is apparent are defective here.

We have the honor to report that we found the wooden building at present used as the Hospital old, dilapidated, and unfitted for the purpose. Its interior presented a clean appearance, but evidence disclosed the fact that it is infested with bugs. As we shall subsequently allude to this matter when pointing out the precautionary measures we consider necessary to prevent this nuisance in the new building, we will only now notice that in the Sydney Infirmary, a rubble building, the most strenuous efforts were quite ineffectual to check, and impotent to get rid of it. This cannot be construed into a reflection on the management here, when the character of the building is considered.

The administration as a whole, under the absolute control of Dr. Philson, has been so far satisfactory that it makes the task of suggesting any alteration both unpleasant and difficult. But his generous answers to our circular questions greatly lightened the burden of our duty; and even should our views meet with approval, and be adopted, we venture to express the hope that his services would not be lost to the institution over which he has so long and faithfully presided; and in the expression of this hope we feel assured that we correctly interpret public opinion.

The site of the new Hospital appears to us to have been admirably chosen. The patient is placed in a condition to enable Nature to do her part in furtherance of the physician's art. The design embraces the most advanced principles of construction. There is plenty of light, air, and convenience for the speedy removal of refuse.

The only objectionable feature that occurs to us is its distance from the city and harbour, where accidents of a serious description most frequently occur. Some provision to meet such cases ought to be made.

We recommend that lightning-conductors be erected immediately.

We recommend that a Board of Management of (say) seven members be appointed. Clergymen and medical men are found to be objectionable. The Government might nominate three, including the President (having a deliberative as well as a casting vote); and the bodies from whom the funds for the maintenance of the Hospital are derived to elect the others. One nominated and one elected member may retire annually, but be eligible for re-election or re-appointment, provided a certain standard of attendance is attained. Members retiring might be chosen by lot. The Board should be supreme in its authority over every one connected with the institution.

It appears to us that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Government to exercise an efficient control over the Hospital in this district. Both in Sydney and Melbourne large Boards have been discovered to be a mistake, resulting in an absence of vigorous and consecutive action, if not in utter neglect of matters of great importance to the institutions. In an earnest and active Board would be embraced all that would be required to secure the good government of the Hospital.

We are of opinion that such a Board would find it necessary to secure the services of a person thoroughly competent to act as Dispenser and Clerk or Secretary. This officer should have the general supervision of the institution and officers (except the Matron, if trained female nurses are employed throughout), with power to discharge and temporarily employ until the next meeting of the Board, to whom he would be responsible, and for whom he would act as the mouthpiece, rendering it unnecessary—as it is undesirable—for members of the Board to take any individual action.