

outdoor treatment, or however well off they may be, to consider that their 10s. ticket clears them of all liability. It will not surprise any one to find that in these circumstances the number of out-patients is unusually great, the drug-bill unusually high, the local rate exceedingly heavy, especially on town property, and that every device is exhausted to get the Government to pay the persistent deficit.

As showing how heavily this system falls on the local ratepayers, as well as on the general body of the taxpayers, I quote a statement made to the Hon. Mr. Mitchelson by a deputation from the Hokitika Borough Council on the 20th February last, complaining of the excessive outlay required to comply with the provisions of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act. The deputation say: "By the appended figures you will perceive how exceedingly heavy this tax has been upon the Borough of Hokitika, which for the year 1886-87 had to levy a rate of 6d. in the pound, and for 1887-88 a rate of 9d. in the pound, in order to raise £600 towards the sum in which this borough was mulcted for the current financial year. As you are aware, the provisions of "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act Amendment Act, 1886," permit a grant of £1 4s. for every pound of voluntary subscriptions, and, as the citizens of Hokitika have, through their representatives, voluntarily taxed themselves, we venture to urge that the Cabinet will not be exceeding its functions in subsidising the sum of £1,000 levied on the borough during the past two years by the 4s. over and above the subsidy of £1 paid or payable to the Hospital Board of Westland. Other boroughs, you will notice, only pay from 6 to 20 per cent of their ordinary rates, while Hokitika is called upon to pay 80 per cent."

I have singled out these two hospitals simply to illustrate a tendency that pervades the whole hospital-system of this country in a more or less marked degree. All our hospitals, with a few honourable exceptions, as conducted prior to the introduction of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, were powerful, though indirect agencies, in pauperising the people. In almost every part of New Zealand persons who were well able to pay for medical advice and medicine had no hesitation in accepting aid *in forma pauperis*, and, while the old system continued, there was no difficulty in getting the Government to make good the deficiency. The extent to which this was allowed to go in New Zealand can only be understood when taken as a phase of the social fever that attended the rise, the culmination, and the wane of our public-works policy. The following tables, which tell their own story, form a very striking commentary on this anomalous period of our history:—

SUMMARY of Hospitals, &c., Expenditure under Provincial Districts out of the Public Works Fund from 1877-78 to 1887-88.

Provincial District of						Total Expenditure, 1877-78 to 1887-88.		
						£	s.	d.
Auckland ..	..	..	..	..	..	3,418	3	5
Taranaki ..	..	..	..	..	..	3,625	13	1
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	..	3,163	14	1
Wellington	..	..	..	..	..	4,440	17	5
Nelson ..	..	..	..	..	..	905	2	3
Marlborough	..	..	..	..	..	1,456	18	10
Canterbury	..	..	..	..	..	5,769	3	7
Westland ..	..	..	..	..	..	2,609	2	6
Otago ..	..	..	..	..	..	7,262	9	0
Total						32,651	4	2

STATEMENT showing the Amount of Expenditure for Unproductive Works out of Votes for "Grants-in-aid—Work for Unemployed" under the several Provincial Districts, for the Years from 1884-85 to 1887-88.

Year.	Auckland.	Hawke's Bay.	Wellington.	Canterbury.	Otago.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1884-85 .. ..	..	..	..	697 1 8	127 13 8	824 15 4
1885-86 .. ..	..	23 2 7	..	4,770 7 3	..	4,793 9 10
1886-87	722 19 10	..	..	9,667 7 11	6,238 5 7	16,628 13 4
1887-88	1,007 18 11	..	10 15 0	4,337 14 1	4 3 11	5,360 11 11
Total	1,730 18 9	23 2 7	10 15 0	19,472 10 11	6,370 3 2	27,607 10 5