

1894.
NEW ZEALAND.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS OF THE COLONY.

(REPORT ON THE), BY THE INSPECTOR OF HOSPITALS.

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

The INSPECTOR of HOSPITALS and CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS to the Hon. the MINISTER of
EDUCATION.

SIR,—

I have the honour to lay before you the following report on the hospitals and charitable institutions of the colony for the year ending the 31st March, 1894:—

The total expenditure for the year was—Hospitals, £87,060 19s. 7d.; charitable aid, £76,616 14s. 9d.: total, £163,677 14s. 4d.

The expenditure for the previous year was—Hospitals, £77,463 3s. 3d.; charitable aid, £76,492 13s. 5d.: total, £153,955 16s. 8d.

Increase for the year ending 31st March, 1894—Hospitals, £9,597 16s. 4d.; charitable aid, £124 1s. 4d.: total increase, £9,721 17s. 8d. The cause of this increase was the erection of new buildings and additions in various places, viz.:—

			£	s.	d.
New buildings and additions, this year	...	...	11,802	3	5
" " last year	...	...	4,608	15	6
Increase this year over last year in buildings	...	...	£7,193	7	11

It will be observed that there is an increase this year in the total expenditure for hospitals and charitable aid of £9,721 17s. 8d. as compared with last year. The cost of new hospital buildings was very heavy this year, the total being £11,802 3s. 5d., as against £4,608 15s. 6d. for the previous year; *i.e.*, an increase of £7,193 7s. 11d.

The total increase in hospital expenditure, excluding new buildings, is £2,404 8s. 5d. This is accounted for by the large number of patients treated during the year, there being 1,121 more than the previous year, and an increase in the total collective days' stay of 14,840. There is a decrease in the average daily cost of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per patient, and a decrease of 2.58 per cent. in the cost of administration in the total expenditure.

The increase in charitable aid is £124 1s. 4d.; but the expenditure on new buildings, &c., was £2,768 6s. 7d. less than the previous year; so that in reality there is an increase of £2,892 7s. 11d.

Owing to the low price of our products, and the unusually bad harvest, the coming winter threatens to be a very hard one, and there is reason to fear a considerable increase in our charitable-aid expenditure. In Wellington, so early as the end of April, a formidable influx of unemployed began to cause great anxiety to the trustees of the Benevolent Society, and widespread sympathy was felt for the undoubted hardships that some deserving persons were believed to be enduring. The way in which this emergency was met in Wellington demonstrates what I have always said—namely, that the question of outdoor relief can never be satisfactorily dealt with till it is tackled directly by the people themselves.

Three private gentlemen in a few days raised a sum of £600, which, together with a sum of £500 contributed by the City Council, was handed over unconditionally to the Benevolent Society. These gentlemen were associated with some of the Trustees as a sub-committee to look after the spending of the money. This is being done in such a vigorous and intelligent fashion that I believe there will be no more trouble with the unemployed this winter. Every man who wants work will get it. All will get enough to live on, but no loafing will be tolerated; and it is provided that no man who is able to work and refuses will be permitted to get charitable aid either for himself or his family. This is a new departure of the most hopeful augury that a time is coming very soon when no money will be raised by the central government to be expended in outdoor relief by local bodies, and when all outdoor relief is paid for out of direct local taxation. It is, in my opinion, the only plan by which this young country can escape disaster, due to its investing a large part of the consolidated revenue in the permanent degradation of the people.

The only other difficulties revealed by the working of the Act, besides those arising out of the incurable evils surrounding the existing system of State-subsidised outdoor relief are, first, the