

REPORT.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS AND CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER to the Hon. the MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HOSPITALS, AND CHARITABLE AID.

Department of Public Health, Hospitals, and Charitable Aid,

SIR,—

Wellington, 10th August, 1915.

I have the honour to lay before you the annual report of the Department for the year ending 31st March, 1915.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The general health of the Dominion has been good. The general death-rate is 9·31, as against 9·47 last year. The infantile-mortality rate for New Zealand was 51·38 deaths per 1,000 births, an increase upon that of the two previous years. The following table shows the rates of infantile mortality in New Zealand and four chief centres each year 1904–1914.

Number of Deaths per 1,000 Births.

Year.	New Zealand.	Auckland and Suburban Boroughs.	Wellington and Suburban Boroughs.	Christchurch and Suburban Boroughs.	Dunedin and Suburban Boroughs.
1904	70·98	70·12	95·33	102·96	93·02
1905	67·52	91·52	96·21	88·99	67·13
1906	62·10	85·80	71·88	74·37	72·60
1907	88·78	97·19	117·80	126·16	95·36
1908	67·88	81·87	81·67	67·82	74·54
1909	61·60	61·85	84·21	62·78	48·52
1910	67·73	79·02	84·59	69·40	79·08
1911	56·31	63·02	73·36	62·90	43·42
1912	51·22	56·95	61·32	60·03	38·11
1913	59·17	80·81	60·23	63·49	73·42
1914	51·38	57·62	82·57	68·15	54·28

The following table shows the death-rates for the more prevalent infectious diseases per 10,000 of the population :—

	Proportion of 10,000 of Mean Population.				
	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
Enteric	0·62	0·66	0·44	0·56	0·44
Scarlet fever	0·13	0·09	0·07	0·10	0·20
Diphtheria	0·76	0·61	0·44	0·57	0·72
Phthisis	5·54	5·28	5·04	5·41	4·99
Other forms of tuberculosis	1·82	1·99	1·85	2·19	1·68

The interest of the Hospital Boards and public regarding the care of sufferers from tubercular diseases, especially phthisis, and the precautionary measures against the spreading of such diseases augur well for a still more successful outcome being demonstrable in the future for the campaign that has been so well initiated generally throughout the Dominion.

Cases notified are set out as follows :—

	Number of Cases.		Rate of Incidence per 10,000 of Mean Population.	
	1913.	1914.	1913.	1914.
Enteric fever	863	859	8·07	7·87
Scarlet fever	1,614	1,506	15·10	13·81
Diphtheria	747	1,095	6·99	10·04
Tuberculosis	1,018	957	9·53	8·78

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

From the returns attached to the several reports of the District Health Officers it will be seen that the amount of work undertaken in the administration of the regulations under the above Act increased substantially during 1914. Fines inflicted amounted to £497, as against £412 during 1913. While on the one hand it has been obvious to the officers administering this Act that they should avoid insisting upon minor technicalities—of labelling, for example—the cost of which would inevitably be placed upon the consumer, nevertheless, they have been watchful lest gross adulterations or short weight be taken advantage of by less scrupulous vendors in these times of national stress.