

1916.
NEW ZEALAND.

SMALLPOX ON H.M.N.Z. TRANSPORT "WILLOCHRA"

(REPORT ON THE OUTBREAK OF).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

Department of Public Health, Hospitals, and Charitable Aid,
Wellington, N.Z., 1st August, 1916.

Memorandum for the Hon. the Minister of Public Health.

SMALLPOX AND VACCINATION.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following short report by the District Health Officer, Dunedin, with regard to the outbreak of smallpox on H.M. transport "Willochra," which arrived at Port Chalmers on the 13th May.

In addition to the case of smallpox reported by wireless, another case of that disease was discovered by the Port Health Officer on arrival of the vessel at Port Chalmers. The vessel was accordingly placed in quarantine, and the men sent to the Quarantine Island, where they were detained for sixteen days. Before leaving the vessel all persons on board who did not show evidence of recent successful vaccination were vaccinated. Two cases of the disease subsequently developed on the Island, and of the total of four cases two proved fatal.

The District Health Officer's report is interesting as again exemplifying the protection afforded by vaccination. When it is considered that there were 303 persons on board the "Willochra," many of whom had never been vaccinated or only been vaccinated in infancy, and, further, that the means of isolation on board the vessel were by no means satisfactory, the protection afforded by vaccination is very striking. It is on this account that I specially draw your attention to this report in the hope that it may induce parents and guardians who have hitherto neglected to have their children vaccinated to take this the only known means of protection against a grave and horrible disease, as may be gathered from the photographs of the cases forwarded me by Corporal A. A. Gower, of Wanganui. The latest returns show that not 1 per cent. of the children born in the Dominion have been vaccinated.

T. H. A. VALINTINE,
Chief Health Officer.

District Health Office, Dunedin, 17th July, 1916.

Memorandum for the Chief Health Officer, Wellington.

VACCINATION AS A PROTECTION AGAINST SMALLPOX.

The recent outbreak of smallpox on the "Willochra" again serves to illustrate very clearly the efficacy of successful vaccination in protecting the individual against a most dreadful and loathsome disease. While the smallpox in the Maori epidemic of 1912 was comparatively mild and innocuous, in this latter manifestation it had reverted to the type which long ago caused it to be regarded as one of the scourges of mankind. Out of a total of four cases from the "Willochra" two died, while a third was critically ill for several weeks, and then made a slow and tedious convalescence. These three cases were all of the type known as "confluent," and were characterized by a very extensive skin-eruption and a profound toxæmia. None of them has been successfully vaccinated at any time, either in childhood or in adult life, consequently the disease ran its ordinary severe course uninfluenced in any way.