

at a minimum cost depends in great degree on professional knowledge and experience, we have refrained from recommending any increase.

We believe, however, that the administration of the department under one professional head will materially expedite the bringing up of arrears, and enable reductions to be effected.

#### GAOLS AND LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

We found that there is surplus gaol accommodation in the Provinces of Westland, Marlborough, and Nelson. As the strength and efficiency of each establishment will have to be maintained whatever the number of prisoners, we draw attention to the subject in order that, if deemed advisable, the long-sentenced prisoners in over-crowded gaols may be distributed according to available accommodation, until provision is made for their reception in the projected Central Penal Establishment.

A similar inequality of accommodation also exists in several of the lunatic asylums.

#### HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE AID.

In pursuance of our instructions we have indicated the present cost and footing of charitable institutions.

Our investigations under this head induce us to offer for your consideration the following conclusion at which we have arrived, as the question of dealing on some uniform plan with hospitals and charitable aid on the Abolition of Provinces will require early attention. It will be seen that at present there exist in the provinces different modes of maintenance and management of these institutions. In some they are altogether maintained and managed by Provincial Governments; in others they are more or less supported by endowments and by private subscriptions and provincial subsidies, and conducted by Boards or Committees nominated or elected under special laws. It must be borne in mind that in the United Kingdom, where private benevolence almost wholly maintains similar institutions for the relief of the sick and the destitute, there still exists in reserve behind them the State system of the parish workhouse. The problem for solution in this colony seems to us to be to combine, in hospitals and charitable aid institutions, the contributions of the State and of public bodies and private individuals in some fixed proportions to each other, and to secure local maintenance and control subject to proper inspection and supervision by the State. Another principle should, we think, be invariably observed—viz. when public money is paid towards the support of an institution, the accounts should be subjected to Government audit. Inasmuch as hospitals and charitable aid are matters in which the colony, the district, and subscribers are relatively interested, though not in equal proportions, we think that support and management should be adjusted accordingly, subject to the indispensable conditions of official inspection and of official audit.

We are also of opinion that ample reserves of land, inalienable except for purposes of exchange or re-investment, should form an endowment for these institutions.

#### POLICE.

With regard to Police, we have, as directed by you, confined ourselves to reporting the present cost and procuring nominal lists showing the standing of the various forces.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

We transmit the additional under-mentioned enclosures:—

ENCLOSURE No. 3.  
Nominal Lists of  
Officers in the service  
of the Provincial Go-  
vernments.

ENCLOSURE No. 4.  
List of Officers  
whose services may  
be dispensed with on  
the abolition of Pro-  
vinces.

ENCLOSURE No. 5.  
Returns of Public  
Works Provincially  
voted, showing  
Amounts Expended  
and Unexpended Bal-  
ances.

ENCLOSURE No. 6.  
Departmental Es-  
timates for 1876-77.

1. Nominal Lists of all the Officers employed in the Provincial Service; showing their office, age, salary, and length of service; excepting those holding political office.

2. A List of Officers whose services may be dispensed with on the abolition of provinces.

3. Returns of Public Works provincially voted; showing the amounts expended on each work, and the unexpended balances.

4. Departmental Estimates for the ensuing year; showing the provincial appropriations for last year, and the amounts that will be required for 1876-77. We have shown the provincial appropriations for last year, in order that the Government may be able to see at a glance the services heretofore provided by the provinces.