

1904.
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 FOR
PUBLIC WORKS.

SIR,—

CHARITABLE AID.

27th July, 1904.

The expenditure on charitable aid during the year ending the 31st March, 1904, was—Indoor relief, £46,613; outdoor relief, £42,618: making a total of £89,231. This is apparently a reduction on last year's total which stood at £94,158, but, as £7,235 was spent in buildings and purchases of land, the more exact comparison is with a total of £86,923.

The large sums spent on charitable aid, especially on outdoor relief, of recent years calls for special notice, and its growth is a matter for serious consideration. How far the distributors are to blame it is not easy to estimate, but that they are to blame is writ large when one compares the amount of outdoor relief given in different centres of more or less equal population. It may be that they are careless or facile, or lacking in system; it may be that humanitarianism outweighs wisdom in councils where these factors should counterpoise; but it requires little penetration to discover that the trustees of public money do not accept the trust with equal seriousness.

Comparing the state of things in the four larger towns we find:—

	903.	1904.
	£	£
Auckland Charitable Aid Board	4,923	4,930
Christchurch Charitable Aid Board	7,356	7,517
Dunedin Benevolent Trust	6,048	6,210
Wellington Benevolent Trust	4,685	3,887

It will be noted that, while Wellington City has reduced its last year's total by nearly £800, and Auckland has remained stationary, there has been an increase both in Christchurch and Dunedin. The Wellington and Wairarapa District altogether spent £6,134 on outdoor relief, made up as follows: Wellington Benevolent Trust, £3,887; Wellington and Wairarapa Charitable Aid Board, £1,527 (this is money given to counties, &c., to expend); Masterton Benevolent Society, £407; Wellington Ladies' Christian Association, £313.

A family or individual can be helped to tide over a time of special trouble without the loss of self-reliance or self-respect; it is the habitual applicant for aid who should be checked by being made in some form or other to work out the relief given to him or her. Some Boards have on their books recipients of charitable aid to the third generation, showing that heredity in these matters comes largely into play. The payment of house-rent for applicants—unless as quite a temporary matter—is an economic evil. Such an expenditure of public money is prejudicial to the recipient's next-door neighbour, whose rent is a little behind, but who will pay in the long-run; for so far as the landlord is concerned, the recipient of charitable aid becomes the better tenant. The tempta-