

tion. He has simply to say before a Magistrate, "I believe it will injure my child," and the child goes unprotected. The law has made that parent's path easy enough, one would think; but no, there are many who do not even take the trouble to comply to this extent with the law. What happens? The Registrar proceeds against the parent, and even when the Magistrate has made an order it costs the parent £2—only that and nothing more. Until the child reaches the age of four years no further action can be taken to protect it against small-pox. Last year out of 24,321 children born, 4,486 were vaccinated, 2,964 were exempted, leaving 16,871 unaccounted-for.

"It will be seen that over 81 per cent. of the children born in 1906-7 are unprotected against small-pox—a deplorable state of things. But that is not the worst aspect of the question. Apparently a large section of the community are passively breaking the law passed by the Legislature, while a noisy few are actively opposing it. To prosecute 69 per cent. of the parents is impracticable; not to carry out the law is demoralising to every one. My instructions generally are to prosecute rich and poor, taking a few cases at a time. The time has come when all parents who have not had their children vaccinated, or obtained a certificate of exemption, should be brought before the Magistrate, or—and I say it with the deepest regret—alter the law so that even the semblance of compulsion shall cease. If this were done, our children would not be less protected than they are present, and this absolutely futile system of pretended compulsion would cease.

"The present generation of parents have, most of them, little knowledge of what a fateful disease small-pox is, and that passing discomfort which attends vaccination easily makes the other scale kick the beam, even when they take the trouble to calmly consider the matter. It may be said that some parents are induced to have their children done under the present *régime* who would not if all semblance of compulsion were removed. I do not think the number is large, and in any case the inducements the law, as it now stands, offers to defeat itself are such as to cause even believers in the protective value of vaccination to pause and consider the whole question calmly. To make vaccination entirely optional except in the services, institutions, and prisons may seem a retrograde step, but to keep upon the statute-book a law which is so flouted seems to me dangerous and inimical to the best interests of the community. There is little need, judging from past experiences in New Zealand, to resort to compulsion when small-pox is close at hand, and every endeavour must be made to protect the people at such times. When small-pox was present in Christchurch in 1904, 11,120 people were voluntarily vaccinated in three months. The standard of "interference with the liberty of the subject" is rarely raised at such a time. The unfairness of expecting the officers of the Department to control an outbreak of small-pox when the weapon they most rely on is denied them may be passed over; but the fact remains that many who now assume an academic calmness, or the few who rail against vaccination, will inevitably join hands in condemning the Department should the colony ever be unfortunate enough to suffer as did Tasmania in 1903. That danger seems far off is true, but owing to our constant intercommunication with the Eastern ports it is nevertheless real. Everything, therefore, would have to be in readiness in case of attack, and as every unvaccinated person is a danger not only to himself, but to all who come in contact with him, power should be given when small-pox is present to draw a circle round the point of infection and require all within that zone to submit. If this were done, more effective protection would be brought about than exists at present, while the humiliating spectacle of an unobserved law would be removed."

The vaccinations registered for the last ten years are as under :—

Year.	Total Vaccinations registered of Children under 14 Years of Age.	Vaccinations of Children under 1 Year of Age.	Number of Births registered.	Proportion of Successful Vaccinations of	
				Children under 14 Years of Age to Total Births. Per Cent.	Children under 1 Year of Age to Total Births. Per Cent.
1906	3,602	1,810	24,252	14.85	7.46
1905	3,818	2,079	23,682	16.12	8.78
1904	18,368	2,323	22,766	80.68	10.20
1903	11,683	5,566	21,829	53.52	25.50
1902	8,763	2,611	20,655	42.43	12.64
1901	3,768	1,984	20,491	18.39	9.68
1900	4,525	3,151	19,546	23.15	16.12
1899	5,133	3,379	18,835	27.25	17.94
1898	10,349	5,507	18,955	54.60	29.05
1897	12,440	6,162	18,733	66.41	32.89

The number of successful vaccinations of children registered in 1906 was 3,602, against 3,818 in 1905. The fall prior to 1902 was consequent on the alteration of the law relative to vaccination in England, and subsequently in this colony, while the increase shown for the three years 1902-4 was no doubt due to a slight visitation of small-pox from abroad, which caused one death in 1903.