

## REPORT.

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

I HAVE the honour to lay before you the following report on public health, hospitals, and charitable aid for the year ending the 31st March, 1911.

According to the Act, the report on the hospitals and charitable institutions should have been presented in July, but owing to the difficulty in getting some Hospital Secretaries to furnish their returns—in fact, many returns did not come to hand until September—it was practically impossible to present it. You may consider it desirable to amend the Act, making it incumbent on Hospital Secretaries to furnish their returns by a specified date.

### PUBLIC HEALTH.

Hitherto the Public Health reports have been issued at the end of each financial year, but it was considered better that this report should be in conformity with the statistics issued by the Registrar-General which are attached as an appendix hereto, and therefore the Public Health portion of this report is for the year ended 31st December, 1910.

#### *Birth-rate.*

From these returns it will be seen that the birth-rate of the Dominion was 26·17, as against 27·29 last year, the actual number of births (25,984) being less than in 1909, when 26,524 were registered.

Victoria, where the birth-rate is 24·55, and South Australia, with a birth-rate of 25·08, excepted, New Zealand has the lowest birth-rate in Australasia.

#### *Death-rate.*

The death-rate was 9·71—slightly higher than the previous year, when it was 9·22.

The average age at death of persons of either sex was—males, 44·47; females, 42·25; in both instances being the highest since 1906.

The infantile-mortality rate per 1,000 births was 67·7, against 61·6 the previous year, the increase in this rate being due to the higher mortality rates in infantile diarrhoea and premature births.

#### *Notification of Infectious Disease.*

There was an appreciable increase in the number of cases of infectious diseases notified, viz. :—

	1909.	1910.	Increase.	Decrease.
Scarlet fever	1,266	1,922	656	...
Diphtheria	578	838	260	...
Enteric fever	635	630	...	5
Plague	0	3	3	...

#### *Deaths from the Principal Zymotic Diseases.*

*Typhoid Fever*—There were 62 deaths, against 55 in the previous year, the average for five years being 61.

*Diphtheria*.—The number of deaths from this cause for 1910 was 75, as against 64 in 1909, the average for the past five years being 53.

*Measles*.—There was an outbreak of this disease in 1907, causing 101 deaths; last year only 1 death was recorded.

*Scarlet Fever*.—There were 13 recorded deaths, the average annual mortality from this disease for the past five years being 28.

*Whooping-cough*.—There were 148 deaths in 1910, 41 deaths in 1909, 42 in 1908, 307 in 1907, and 26 in 1906.

#### *Plague.*

As regards the general public health, the most serious matter during the year was the occurrence of three cases of plague in Auckland (since the period covered by this report, however, five other cases developed, one case proving fatal).

I would particularly draw attention to what Dr. Makgill mentions in his interesting report on this subject—especially with regard to the need for persistent effort on the part of the Auckland local authorities if they wish to keep their city free of plague. Spasmodic effort is of little or no avail in fighting this, one of the most insidious of all diseases, nor is spasmodic effort likely to keep the rat from the haunts of man.

#### *Tubercular Diseases.*

The death-rate from tubercular diseases (7·36 per 10,000) is the lowest hitherto recorded in the Dominion, last year the death-rate from these diseases being 8·23, the actual number of deaths being 731, against 800 in 1909. Of these 731 deaths, 550 were from phthisis, against 588 the previous year, the death-rate from this disease being 5·54 per 10,000, which is also the lowest death-rate from this disease recorded in the Dominion.

There is every reason to hope that the steady decrease in the death-rate from these diseases will at least be maintained.

At the recent Hospitals Conference, representatives of Hospital Boards unanimously agreed to carry on the campaign against these diseases, as outlined in this report last year. A full account of the discussion on this important subject is attached as an appendix to this report; and