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The DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF HEALTH to the Hon. the MINISTER OF HEALTH, Wellington.

I HAVE the honour to lay before you the annual report of the Department for the year 1923-24.

PART I.—GENERAL SURVEY.

SECTION 1.—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Unfortunately, the year under consideration was affected by the special demand for economy in public expenditure, and this necessitated a certain measure of departmental reorganization. Among other measures taken with a view to bringing about the economy so urgently required was the decision to close the offices of the Department at Whangarei, Napier, and Wanganui, the districts administered from those centres being placed respectively under the control of the Auckland and Wellington office. It is obvious that the districts as now situated are too large to ensure efficient supervision, and it can only be hoped that in more prosperous times it may be possible to again establish offices outside the four chief centres of our population. At that time, also, it may be possible to make departmental positions more attractive to the medical profession than is possible under the existing circumstances. In this connection it is to be regretted that so far the proposals of the Department to the effect that the Councils of the larger centres should appoint whole-time Medical Officers has not been favoured by the Councils concerned, and though the Department must naturally conclude that the Corporations are satisfied with the present arrangements, the fact remains that the sanitation and general health work of the larger towns could be better supervised if the Councils would but agree