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The Hon. the Minister of Health, Wellington.

SIR,—

The Committee of Inquiry into Mental Defectives and Sexual Offenders appointed by you to inquire into and report upon the necessity for special care and treatment of mental defectives and sexual offenders in New Zealand have the honour to submit herewith their report.

## PART I.—INTRODUCTORY AND HISTORICAL.

### SECTION I.—ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF INQUIRY.

For a considerable time there has been a growing feeling of anxiety among the public owing to the number of mental defectives becoming a charge upon the State, and also the alarming increase in their numbers through the uncontrolled fecundity of this class. Furthermore, owing to the frequency of sexual offences, many of a most revolting character, there was a strong demand that some action should be taken to prevent further acts of this nature ; it being suggested that the law should be altered to make it possible for surgical operations to be performed upon these offenders.

The North Canterbury Hospital Board considered the need for action in this matter so great that they set up a Committee to go into the question and take evidence, which was done, and various recommendations were made to the Government.

A perusal of departmental files reveals that many persons and social bodies have urged upon the Government the desirability of setting up a Committee or Commission of Inquiry to go into this subject.