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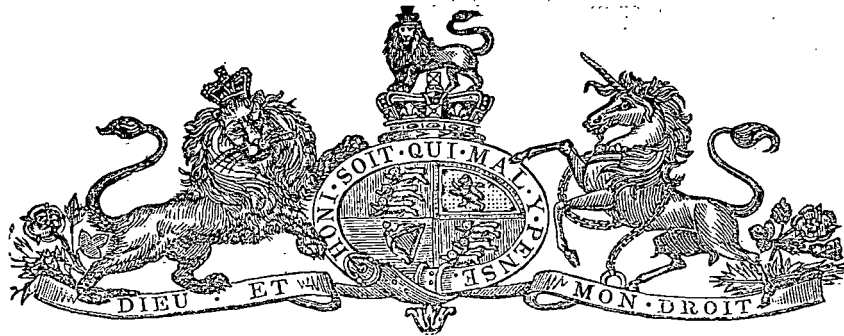
1891.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICER :

REPORT FOR 1890.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT, 1890.

Medical Department, Hobart, 2nd May, 1891.

SIR,

As the Government Medical Officer, I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1890.

The several duties connected with my office are much the same as last year; namely:—

The medical supervision of the sick inmates of the New Town Charitable Institution.

The visiting of the sick poor of Hobart at their own homes.

Medical Officer to the Territorial Police in the suburbs of Hobart.

The duties devolving upon me as Health Officer for the Port of Hobart.

The supervision of the Hospitals for the Insane at New Norfolk and at Hobart, as Chairman of the Board of Official Visitors.

Medical Adviser to, and Member of, the Central Board of Health.

My visits to the New Town Charitable Institution have been 139 in number during the year. Besides the usual bi-weekly visits, I have occasionally gone round the Institution without previous notice, and invariably I have found the sick patients well attended to, and everything satisfactory. I am also frequently in telephonic communication with the Institution.

Besides visiting the wards, I occasionally inspect the food while being prepared in the kitchens; and, as a rule, I have found the meat good, the vegetables plentiful, and the cooking satisfactory. The dietary scale is in every way adequate, and the patients seem well satisfied with the food supplied to them.

The average number of inmates in the Institution during the past year has been—males, 427; females, 165; total 592,—being a slight increase upon the total of the previous year. The large majority of these inmates are well advanced in years and in feeble health, many of whom require constant care and attention and medical comforts.

The number of cases of sickness calling for special treatment was larger this year than during the previous twelve months. The cases number—males, 321; females, 35; total 356, as compared with a total of 288 during 1889.

The Hospital wards were crowded during the winter months with patients suffering mostly from catarrhal complaints; and in the month of April a severe epidemic of influenza prevailed throughout the whole establishment, though only a few of these cases proved fatal.

The number of prescriptions for the patients that were made up at the Dispensary of the Institution during the year amounted to 6901.

The deaths during the year numbered 127, of whom 95 were males and 32 females. The greater number of these deaths was due to senile decay.

The average age of those who died during 1890 was, for males, 75 years; for females, 72½ years, which is slightly higher than last year, when it was 72 and 71½ respectively.

There were three cases of cancer during the year. The Receiving ward is now used temporarily for these cases pending the erection of the contemplated Cancer ward.

The drainage of the Institution is a matter that requires attention, as several cases of typhoid fever occurred amongst the younger members of the family of the Assistant-Superintendent.

Several improvements have been completed during the year, the necessity for which I had previously brought under the notice of the authorities and recommended their adoption, such as the four fire escapes or staircases placed outside the main buildings leading from the large wards on the upper floors. Previous to the erection of these means of escape the upper wards had only one door and one staircase each for egress. The additional new staircases, with a door to each, afford ready egress, and render escape in case of fire comparatively easy and effectual. The risk of fire has also been much lessened by the substitution of gas for kerosene throughout the establishment. This change, besides giving the advantage of a better and more convenient light, must prove a source of economy.

The introduction of paid male attendants into the hospital wards, advocated by me in my last Annual Report, has been officially approved, and came into force at the beginning of the current year. This step will be a decided improvement, having become more and more necessary of late, as the number of inmates who make useful attendants is lessening year by year, with none but decrepit and feeble men to fall back upon for assistance; and, besides, as the sick and helpless are increasing in numbers, it would be difficult without this new class of paid attendants to attend to them satisfactorily.

My duties in connection with the visiting of the poor at their own homes absorb a considerable portion of each day, according to the number of patients to be seen and to their distances apart. The number of patients visited during the year was 376, being a slight increase upon the previous year. A small proportion of these cases was sent into the General Hospital for treatment, as it was impossible for them to obtain at their own homes the skilled nursing and many comforts they would receive in that institution. With the exception of an epidemic of influenza during April, the majority of the cases treated were of an ordinary character.

Included in my professional duties is attendance upon the members of the Territorial Police who are stationed in the immediate suburbs. These men enjoy, as a rule, good health.

As Health Officer for the port of Hobart, my duties relate to the quarantine regulations of the port. There have been no cases of infectious disease introduced into the Colony by any ships during the year.

As Chairman of the Board of Official Visitors to the Hospitals for the Insane, it is my duty to make frequent visits to both the Asylums at New Norfolk and Hobart. Besides this, all the correspondence of these institutions has to pass through my hands, engaging my constant attention.

As Medical Adviser to the Central Board of Health, as well as a Member, questions relating to matters of health are frequently referred to me for consideration.

By way of summary, I subjoin the following statement of the number of miles travelled by me during the past twelve months in the course of my various duties enumerated above:—

To and from New Town Charitable Institution, distant about three miles from residence, 139 visits; making a total of 834 miles. In visiting the sick poor of Hobart, about 20 miles per week; making for the year a total of 1040 miles. To and from New Norfolk Hospital for the Insane, 44 miles each journey, 23 visits during the year, giving a total of 1012 miles. Thus these three duties alone cause me to travel altogether during the year about 2886 miles.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

C. E. BARNARD, M.D.,
Government Medical Officer.

The Honourable the Chief Secretary.