



Medical Registration in New Zealand and the Admission of Foreign Doctors. 1849 - 1949

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When I was a child visitors to our house were mostly refugees from Europe. We didn't see many New Zealanders at home. Now when I meet doctors and families from overseas I have some feeling for their sense of unfamiliarity. I have not been an activist for the new doctors in New Zealand but I thought by drawing attention to the history of registration I could focus our collective thoughts on the new dilemmas they are facing.

I had really intended to discuss the registration of foreign doctors in New Zealand, particularly those who came from Europe in the 1930s and 40s, but it became clear that to do that I would need to include background information on all medical registration in NZ. Early records are fragmented so it took some time to draw together the essential threads.

The title of DOCTOR is an interesting one. Even when I first went to the Archives NZ desk to register I was asked if I was a "real" doctor. The questioner had a Ph.D. and was keen to banter. The question has been discussed for many years. When the first regulations were drawn up in NZ they were headed "whereas it is expedient to regulate and define the qualification of Practitioners in Medicine and Surgery".

Then in 1915 an opinion from the Crown Law Office states "It is impossible to give a satisfactory ruling as to what constitutes practicing medicine within the meaning of section 23 of the Medical act 1914".

In 1934 the Minister of Health, answering a question from an MP D.S Reid, writes "the law does not prevent anyone from practising medicine, but it very definitely makes it an offence for anyone to so practice under the style of 'doctor' or 'physician' or any title or description which will lead the public into thinking that the practitioner possesses any special qualification to practise.

Now we have updated rulings from the Medical Council in line with the current Act.

"patient research and precision of detail the hallmarks of a true historian"
(from book of Otago Medical School under the 3 Deans) . Having decided I am not a true historian but a GP I have taken a GP overview and if anyone wants more detail I have plenty of references which will be tabled at the end.

Doctors of course were arriving in New Zealand from very early times. Most ships carried a surgeon who was often also an artist or zoologist or geologist. Joseph-Paul Gaimard was such a one. He was the surgeon - naturalist who accompanied Dumont D'Urville on the voyage of the Astrolabe in 1826. He was a Frenchman and some small islands near D'Urville Island were named for him. I found little record of his medical work but he did do early measurements on the natives and D'Urville writes that he was always happy to have a surgeon with him when he went ashore.

The first doctor noted to have settled in NZ was Dr. Joseph Crocome in Waikouaiti. 1838, where he practised for many years. (Reference An Encyclopedia of New Zealand Vol 2 pages 529-533 published 1966)

Among others of note was Dr. Isaac Earl Featherston MD Edin arrived in Wellington in 1841 as ships surgeon. Was Doctor, editor and businessman in Wellington.

Many who came as doctors then followed other interests. This would be an interesting area of further study.

The need to develop a registration system for doctors was regularly discussed as it was difficult for people to know who was genuine and who was bogus. In Great Britain The General Medical Council had been formed in 1858. New Zealand always looked to them, and sometimes to Australia, for leadership.

The first Medical Practitioners Act was presented for legislation in 1867 . Schedule A attached to this Act repeals previous legislation and gives us the key to what has gone before. (I have a copy of this Act)

NEW MUNSTER ORDINANCE 1849

WELLINGTON PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION 1854

OTAGO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION 1864 with 2 amendments in 1865

then the MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ACT 1867

****To understand the early rules it is helpful to look at the political situation briefly.

In 1840 the islands of New Zealand were separated politically from the colony of New South Wales, into New Ulster (North Island), New Munster (South Island) and New Leinster (Stewart Island).

In 1846 there were two political institutions, New Ulster, the Auckland area, and New Munster, the area south of the Patea River including the rest of the South Island. In addition central government was in Auckland.

By 1852 the 6 provinces had been set up.

***** Now to the legislation.

NEW MUNSTER GAZETTE Session 1. No 2 Page 134

Proclamation no 2 of the Legislative Council

“ an Ordinance to define the qualifications and to provide for the examination in certain cases of medical practitioners.” 18/5/1849

Wedged between naturalization, straying horses and prevention of spread of scab in sheep.

Became law on 23/8/49 i.e. 3 months later

1. “Whereas it is expedient to define the qualifications and to provide for remuneration, in certain cases, of medical practitioners within the Province of New Munster --

By his Excellency the Lieutenant -Governor of New Munster, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council thereof in :

Every person who is a doctor or bachelor of medicine of some University or a physician or surgeon licensed or admitted as such by some College of Physicians or Surgeons in Great Britain or Ireland, or a member of the Company of Apothecaries of London or Dublin or who is or has been a medical officer, duly appointed and confirmed of Her Majesty’s sea or land service, shall be deemed a legally qualified medical practitioner , and after submitting degree diploma or proof thereof to the Resident Magistrate in his district, shall be entitled to a Certificate in proof thereof and be entitled to have notification in the Government Gazette on payment of 5 shillings.”

2. Remuneration of 1 guinea to attend inquest, 2 guineas to do a post mortem if requested and 2 shillings and 6 pence for each mile travelled. None of these fees apply to the Colonial Surgeon.

3. To be in operation from this day. 23/8/1849

This was followed by

Wellington Provincial Council Proceedings. Session 1. No 7

“ An Act to establish a Medical Board and to declare who shall be deemed a qualified Medical Practitioner within the Province.” Assented Jan 14, 1854. By Superintendent of the Province, with advice and consent of the Provincial Council.

This repeals the New Munster legislation, for the Wellington Province.

The Board to have three members being of the medical profession and registered.

The first Board was to be appointed by the Superintendent and thereafter to be added or removed by vote, which could be a proxy.

Voting papers to go to all those currently registered.

Must have “proved to the Board that he is a doctor or bachelor of medicine of some University of Great Britain or Ireland, **OR SOME FOREIGN STATE**, or a physician or surgeon licensed or admitted as such by some College of Physicians or Surgeons in Great Britain or Ireland, or a member of the Company of Apothecaries of London, or who is or has been a medical officer duly appointed and confirmed of Her Majesty’s land or sea service.

They shall submit degree or proof thereof

The Board has the power to insist on proof that the person named is the person presenting the diploma.

The Board shall give a certificate of registration.

The Board will hold a register and the names shall also be published in the Government Gazette.

****The signature assenting is that of I.E. Featherston, now the Superintendent of the Province.**

12 doctors registered.

****Next came

Medical Practitioners Ordinance 1864 from Otago Provincial Ordinances Session 19 , 1864.

(I have highlighted some features. The full text is available)

An Ordinance to constitute a Medical Board in Otago and to regulate the qualifications of Practitioners of Medicine and Surgery.

“it is expedient that persons in the said Province requiring medical aid and advice should be enabled to distinguish qualified from unqualified practitioners”

The New Munster Ordinance was **repealed for Otago.**

The **Otago Medical Board** was established. It would have 3-5 members who would be registered medical practitioners. They would be appointed for 5 years. One would be the President and have the casting vote.

A Registrar would be appointed who would be the Secretary and could be the treasurer.

Clerks and servants were to be appointed and all members would be paid a fee.

The Registrar’s duties were spelled out in detail and a register was to be kept.

X. the Board may if it thinks fit require the personal attendance before the Board of any person seeking or applying to be registered.

XI. Any person practising medicine or surgery in the Province of Otago prior to this may in personal attendance before the Board prove he has had a regular 3 year course of medical study , whether such country be within Her Majesty’s Dominions or not , shall be entitled to be registered.

XII. anyone registered under the Acts of the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain or Ireland shall be entitled to be registered.

XIII. Any person already registered under the New Munster legislation will be registered under this Ordinance.

XIV. Anyone registered in **Australian** colonies may be registered under this Ordinance, as may those in the services of the Army Navy or Militia, or in the service of the East India Company.

The Board also has the power to **dispense with** the provisions of the Ordinances in certain cases and in certain conditions.

XV. There will be a fee of 5 pounds.

A register is to be kept and it spells out how to keep it valid and current.

Spells out removal from the register on death or if not found.

*****Now we come to the first legislation for the whole country. (Again selected highlights. The full text is attached)

An Act to Constitute a Medical Board for the Colony of New Zealand and to define the Qualifications of Practitioners in Medicine and Surgery. 10th October 1867

1. The name of the Act.

2. The several Acts and ordinances mentioned and specified in the Schedule A. to this Act are repealed, **except so far** as regards acts done, offences committed or penalties incurred before the passing of this Act.

3. Becomes lawful for the Governor by Order in Council to nominate and appoint a Board to be known as **The Medical Board**.

There were to be from 5 to 10 members, at least 2/3 were to be members of the medical profession and qualified to be registered under the Act. One of them was to be nominated by the Governor to be President .

4. It was to be a 5 year appointment. This section also deals with death or resignation of a member.

5. The first meeting was to be held within 3 months. Also specified were a quorum of 3, majority voting system, and the President was to have casting vote.

6. The Board shall appoint a Registrar who shall also act as Secretary and may also act as Treasurer until the Board appoints another. May also appoint clerks and servants as necessary for the purposes of this Act. All can be removed at the pleasure of the Board , and all shall be paid such salary as the Board sees fit, AND it shall be lawful for a member of the Board to hold all or any of the offices of Registrar, Secretary or Treasurer.

7. A fee will be paid to the members of the Board, BUT the Governor "can abstain from allowing fees as he sees fit".

8. Deals with expenses of the Board. Treasurer will see to it that the accounts are signed by two members of the Board and will go to the General Assembly annually.

9. It will be the duty of the Registrar to keep the register correct.

10. Registration will be granted IF

have one of the qualifications in Schedule B and produces this to the Board or a quorum thereof

OR upon transmitting these documents by post to the Registrar

OR if two of the examiners for these qualifications transmit to the Registrar a certificate in writing under their own hand stating that this person is possessed of these qualifications , and stating fully the name and address of such person

OR the Board may require the personal attendance of any person seeking or applying to be registered.

11. Gives authority outside of Wellington to every Province to have the Resident Magistrate in the chief town and a medical practitioner practising in such Province who has been appointed by the Governor for this purpose, to act as assessor. May also require attendance of the applicant.

12. On personal attendance before the Board if the applicant can prove they have passed a regular course of study of not less than 3 years in a School of Medicine or Surgery and has a qualification "other than those specified in Schedule B. entitling him to practice medicine or surgery in that country whether that country be within Her Majesty's dominion or not, shall be entitled to be registered under this Act."

13. Every person registered under Schedule D. may be registered, but it is not compulsory.

14. Every person shall be entitled to be registered who was in actual practice in New Zealand before 1857,

OR in practice under Ordinance of the Legislative Council of New Munster OR in the province of Wellington under an Act of the Superintendent of the Province of Wellington in the Province of Otago under Ordinance of the Superintendent of the Province of Otago

OR any other from Schedule A.

15. Special dispensation as the Board sees fit for any persons legally qualified to practice medicine or surgery in any of the **Australian** colonies at the time this Act comes into force provided that the Board **may require personal attendance** before it. This may then allow registration.

16. There will be no registration unless a fee of 5 pounds is paid.

17. When the Board is satisfied the registrar shall put the name on the register according to the form set in shedule C.

18. The name on the register can be erased if no reply to post in 6 months, but can also be replaced.

19. Registrar and Deputy Registrar of Deaths in the Colony to let Registrar to the Board know so name can be erased.

Also any change of address to be notified to Registrar.

20. Any persons **unregistered 182 days after this Act** comes into operation will be subject to a **fine** not exceeding 50 pounds if using the title of Doctor.

21. Unregistered people not entitled to recieve fees for attendance, surgery or prescriptions, so cannot sue for these in Court.

22. If registered may sue for fees in a Court of Law in New Zealand.

23. "Legally qualified medical practitioner" and "duly qualified medical practitioner" will be construed to mean registered under the Act.

24. The Board has the power to question any person applying for registration and to require a solemn declaration before a JP.

25. No unregistered person is to hold any public appointment AND no certificate required under any Act shall be valid unless the person signing is registered under the Act or Schedule D. This excludes medical officers of any of her Majesty's land or sea forces in full pay although such officer may not be registered under this Act.

26. If any false claims are made to the Registrar, or if a person is guilty of a felony in Great Britain or Ireland or any of the British Dominions, or guilty of discreditable or infamous conduct in any professional respect, that person's name may be erased from the register, and this will be published in the NZ Gazette.

27. If become registered fraudulently or by false representation, or falsely advertise registration, "shall be deemed guilty of misdemeanor and if convicted liable to prison with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding three years."

28. Higher degrees may be added to register on payment of a fee.

29. Annually in December a true copy of the register is to be published in the Government Gazette of the Colony. This shall be evidence of registration.

30. Schedule D. to be proved in Courts in same manner as in Great Britain and Ireland.

31. This Act is not to affect lawful occupation trade or business of chemists druggists or dentists.

32. The British Pharmacopoeia shall be used in all public hospitals and dispensaries in New Zealand.

33. Any penalty under this Act may be recovered in a summary way as provided by "the Justices of the Peace act 1866".

34. All fees received for registration under this Act to be used for expenses of the Act and the surplus to be paid to the Colonial Treasurer and form part of the Ordinary Revenue of the Colony.

Followed by the four Schedules. A B C D

The first Medical Board

James Hector M.D., Edin. Used medical degree to become a geologist. Travelled with Palliser to Canada, then came as ship's surgeon to NZ. Was geologist, explorer and scientific administrator. Director of Geological survey and head of Colonial Museum in Wellington.

Morgan Stanislaus Grace M.D. (from dictionary of NZ Biography Vol 2.), born in Ireland, studied in Paris, degree from Germany, Lic R.S. Edin and so into the Army as Medical Officer and so to NZ. In practice in Wellington, doctor, politician and businessman. Was one of the founding Directors of AMP.

Leonard George Boor MRCS England and Wellington.

Alexander Johnston M.D. London and Wellington

Thomas Moore Philson M.D., Irish. Degrees from Edinburgh following which he gained an Army commission. Sent as Assistant Surgeon to Australia and then on to NZ. Good administrator and became an early Medical Superintendent at Auckland Hospital. gave his retirement present of

cash back to the hospital and eventually that formed the nucleus of the Philson library. NOTE Place on Medical Board not even mentioned in the biography.

Samuel Athenasius Cusack FRCSI , Degrees from London and Ireland. Worked in Nelson.

James Turnbull M.D., Degrees from Edinburgh and worked in Christchurch.

Edward Hulme M.D. according to the Dictionary of NZ Biography Vol 1 he came to NZ to Otago in the hope of abandoning medicine and becoming one of the colony's gentry. But he went "was short tempered, distant and abrupt" and drifted into medical administration. He was President of the Otago Medical Board from 1864 until it was dissolved in 1867, when he was on the new board. He later became a Foundation member of the Otago University Council.

* Note for some reason Dr. Hulme was not on the first register.

James Hector to be the President of the said Board.

They were asked to attend the first meeting which would be held at the Government Building, City of Wellington, on 7th January at 3 p.m. 1868

64 doctors immediately registered , all men.

****By 1868 an amendment to the Act followed a letter from Downing Street indicating that "it should be possible to distinguish unqualified medical practitioners" so the new Act in UK meant a need to reword the NZ Act. This entitled "any doctor registered under The Imperial Medical Act 1858 to register in New Zealand on proof of registration and payment of a fee."

The 1867 Act was unpopular with the doctors on account of the composition of the new Board (see Encyclopedia of NZ) as it included the Director of Geological Survey, the Comptroller of Public Accounts, the Secretary for Crown Lands, and the Auditor General.

By 1869 the doctors were ready to change the Act completely and on 3rd September 1869 a new Act was put forward.

*****An Act to repeal "The Medical Practitioners Act 1867" and to make other provisions in lieu thereof. 3rd September 1869

This Act was to come into force 1st January 1870. It was to be known as "the Medical Practitioner's Registration Act 1869" and repealed the previous Act except for any offences committed or penalties incurred before the passing of the new Act.

Because of this the **Medical Board was disestablished**.

New definitions were declared , in particular the Registrar-General was the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages, the Registrar meant the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages whose office was nearest the place of residence of the person applying for registration, AND the Registrar-General was to be responsible for the medical register.

The duties of the Registrar-General and his Registrars was spelt out in more detail, and a Certificate of registration was to be supplied.

Books of registration were to be open to the public, and doctors were entitled to have a higher degree entered in the register.

If registration had not been notified in the Gazette a written note from the Registrar-General would suffice as proof of registration.

The detail of who could be registered was changed very little except the "Australian" clause was removed and they were included among the others.

Notice **of intent to apply for** registration was to be inserted in the nearest local newspaper and in the New Zealand Gazette at least one month prior to application to the Registrar-General or Registrar.

A new clause entitled a person dissatisfied with the result of their application to appeal to the Supreme Court .

Fees for registration were to be up to a total of 2 guineas with provision made for a fee at each stage of the process. Those registered under the previous Act to be registered under the new one without fee.

All fees were now to be part of the consolidated fund.

* A doctor on the register was entitled to sue for unpaid fees , but unregistered doctors still had no entitlement.

Penalties for false representation remained the same.

Doctors present on first register who were in NZ prior to 1857 and then on 1868 register

Carl Frank Fischer, Auckland (from Berlin)

Walter Lee Auckland

Charles France Wellington

Frederick William Wright Lic. Medical Board Toronto B.N.A. (both in Wellington)

George Henry Gibson Wellington

Alexander Macdonald Auckland

Benjamin Moorhouse Canterbury (brother organised the Lyttelton tunnel)

Thomas Oldham Waimea South Nelson.

1868 Medical practitioners formerly registered under the Provincial Acts are exempt from payment of registration fees but are obliged to register under the MPA 1867

In order that the official register may constitute a complete list of medical practitioners in NZ it is desirable that practitioners registered under the Imperial Act of 1858 in Great Britain should have their names also placed on the NZ register.

By 1868 , 133 medical practitioners for a population of 228,000

BY 1871 there were 198 in total on register, still all men.

****I thought it would be useful at this stage to look at the overall picture in OTAGO

The first ships had arrived in the 1840s.

Otago became a province in 1853.

The gold rush started in the 1860s At the start of the goldrush there were 5 doctors known to be working in Dunedin, by 1862 there were 13, 1864 29. Most of them went back to practice of medicine after the gold had gone.

******University of Otago** started 1869/70. Open from the beginning to both sexes, all religions and all nationalities. (Arts, Medicine Law and Music)

The establishment of a Medical School was long and fully debated and was considered a calculated risk. It was one of the dreams of James Macandrew , an educated Scot who was the Provincial Superintendent, although enough qualified doctors were already coming into NZ.

A Medical School had been started in Melbourne Australia in 1863.

In May 1875 an embryo MEDICAL SCHOOL in Dunedin was established with 4 medical students and Dr. Millen Coughtrey (Edin) Professor of Anatomy and Physiology appointed. He later resigned and was followed by Dr. John Halliday Scott (Edin) aged 26 also an Anatomist. Initially the first 2 years were done in Dunedin and the next 2 in Britain, usually Edinburgh.

* Note problems with Medical Schools in Britain accepting the NZ first 2 years. First Coughtrey and then Scott went to Great Britain to argue the case for NZ students.

In 1882 the University Senate approved the degree of MB.ChB (NZ)

From 1885 the whole 4 years could be done in Dunedin. At this time 4 summer sessions were included using the facilities of Dunedin Hospital. This continued until the early 1920s with the addition of the 5th and later the addition of the 6th year clinical year.

William Ledingham CHRISTIE the first to graduate solely from New Zealand in 1887

Emily Siedeberg in 1891

At turn of century numbers restricted because of financial constraints.

Medical School opposite the hospital opened in 1917

By 1886 there were 444 doctors on the register.

By the end of 1900 there were 5 women on the register and 706 men

By 1923 870 doctors practising in NZ and 297 were Otago graduates.

****By 1931 it became evident that the increase in medical students was stretching the facilities to teach them.**

In 1937 the 6th year students began to go to the other metropolitan hospitals to extend their experience. i.e. Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland.

1940 100 students in each 2nd year intake

Priorities were to graduates of NZU, then those who had failed first time, then those from other centres in NZ.

1943 urgent request to Government to increase the intake. Increased to 120 at end of 1943.

However 1st Professional examination was tough so not until 1958 that more than 100 students were in the clinical classes.

(NOTE some of the above info was not included in detail)

******* Medical Practitioners Act 1908**

“To consolidate certain enactments of the General Assembly relating to the Registration of Medical Practitioners and the Practice of Anatomy.

Part I dealt with registration (nothing much extra to add)

Part II dealt with details of the Practice of Anatomy and became very important.

Medical Practitioners Act 1914 . (Selected details. Full text available)

An Act to make better Provision for the Registration and Control of Medical Practitioners. Dated 5/11/14 but not operational until 1/3/15.

(3). There is hereby instituted a Board to be called the **Medical Board** which shall consist of 7 members of which the Inspector General shall be one. The remaining 6 shall be registered medical practitioners and shall be appointed by the Governor General on recommendation of the BMA, a member of the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Otago who holds office as a member of the Board of Health.

To be appointed for 3 years and can be removed by the GG.

One to be appointed by Board to be Chairman for 1 year and to have the casting vote.

Then details of meetings and procedures etc. spelled out.

(8). Spells out who may be registered.

Graduate of University of New Zealand, those registered in Great Britain, those eligible for registration there, the holder of a Diploma (hereinafter called a foreign Diploma) approved by the Board and granted by any other institution than NZ or GB “after a course of not less than 5 years study of the subjects pertaining to a medical degree or license” provided that the Board thinks that NZ graduates would be entitled to practice in that country from which that diploma was granted. (so reciprocity expected)

Note the course at this time in NZ was 4 years and there had already been instances of people being denied registration due to insufficient length of study.

There follow details of those not registered due to felony or if not of good character. Then spells out requirement of notice of intent to register, the way objections can be heard and the method of appeal if application refused.

(32). If an application for registration is made, the Registrar General may at the request of the Chairman of the Medical Board issue a **Provisional Certificate** "which shall entitle that person to practise as a medical practitioner pending the consideration of his application by the Board". This will remain in force for 3 months but may be renewed OR withdrawn. The holder of such a certificate shall be deemed to be a registered medical practitioner.

Then provision made for all those previously registered in NZ to be deemed to be registered under the new Act.

Fees increased.

Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 1924 (24/10/24)

To be read in conjunction with the 1914 Act. NOW the **Medical Council** takes the place of the Board and the duties of all Registrars go to the Director General of Health. Note Health Act of 1920 had spelled out new duties for the Department of Health.

Clause 4 (2) no longer as of right for those with foreign diplomas registered in Great Britain to be on NZ register, but they have the same rights as those holding a foreign diploma.

This is as in 1914 for those holding a diploma in a country to which a NZ graduate could go to practice, AND ADDED in 1924 that "the doctor shall pass an examination in medicine and surgery to be prescribed and conducted by the Senate of the University of New Zealand", having still the requirement of not less than 5 years of study in medicine and surgery.

Clause 6 Disciplinary powers of the Council now spelled out.

The Director General of Health wrote to Sir Maui Pomare who was the Minister of Health thanking him for his help in getting this Bill through as it also added Education of doctors in the powers of the Medical Council.

Sir Maui Pomare was one of the few Maori doctors. The only figures I found were in 1948 when 6 Maori doctors were said to be registered with an unknown group of others who did not admit to being Maori.

Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 1949.

The Act of 1914 still seen as the principal Act. Disciplinary Committee now spelled out. No special comment on Foreign doctors.

Medical Practitioners Act 1950.

Now requires 6 years medical study from a foreign doctor and the requirement that they be on the register IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY unless they can show good reason for not being on that register.

Note by now there is a whole section on Discipline.

Foreign Doctors.

The first Foreign doctors I could find applying for registration in the first five years were 1870 George Trousseau Doctor of Medicine of the Faculty of Paris, Knight of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, France, now resident in Grahamston, Thames, Province of Auckland. (was registered)

Llewellyn Powell, MD Heidelberg, LRCP, MRCS UK (was registered)

(Interesting to read the applications. e.g. Thomas Docking Dunedin MD Eng N.B. Always at home except when called out upon urgent cases).

1871 Franz Alexander Hartmann, Leipzig, Germany, also registered in England

1873 Paul Reinhold Oscar Bohrdt Royal University of Berlin and Kiel, Surgeon of Medical Staff of the German Navy, now in Dunedin (wasn't registered ?why)

William Robert Gilling Samuels, Wanganui, MD of Univ. of Philadelphia and of Medical College Pennsylvania and member of the British Reform Assn. England. (not registered)

1875 Baron Rudolph von Mirbach from Munich, now in Wellington (was registered)

Johann Peter Ernst Ferdinand JOHANSON Doctor Med and Surg from Univ of Berlin, now in Motueka. (was registered)

Information regarding foreign doctors has been elusive. I found a request from the Medical School re the syllabus for medical schools in India dated 1918, but no reason why.

Searching the register for foreign degrees is also not always accurate. For instance I had read that Dr. Fletcher Telford, a Medical Officer of Health in Christchurch had a South African degree, but on the register his degree from Dublin shows. Later searches of the register showed that not even the doctors who I knew had foreign degrees had registered them, but had registered the NZ degree.

I could not find evidence of registration of Indian, or South African doctors, but by then my search was not as thorough as the early searches.

****From time to time there have been special reasons for the foreign doctors to be singled out. Most notably in the past this has been when there has been a sudden influx or what was seen as a potential problem.

****In 1931 there were already discussions at the Otago Medical School regarding the numbers of medical students, and the difficulty in finding clinical cases for them to see. There was also some overcrowding in the classrooms. (Ref The 3 Deans)

In 1933 in Germany, Hitler began the first discrimination against Jewish doctors. This refused Jewish doctors the right to health insurance practice. This also meant they had no access to the hospitals and nor were they able to study. Those who could began to leave Germany. Some went to Edinburgh to study there (a one year special course had been set up there). 500 left Germany in the first year. According to Dr. A. Sternberg reported in the Dominion on December 24 1934, 100 went to GB, 200 to Palestine, and the rest to France Italy and Switzerland. Some applied to come to New Zealand. The first one, in 1934, came in under the 1924 Act, and was asked to sit the final examination in Dunedin. Then came several with the added degree from Edinburgh (Dr. Sternberg came to Wellington).

The next three doctors who came between 1935 and 1937 were able to go to Dunedin and do 6th year there and sit the final examination. My father was one of them.

NONE of the refugees who were applying to come to NZ had qualifications which would allow registration here or in Great Britain.

The doors were closing fast on Jewish doctors in Europe, as on other professionals as well. The German Jewish newspapers were expelled from membership of the Reich Press Chamber, Art Dealers were ordered to sell out, and Pharmacists were forced to leave. The lawyers had been discriminated against early and so were the architects.

At the end of 1935 the German Jews were deprived of citizenship, except for those doctors who were World War 1 veterans. They were still acceptable. However by September 1938 even these were unable to work as doctors. This meant another 4,000 doctors were looking for somewhere to go. The borders were closing and for many of them the chance to leave Germany had been delayed too long.

Recently I heard a survivor from Auschwitz discussing the very public toilet buckets which they had to use. The people who emptied those buckets were the Jewish doctors.

In 1936 the **Medical Council** began to be very anxious about the numbers of refugees who might arrive. Records show that Medical Council meetings had been very infrequent for several years. However on the 27th of May 1936 an urgent meeting was called "for the main purpose of considering applications for registration for persons from foreign countries," according to letters between Dr. Newland (Chairman of Council) and C.J. Drake (Secretary). (Ref file H 1 [17719] 183/42) There was also anxiety about the "Indian question", but no later reference is made to that.

The minutes of that meeting are not in the records. However it seems from the minutes of later meetings that a recommendation was made that the requirement would be three years of study at the Medical School prior to taking final examinations and then registration in NZ.

The minutes of the Medical Council meeting in October 1937 show that the case of 2 **Canadian** graduates was discussed. As Canada would require NZ graduates to sit registration exams there, then NZ would not accept Canadian degrees here. However the Canadian registered radiologist with an Edinburgh degree would get provisional registration, and could sit the final exams if he wished to get full registration. So he could work here.

At the Medical Council meeting on 6th July 1938 there was a discussion regarding the registration of foreign graduates. Should there be a request for an amendment to current legislation? The decision made was to wait for another year.

****At that same meeting, in reply to a question to Mr. Drake from Sir Lindo Ferguson, Mr. Drake stated that "in the case of foreign doctors it had been the practice to inform inquirers who were Jewish refugees that in the event of their obtaining a permit from the Minister of Customs, the Council would be prepared to consider allowing them to qualify for registration here by undergoing a 3 year course of study at the Otago Medical School and passing the second professional and both sections of the final professional examination. In regard to all other foreign inquirers it had been the practice to inform them that if they wished to obtain medical registration in NZ it would be necessary for them to undergo the full 6 year course of medical study in the Dominion".

This was considered to be likely to lead to anomalies, so at the motion of Sir Donald McGavin it was resolved that in future each case would be referred to the Medical Council and considered separately and on their respective merits.

Council members at the time included Sir Lindo Ferguson, Dr. Hugh Douglas of Hamilton, Dr. P.S. Foster of Christchurch, Dr.T.W.J. Johnson. Dr. W. Newlands of Dunedin was Chairman.

At the meeting of 24th March 1939 there was disquiet re the large number of foreign doctors applying to come to NZ. There was a suggestion that at least a fifth of the refugees were doctors (not true). There was anxiety regarding the possibility of war.

Later figures show that 34 Jewish doctors were accepted out of a total of 1100 refugees.

67 had been granted permits by the Minister of Customs. Some did not arrive. The permits were valid for 2 years. Several who had dental as well as medical degrees opted for a career as a dentist as at that time dental registration was available to them.

At the meeting of the Medical Council 5th June 1940 it was decided that legislation should be requested allowing "control" over the practising locations of foreign doctors, especially as so many locals were leaving their practices. Later still there was a suggestion that this should apply to all new graduates.

**You may be aware that at the outbreak of war all those who had not been naturalised were declared to be enemy aliens. The Alien Control Emergency Regulations. Georg Lemchen (my father) had certificate no.12440. Later discussions revolved around the acceptability of enemy

aliens in public positions, e.g. in hospitals, health department posts and school health services, and also whether they should be registered here at all.

One Italian doctor had had his registration accepted in Great Britain, but this reciprocity had not been discussed with NZ so this was also a cause of disquiet.

There were of course anomalies. The June 1940 minutes of the Medical Council show that a doctor from Witwatersrand, South Africa qualified 1934 was granted full registration, whereas 3 other doctors from GB qualified 1936, 36, and 38 respectively were granted only provisional registration.

23/1/40 The Director General of Health replying to an enquiry from Australia. "United Kingdom registration is acceptable in NZ. This Dominion has reciprocal arrangements with UK, South Africa, some universities in India, as well as with Australia".

***** 19/4/40 (Ref H 1 183/47) Registrar of the University of Otago. "From 16/4/40 permission will not be granted to any further applicants to take the special 3 years course of study at the Medical School".

In June 1941 Dr. Newlands wrote to the Secretary C.J. Drake, "Dr. Watt, Director General of Health, has made some advance in arrangements for the utilisation of the Refugee Doctors who will soon be eligible for registration. A certain number of them would make satisfactory resident medical doctors".

NOTE.** This is a new strand appearing, the Refugee Doctors.

Discussions with one doctor's family indicate that he had a government grant while studying at the Medical School and then was directed where to work. The choice was Gisborne or Lower Hutt.

After the war (File H 1 [34332] 146/4 matters arising out of war), letters from Dr. G.C.Geel (Major) the Deputy Head of the Netherlands Indies Public Health Service show a request for doctors accompanying the evacuees from the East Indies to be granted temporary registration in NZ, so that these people could be treated by doctors who understood their problems and could speak their language. "Could they have temporary registration to enable them to prescribe poisonous drugs and to issue death certificates."

There was much discussion regarding who should pay, and the limits on the doctors.

5 doctors were granted temporary registration here, with the proviso that they would only treat the refugees.

The certificates were issued for 3 months only, and only for that work, but the doctors could apply for renewal. (Note one was stolen along with cash and passport). Issued to Drs. D.K. Wielanga, A.B.Wielanga-Bergmans, R.H.de Boer, C.J.H.de Geus, and M.P. Wapstra.

Some of these doctors reapplied, some left, others came to make up the numbers, and when they left NZ the records are meticulous.

Dr. Geel was Casualty Officer Hutt Hospital when I was a House Surgeon. The Register shows his NZ degree in 1955 from Otago/ I do not know how long he ~~was~~ studied there.

The next influx of doctors came in the late forties as the figures show. Most of these were from the UK

Figures collected for the Health Department manpower study in the 1950s by analyst Dr. Eascott show

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
NZ Graduate	21	22	30	57	34
Overseas grad.	5	5	4	8	3

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
NZ Graduate	34	23	51	75	60	70
Overseas grad	9	9	9	15	7	7

	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
NZ Graduate	80	68	79	81	81
Overseas grad.	3	-	6	5	22

over head

	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
NZ Graduate	82	101	101	91	87
Overseas grad	55	38	50	35	65

Grand total 1688 NZ 1328 Overseas 360

Note The overseas graduates were older and were estimated to have half of their working lifespan left.

1868 133 doctors for 228,000

over head

1892 427 doctors for a population of 672,750

1910 810 doctors for 1,002,679

1930 1,382 1,438,239

1950 2,313 1,812,946

**** New Zealand doctors have achieved well overseas and the foreign doctors also achieved much in New Zealand. There are always those who let themselves down, and in so doing diminish the regard in which their fellow countrymen and women are held. They are fortunately the minority.

I would like to end by paying tribute to my parents, Dr. Georg Lemchen and Dr. Ruth Lemchen who came to NZ as Jewish refugees in 1935. He worked as a dedicated GP in Upper Hutt from 1936 to 1971 after doing one year at the Medical School in Dunedin, and she was a devoted wife and mother who with the added pressure of looking after parents and in-laws in a strange land was not able to do the 3 years which would have allowed her registration.

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