

REPORT OF COMMISSION.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable William Hillier, Earl of Onslow, of Onslow in the County of Salop; Viscount Cranley, of Cranley in the County of Surrey; Baron Onslow, of Onslow in the County of Salop, and of West Clandon in the County of Surrey; Baron Cranley of Imbercourt; Baronet; Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Her Majesty's Colony of New Zealand and its dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same: *

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the undersigned, acting under the authority of the Commission issued by your Excellency on the 19th August, 1890, empowering us to hold an inquiry touching complaints which have been made that the hospital known as the Dunedin Hospital, or certain parts thereof, are in an insanitary condition and dangerous to the health of the inmates, and particularly the allegation that certain cases of blood-poisoning have arisen in the said Hospital from the state of certain wards, have the honour to report,—

1. We met in Dunedin on the 18th and 19th August, 1890, to consider and settle the order and conduct of the proceedings, and arranged to commence our sittings for the taking of evidence at the Resident Magistrate's Court on Wednesday, the 20th August. After hearing the representations made to us by the parties interested, we further resolved that the proceedings should be open to the Press and the public. These arrangements were duly notified to the representatives of the Hospital Trustees and Dr. Batchelor. At the commencement of the meeting on Wednesday Mr. Solomon, solicitor, intimated that he appeared on behalf of Dr. Batchelor, and handed to us a complaint in writing, signed by Dr. Batchelor, in the following words: "I wish to make the following complaints to you, and to request that they may be considered and inquired into at the forthcoming Commission: (1.) That there are defects in the sanitary condition of the Dunedin Hospital. (2.) That these defects are of so serious a character as to be a source of grave danger to the inmates, and call for immediate remedy."

Mr. Frederick Chapman, solicitor, then stated that he appeared on behalf of the Hospital Trustees, but only for the purpose of meeting certain specific complaints contained in a letter from Dr. Batchelor to the Hospital Trustees, dated the 22nd July, and which letter had been forwarded by the Trustees to the Government, as containing the matters upon which they demanded inquiry.

The contentions of counsel on this preliminary point, which involved the definition of the questions at issue, will be found fully set forth in Appendix A to this report. (Extracts from *Otago Daily Times*.)

The result of the discussion was that the subject-matters of both letters were considered to be before the Commissioners, notwithstanding that the terms of the Commission seemed to require that the complaints to be inquired into should have been made to the Commissioners, and not to other persons previous to the issue of the Commission.

The letter submitted by Mr. Chapman and the specific complaints it contains are in substance as follows: That in two cases, after operations performed by Dr. Batchelor, which were not of a serious character, blood-poisoning supervened. That one of these patients died, and the other will have a tedious recovery. That the complication (fatal in one case) was due to unhealthy hospital influences.

The Commissioners (Sir James Hector acting as chairman) proceeded to take evidence on the 20th, 21st, 22nd, 26th, 28th, 29th, and 30th August, and on the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th September. The Commissioners thus held sittings on nineteen days, during which they took the evidence of twenty-five witnesses, and received seventy-three documents and plans.

On the 25th August the Commissioners examined the Hospital together, and inspected the various wards and offices, so as to be able to apprehend thoroughly the references made to the different parts of the building in the course of the investigation.

On the 11th September the chairman also visited the Hospital at daylight, and observed the condition of the ventilation in the various wards.

2. At the first public sitting, on the 20th August, Mr. Solomon opened his case with an address, and outlined the defects which, as he contended, exist in the Dunedin Hospital, and respecting which he proposed to call evidence. The defects he enumerated, and all other defects which have been alleged during the investigation, may be conveniently classified as follows: (a) Affecting the site; (b) faulty plan of construction; (c) imperfect system of ventilation, lighting, and heating; (d) imperfect floors and walls; (e) overcrowding wards; (f) drainage; (g) closets, &c.; (h) baths and lavatories; (i) special wards; (j) special-case rooms; (k) kitchens; (l) nursing; (m) convalescent wards; (n) general sanitary condition; (o) falling wards; (p) new hospital; (q) dangers require immediate remedy; (r) domestic management; (s) results of practice.

Mr. Solomon called and examined the following witnesses: (1) Dr. Batchelor, (2) Dr. Maunsell, (3) Dr. Roberts, (4) Dr. Lindo Ferguson (members of the honorary medical staff of the Dunedin Hospital); (5) Dr. Closs, of Invercargill; (6) Dr. De Lautour, of Oamaru; (7) Dr. Truby King, Superintendent of Seacliff Asylum; and (8) Dr. De Renzi, of Christchurch Hospital.

Mr. Chapman then opened his case with an address, and in support of his contention called and examined the following witnesses: (9) Dr. Gordon Macdonald, (10) Dr. Stenhouse, (11) Dr. Jeffcoat, (12) Dr. Colquhoun, (13) Dr. Ogston, (14) Dr. John Macdonald, and (15) Dr. Coughtrey (members of the honorary medical staff of the Dunedin Hospital); (16) Dr. Copland, house surgeon; (17) Mr. Hogg, clinical clerk to Dr. Batchelor; (18) Mr. Miller, Chairman of the Trustees; (19) Mr. Burns, Secretary to the Trustees, and hospital steward; (20) Mr. Wales, architect; (21) Mrs. Burns, matron; and Misses (22) Fraser, (23) Shaw, (24) Waymouth, and (25) Monson, hospital nurses.