

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 20TH AUGUST, 1890.

Dr. BATCHELOR sworn and examined.

1. *Mr. Solomon.*] What is your name?—Frederick Campion Batchelor.
2. What is your title?—M.D., M.R.C.S.
3. Are you registered on the roll of medical practitioners for New Zealand?—Yes, I believe that I am.
4. You are, I think, a member of the staff of the Dunedin Hospital?—I am.
5. For how long have you been a member of that staff?—For about twelve years, but I am not quite certain. It may be a little more, but Mr. Burns, the house secretary, will be able to tell you exactly.
6. When you were first appointed what position on the medical staff did you occupy?—I cannot tell you exactly. I was for a year or two on the medical staff, and was afterwards on the surgical staff. I think there was no distinction at first: their duties were not defined at first.
7. At all events, you were a member of the surgical staff for a number of years?—Yes, I was.
8. Since 1886, in what capacity have you served on the staff of the Dunedin Hospital?—I have been a specialist in gynecological and obstetrical cases for the last four years.
9. I will now put to you a general question to lead up to the subject. What has been your opinion for some time past as to the hygienic condition of the Dunedin Hospital?—I have held a very strong opinion almost from my first connection with the Hospital, I may say, that it was exceedingly bad. I have heard the members of the staff frequently discuss the subject among themselves, and I think that we have all practically agreed that its hygienic condition is very bad—indeed, almost as bad as any hospital can be—possibly, I should say, as bad as any hospital I have seen. I will say that, at any rate.
10. When did you first definitely draw the attention of the staff or the Trustees to this condition of affairs?—The attention of the staff had been drawn to it for a number of years. We had been trying for several years to effect changes in the Dunedin Hospital. There were so many reforms that we wanted that we really did not know where to begin. I think that the reform of the nursing was the most urgent of all the reforms, and I think that it was an alteration in the nursing that we all tried to get effected first.
11. In the month of May, 1887—the question was brought before the attention of the staff at that time, was it not?—Yes; I think it was at a meeting, but I would not be quite sure, called on my advice. However, it is in the minute-book of the Hospital.
12. *The Chairman.*] When you use the pronoun “we,” do you mean the Hospital staff at that time?—Yes. I am speaking of my own knowledge. The Hospital staff were not thoroughly in accord. One or two of the staff did not agree that some of the alterations were necessary, but the majority of the staff did.
13. Perhaps it would be better if you were to say “I,” as one of the Hospital staff, instead of “we,” as the latter term involves the opinion of persons who are not clearly defined?—Just so.
14. *Mr. Solomon:* Will you just read out from that book? [Hands a book to the witness.]  
*The Chairman:* What is he going to read from?  
*Witness:* From the minute-book of the Hospital staff.
15. *Mr. Solomon.*] You find there—do you not?—that the question of reform was thereupon brought before the medical staff by you?—Yes; I see that it was brought forward by me.
16. Do you know whether that was referred to the Trustees?—Yes. At that time we had considerable discussion as to what we should do. I remember that I had some time previously a case of septicæmia which I was unable to account for satisfactorily. It was the case of Mrs. Sophia Munro, I think, and I cited it as it was a specially strong one, which ought to be brought forward. There was considerable discussion among the staff as to what was the best thing to be done, and it was agreed that we should meet the Trustees, and report to them as to the very unsatisfactory condition of the Hospital, and make certain suggestions for its improvement.
17. Was anything definite done by the Trustees towards improving the condition of the Hospital?—We met the Trustees and had a long discussion about it. I think, myself, that the thing which we at that time considered to be the most urgent was the operating-room. That came about in consequence of our having a very small operating-room and a number of medical students crowding around us. We could see that that was a very grave source of danger, and we thought that it must be done away with. We agreed that was the first and most important matter requiring to be dealt with at that time. I was doubtful myself whether it was the most important matter, but we urged that most strongly. The next thing that we urged was the nursing. We regarded a change of the nursing as being essential. And finally we recommended the providing of special wards for special cases.
18. What did you do next? Did you not read your paper to the Trustees?—Yes.
19. That was in February, 1889, was it not?—Yes. I should like to make some explanation about that. We were in the habit every year of sending in notice to the annual meetings of the Trustees—it was Dr. Colquhoun who first suggested this—pointing out the necessity which existed