

official experts"; while in another leading article, dated the 3rd February, 1903, we find the same paper vigorously supporting building for infectious diseases within the Hospital grounds. Similarly, we find a member of the Hospital Board, on the 8th April, 1902, at a Board meeting advocating the removal of the Infectious Diseases Hospital "some distance from town," and on the 23rd January, 1903, the same member telling a meeting of local bodies' representatives that the Hospital authorities were quite able to treat such cases at the General Hospital. Certainly at this time there was a strong public feeling against having an infectious-diseases hospital in the centre of the city, and there was talk of forcibly pulling down the plague-buildings in the Domain.

To complicate matters, an outbreak of scarlet fever and diphtheria occurred in March, and the accommodation provided by the Board naturally proved utterly inadequate, with the result that the Plague Hospital was taken by the Hospital authorities to meet the necessities of the moment. We were now without accommodation for plague, and fearing that at any time we might have such a case to deal with I approached the Hospital Board on the question of providing something in return for this seizure of the Plague Hospital. That I was not mistaken in my anxiety was shown by the fact that sixteen days later the first case occurred. It was somewhat of a surprise to find, when, on the 3rd April, I met a sub-committee of the Board on the subject, that they absolutely declined to assist me in the matter, and, further, taking advantage of the fact that under the Health Act they could not be called on to deal with infectious cases, threatened to refuse further treatment of any infectious disease, even going the length of discussing the advisability of turning the cases then in the Plague Hospital "loose upon the town." Fortunately, owing chiefly to the influence of the Chairman, Mr. Stitchbury, and Mr. Bollard, better counsels prevailed, and at a meeting on the 8th April an undertaking was given to make temporary provision for possible plague cases, and this was done, though many members protested. But it was evident that the whole question of treatment of infectious diseases was unstable. The Plague Hospital was merely a temporary structure, not intended for constant occupation, or suited for more than one class of disease. It was insufficiently isolated from the General Hospital and from the public, and opinion was strongly against its presence on the Domain grounds. Moreover, the attitude taken by the Hospital Board was a warning that they could not be relied on to continue the care of infectious cases under existing legislation, and they had further shown a lack of foresight in their methods of dealing with the subject. Their tendency to pick and choose which cases they should deal with, and which leave to the local bodies, was in itself sufficient to warrant the determination of the Health Department to place matters on a sound basis, and erect a hospital on modern lines, with ambulance, steam disinfectors, proper provision for classification of cases, and adequate accommodation for the nursing staff, on a site admitting of all infectious cases being there treated. Accordingly, at the meeting of the Hospital Board on the 8th April, when Mr. Bollard introduced a scheme for the erection of an infectious-diseases hospital on the General Hospital Grounds, I opposed it, feeling that such a site in no measure met the requirements, and refused some days later, when approached by the Board, to approve of the plan. Again, on the 21st April, at a meeting of city and suburban local bodies, I advocated the erection of a modern infectious-diseases hospital, and on the motion of the Mayor of Auckland it was unanimously resolved to urge the Government to amend the legislation so that such a hospital could be built on behalf of the local bodies by the Hospital Board. On the 23rd April, at a conference between Dr. Mason and the Chairman of the Hospital Board and the Mayors of the city and Grey Lynn, the question was further discussed, and it was agreed that a general meeting of local bodies concerned be held to lay before them the needs for a special infectious-diseases hospital, and that the Hospital Board meanwhile should erect a small building to help in meeting immediate requirements, this building to subsequently become an observation ward for doubtful cases occurring in the General Hospital, such as is possessed by every well-appointed institution.

Public feeling at the time certainly justified Dr. Mason's determination to take such steps as were in his power to do away with the state of chaos in regard to infectious disease. Accordingly, the meeting of delegates of local authorities was called for the 28th April. The following was the text of the notice telegraphed to the fifty-one bodies which comprise the Auckland Hospital District: "The question of erecting one general hospital for the treatment of all infectious diseases, instead of requiring each local authority to look after such cases in addition to paying for maintenance of the General Hospital, will be discussed at the City Council Chambers on Monday, 28th April, at 11 o'clock. Dr. Mason has come from Wellington in order to obtain the views of the various bodies affected, and will be glad if you will attend or appoint a delegate to represent your Board." I have quoted the telegram in full, for it forms in itself a sufficient answer to two charges brought later against the Department—first, that the local bodies thought it was a hospital merely for plague and smallpox, though the telegram specifically says *all* infectious diseases; second, that Dr. Mason had acted in an arbitrary manner, without due regard to the public wishes. It is evident that, in calling together these bodies to consult their views, he was taking pains to avoid even the semblance of dictation. Had he been inclined that way he might, in accordance with section 38 of the Public Health Act, have directed them to build the hospital without further parley.

The meeting of the 28th April, however, was encouraging. Some thirty delegates were present, and almost all the bodies were represented. There was absolutely no hostility, and the following resolutions were passed unanimously: (1.) Affirming the need for immediately erecting a hospital for infectious disease. (2.) Asking the Chief Health Officer to exercise the powers vested in him by the Public Health Act, and declare the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid District an area for the purpose of erecting the infectious-diseases hospital. (3.) That in the