

1911.
NEW ZEALAND.

CHARGES AGAINST THE ADMINISTRATION OF RAROTONGA,
COOK ISLANDS :

CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE ADMISSION OF PATIENTS INTO HOSPITAL

Laid upon the Table of the House by Leave.

SIR,— New Zealand Cook Islands Administration, Rarotonga, 22nd February, 1911.
I have the honour to enclose for your information copies of correspondence between Dr. Dawson, Dr. Story, and myself on the question of admitting patients to the Hospital for surgical attendance.

I have, &c.,

J. EMAN SMITH,

Resident Commissioner.

The Under-Secretary, Department of Justice, Wellington.

[ENCLOSURES.]

DEAR SIR,—

Teotue, 31st January, 1911.

I shall be obliged if you will inform me if the Hospital is ready to receive patients for surgical treatment, and, if not, when it will be. I have a patient suffering from a serious malady and requiring immediate surgical attendance.

Will you please give this matter immediate attention, as it is decidedly urgent.

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

Yours, &c.,

C. M. DAWSON, M.B., C.M.

DR. STORY.—Please enable me to reply.—J. E. S.—1st February, 1911.

DEAR SIR,—

Rarotonga, 1st February, 1911.

Referring to Dr. Dawson's letter addressed to you of 31st January, requesting to know if the Hospital is now ready to receive patients for surgical treatment, I have to say that it is ready for any urgent cases.

Sundry appliances are still required, which no doubt will be furnished on return of the Chief Medical Officer.

I remain, &c.,

Captain J. Eman Smith, Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

A. C. STORY.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 1st February, 1911.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st January, received by me this day. As far as I am aware, the Hospital is ready to receive patients for surgical treatment. If the patient be a Native he will be attended to free of charge by Dr. Story, who is acting for Dr. Chesson, the Chief Medical and Health Officer, now on short sick-leave in New Zealand. If it should be a European patient of your own, I will have no objection to your using the Hospital for such patient pending the return of the Chief Medical and Health Officer. On his arrival he will deal with all questions such as this: I do not interfere with his Department.

I have, &c.,

J. EMAN SMITH,

Resident Commissioner.

Dr. C. M. Dawson, M.B., C.M., Rarotonga.

SIR,—

Toetue, 3rd February, 1911.

I shall be obliged if you will ascertain and inform me whether the Acting Medical Officer will admit to the Hospital for treatment a case of cancer of the breast, for immediate operation; a case of suppurating appendicitis; and a case of ischioirectal abscess. The patients are Natives.

Discourtesy on the part of the Chief Medical Officer compels me to deal through you in this matter.

I am, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. M. DAWSON, M.B., C.M.

[COPY OF MEMORANDUM TO DR. STORY.]

I ENCLOSE for your information a letter received yesterday afternoon from Dr. Dawson. Will you kindly enable me to reply.

4th February, 1911.

J. EMAN SMITH,

Resident Commissioner.

DEAR SIR,—

In reply to your letter of the 4th instant, I have to inform you that I only consented to temporarily act for Dr. Chesson during his absence. The cases referred to in Dr. Dawson's letter, I think, had better be left for the Chief Medical Officer to deal with on his return.

Yours faithfully,

Captain J. Eman Smith, Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

A. C. STORY.

SIR,—

New Zealand Cook Islands Administration, Rarotonga, 8th February, 1911.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, asking me if the Acting Medical Officer will admit to the Hospital certain patients mentioned by you which I understand you are attending. I have referred the correspondence to Dr. Story. He states he thinks the question had better be left over for the Chief Medical and Health Officer to deal with on his return, and I agree with him.

Of course, you understand that Dr. Story only consented to act temporarily for Dr. Chesson whilst absent on sick-leave. For your information I may say that I expect Dr. Chesson on the 16th instant.

I have, &c.,

Dr. C. M. Dawson, M.B., C.M., Rarotonga.

J. EMAN SMITH,

Resident Commissioner.

SIR,—

New Zealand Cook Islands Administration, Rarotonga, 27th April, 1911.

Further to my letter of the 23rd February last, I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of subsequent correspondence between Dr. Story, Dr. Dawson, and myself regarding the admission of his patients (Dr. Dawson's) to the Hospital for operation.

I have, &c.,

J. EMAN SMITH,

Resident Commissioner.

The Under-Secretary, Department of Justice, Wellington.

[ENCLOSURES.]

SIR,—

Toetue, 27th February, 1911.

I find that the Hospital was gazetted as open in April, 1910. As Dr. Story has declined to admit to the Hospital the patients referred to in my letters of 31st January and 3rd February last, and as Dr. Chesson has not returned at the time you indicated in your letter of 8th February, I must ask you what is to be done in the matter.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that some surgical cases will not wait for any one's convenience, and as one of the cases referred to in my letter of 31st January has already died, and I had to do an emergency operation on another in a Native house, I decline to accept any responsibility, either legal or moral, in this or any similar case. By the terms of your letter of 8th February the responsibility will be shared by Dr. Story and yourself.

I am, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

C. M. DAWSON.

DEAR SIR,—

Rarotonga, 28th February, 1911.

I have seen Dr. Dawson's letter of the 27th instant, and have to report that no cases came to the Hospital for operation.

Your letter of 1st February addressed to Dr. Dawson informed him that the Hospital was at his disposal pending the return of the Chief Medical Officer, at present away on sick-leave, who would then deal with such questions. Up to the date of writing no case has been brought to the Hospital by Dr. Dawson, and my assistance has not been requested to attend to Dr. Dawson's private patients. I know nothing of Dr. Dawson's private affairs.

Yours, &c.,

Captain J. Eman Smith, Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

A. C. STORY.

SIR,—

Rarotonga, 14th March, 1911.

I am compelled to remind you that you have not replied to my letter of 27th February last. Since then I have had a letter from you on a matter of minor importance. You have been placed in charge of the administration of these Islands, and it is your duty to see that your officers do their work.

I am, &c.,

C. M. DAWSON.

P.S.—Perhaps you cannot see that in this matter human lives are concerned.
The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

SIR,—

14th March, 1911.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 27th February last and the 14th instant respectively; and, in reply, to inform you that the whole of the correspondence will be handed to the Chief Medical Officer on his arrival for him to deal with, as indicated in mine of 1st February addressed to you.

I have, &c.,

J. EMAN SMITH,

Resident Commissioner.

Dr. C. M. Dawson, Rarotonga.

SIR,—

Cook Islands Administration, Wellington, 18th April, 1911.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd February last, forwarding copies of correspondence between Dr. Dawson and yourself, relating to the admission of certain patients to the Hospital.

Further correspondence on the subject has been published in the *Dominion*, from which it appears that one of the patients referred to by Dr. Dawson has since died, and that an operation on another had to be performed in a Native house. The correspondence has caused considerable comment here, and I think it most unfortunate that every possible facility was not given for the treatment of these cases in the Hospital.

I shall be glad to receive full reports, giving the reasons for the objections to the admission of these cases to the Hospital.

I have, &c.,

The Resident Commissioner, Rarotonga.

J. CARROLL.

SIR,—

New Zealand Cook Islands Administration, Rarotonga, 16th May, 1911.

Referring to your letter of the 18th April last, at the time of writing you had not received mine of the 27th April forwarding further correspondence on the subject mentioned in your letter.

You will notice by my letter of the 1st February that Dr. Dawson was given every opportunity of sending in the patients mentioned by him whom he was attending prior to the 1st February. He did not send them to the Hospital when they would have been admitted.

If you refer to Dr. Story's letter of the 28th February you will see the following: "Up to date of writing no case has been brought to the Hospital by Dr. Dawson, and my assistance has not been requested to attend to Dr. Dawson's private patients." If Dr. Dawson had sent his patients to the Hospital, in accordance with my letter of the 1st February, all that possibly could be done by himself and with the assistance of the Acting Medical Officer would have been done. After all, they were his private patients.

In consequence of the illness of Dr. Chesson, which was backed up by medical certificates, before any such cases were reported by Dr. Dawson to exist Dr. Chesson had left for New Zealand. It was not until after his departure that Dr. Dawson reported his cases. Dr. Chesson left on the 26th January last, and Dr. Dawson's first communication in the matter was dated the 31st of that month—five days after Dr. Chesson's departure. It must be apparent to any one that prior to the departure of Dr. Chesson Dr. Dawson knew of these cases, which were his own private ones—if they existed.

The *Gazette* notice referred to I enclose a copy of. It was merely to intimate that as the old Hospital had been destroyed the new Hospital was open to attend to the wants of the Natives as they had been attended in the past—some twenty years. At the time the notice was issued it was not possible, with the limited time at my disposal, to equip the Hospital as it is now. Dr. Dawson knew this well, therefore his reference to the opening of the Hospital carries no weight.

In a correspondence such as this you must be aware that I am entirely in the hands of the medical division, as I do not profess to know anything about medicine. The illness of Dr. Chesson compelled a rapid rearrangement of things to enable him to comply with the advice rendered him by his medical advisers, and the only assistance I could possibly obtain on the island was that of Dr. Story, pending the appointment of Dr. Perceval.

Dr. Dawson, instead of sending the patients, as he was requested to do, and accompanying them himself, and availing himself of any assistance Dr. Story could give him, did not do so. It is clear that he allowed the patient—if a patient existed—to suffer in consequence of his own neglect to avail himself of the offer made in my letter of the 1st February by taking the two patients referred to by him—his own private patients—to the Hospital, or request the Government to send for them, neither of which he did.

Dr. Dawson has since his return here had his own hospital and nurse, and it is very strange that he did not take the case—his own patient—to his own institution.

I have requested the Government Interpreter to try and locate the death of the man alluded to, and I enclose herewith his report. This may or may not be the case referred to by Dr. Dawson, but the Interpreter believes it to be the case.

Might I draw your attention to the correspondence already before you of Dr. Dawson's attitude with regard to a true case of leprosy in the Penrhyn settlement on this island, and his action thereon; also the correspondence which is before you with regard to a plague scare which proved to have no existence. I think I may be pardoned if, when these two cases are read, I say that I doubt very much whether the three cases he quoted ever existed. He did not consult Dr. Chesson on the subject prior to the latter's departure, neither did he do so to Dr. Story.

You must not forget the statements made by Dr. Dawson to Dr. Chesson that his fight was not with Dr. Chesson but with the New Zealand Government. I am, of course, as representative of the New Zealand Government here, bearing the brunt, but as my conscience is clear and my administration can always be vindicated, I pay very little attention to the sayings or writings of Dr. Dawson and two other individuals who have no interest in the Cook Islands whatever except of a vindictive nature.

I have, &c.,

J. EMAN SMITH,
Resident Commissioner.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge, Cook Islands Administration, Wellington.

STATEMENT MADE BY RAEA VAINE (NGAU), MOTHER OF TAU (DECEASED).

My son resided at Titikaveka. Tau was his name. He had been suffering from severe diarrhoea. I was sent for, and went out to see him. When I got to Titikaveka I found him in a very weak state. He also suffered from some complaint of the anus, which discharged a great deal of pus. The Taote Meangiti (Dr. Dawson) attended him and cured the diarrhoea, but he was very weak, just skin and bones. The doctor said that *kare e ravenga*—there was not much hope for him. I saw myself that there was no hope, for when I got out to Titikaveka he had fallen down under an au-tree, and we left him there and dug a hole under him so as he could do his stool into that hole. After the diarrhoea had ceased the deceased was in a very low condition. I attended on him the whole time. I did not see the doctor perform any operation on him, nor did he tell me to have him brought into the Hospital. He died about a week after I went to him—died in February or March, I am not sure. My daughter knows all about it.

The above statement, made by Ngau to me this 17th day of May, was taken down by me at the time she made it.

17th May, 1911.

S. SAVAGE,
Government Interpreter.

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