

81. On the 13th June Dr. Valintine visited Trentham Camp at the request of the Minister of Defence, who wished to ascertain exactly how matters then stood with reference to the accommodation for treatment of the sick. Dr. Valintine, although Inspector-General of Hospitals, on this date had no official military status. It was a wet and stormy day, and it appeared to him, after inspecting the marquees where the sick lay, that it was imperative to at once secure better accommodation. Dr. Valintine stated that the sick marquees "struck him as being overcrowded," and that they "would not have been overcrowded like that except in a case of emergency." He saw sick men lying on the floor in one marquee. The measles were separate from the influenza cases. One of the measles marquees was for the acutely sick, and the other for convalescents. Dr. Valintine asked the Medical Officers in camp if they were satisfied with the existing conditions, and they said "No." On his own initiative he commandeered certain buildings belonging to the Wellington Racing Club, and, in conjunction with Colonel Purdy and his staff, had the patients all removed into those buildings that day. This was done in closed motor-cars. The buildings consisted of the quarters occupied at racing meetings by the trainers and jockeys, and when these were filled the rest of the patients and the orderlies were placed in the adjacent loose-boxes. These boxes, notwithstanding their purpose, were clean and sanitary, as after each race meeting—so the secretary stated—the mangers are disinfected and the whole of the boxes perfectly cleaned. Dr. Valintine was informed that there were forty measles cases and some sixty other patients, but when the removal took place the numbers were found to amount to 140. There was an insufficiency of bedsteads, and the new accommodation, such as it was, was overcrowded; but notwithstanding these drawbacks it was considered better to get the men out of the tents. He at once reported his action to the Minister, who approved of it.

Racecourse buildings commandeered.

Removal of patients.

82. On the following day the racecourse authorities offered the use of the tea-kiosk as being more suitable.

83. Having before this failed to obtain permission to utilize the racecourse buildings, he had accepted an offer generously made by Mr. Pearce, of Levin and Co. (Limited), of the use of a large wool and hemp store situated at Kaiwarra, which proved very valuable. This building had to be fitted out, and was ready for occupation on the 18th June, on which date 170 measles patients were accommodated there, and finally 250—on one occasion the number rising to 260—patients were provided for in that building.

Levin and Co's. store at Kaiwarra.

84. At first only a hundred bedsteads were put in, that being all that could be then obtained. Dr. Valintine had resolved to obtain a thousand bedsteads, but these were not immediately procurable in the Dominion. He was disappointed in not receiving a certain number promised from Dunedin, nor could the Defence Stores supply them. Many were obtained from private sources, as well as at least fifty from Porirua Mental Hospital. That many patients here and elsewhere were at the outset temporarily without beds is thus explained.

Difficulty in obtaining bedsteads

85. On Dr. Valintine taking charge under his appointment on the 23rd June as Director of Military Hospitals, the accommodation was becoming congested in the trainers' quarters, and seventy-six influenza patients were placed in the kiosk. There was still a shortage of beds, and so some of the patients had to lie on their palliasses on the timber floors inside. On the open veranda of the kiosk, which had a concrete floor, the men were given beds so far as and as soon as they were available.

Removal to kiosk.

86. At this time the number of patients was increasing daily, and from the 23rd June till the 9th July, the date on which the last large number was admitted for hospital treatment, 1,157 patients were received, or an average of sixty-eight per day, the maximum of 122 for one day being reached on the 8th July. Dr. Valintine states in evidence, "On the night of the 24th June, although I am not responsible for the treatment of the sick, I went round and found there were some men who were seriously ill. I had been led to understand that the majority of cases of influenza were only minor cases and would not require very much medical or nursing treatment, but it was obvious to

Increase of illness.