

Mr. Solomon : I did not ask about one operation. I instanced three operations.

3154. *Mr. Chapman.*] Well, in none of these cases is the operation said to have been a surgical failure, but that septic trouble has arisen. Do you attach any importance to the fact, if it be a fact, that the temperature was 101° before operation?—Certainly.

3155. If you had had a simple operation (such as we have been told an Emmet is) to perform, would you have performed it with a temperature as high as that?—Certainly not.

3156. What would that suggest to you?—It would suggest that there was possibly or probably some inflammatory condition going on; of course, the rise of temperature might have been due to a common cold. What was the patient said to be suffering from?

3157. She was said to be suffering from something which caused an Emmet operation—not to be a necessity—to be rendered expedient to be performed some day?—If that were so, she might possibly have been suffering from sub-acute or acute inflammation of some of the pelvic viscera.

3158. But if such inflammation were acute, would you undertake to operate at that time?—No.

3159. You would treat the operation as one of expediency which might be performed a month or three months hence?—Yes.

3160. If you were a surgeon who was approaching every operation in fear and trembling, such things would be a sufficient indication to you not to operate?—Yes.

3161. Now, in a general way, you say that erysipelas has arisen at Seacliff: have you ever known any hospital where erysipelas did not arise at times?—I have not.

3162. Even in hospitals in the best condition?—Even in hospitals in the best condition. But it is only fair to state that I have never seen it arise previously in any establishment in anything like the number of cases in which it has arisen at Seacliff Asylum; nor have I ever seen such an epidemic of hospital sore throat as occurred in the ward of the Wellington Hospital which I have mentioned. In other public institutions I have met with occasional sporadic cases, so to speak, of erysipelas, which will occur in any hospital, and may, as often as not, have existed before the patient came in; but if a large number of erysipelas cases occur in any institution it is an indication that the place is in a very unsatisfactory state with regard to sanitation.

3163. You have been asked some questions with reference to a particular week in the Dunedin Hospital. Now, supposing you were informed that at that time, and prior to it, immediately about it, and even for some months previously, a number of serious gynecological cases had made perfectly good recoveries?—Do you mean in the Hospital.

3164. I mean in the same wards, and even in the same beds in succession. From that fact what conclusion would you form, in a general way, as to the state of the Hospital?—I could not form any conclusion from particular cases. I mean to say that patients may be placed in insanitary surroundings and yet escape infection. One sees that constantly; and it does not follow because 95 per cent. of cases are apparently unaffected by insanitary conditions that the 5 per cent. of affected cases would not be quite enough to render it undesirable that you should have an unhygienic condition in your hospital.

3165. Now, as to statistics, you have given us an expression of opinion on that subject: I suppose that without analyses of the classes of cases, the number of cases treated in the Hospital, &c., you cannot come to any reliable conclusion?—I consider statistics absolutely valueless unless you know the factors bearing upon them; necessarily that must be the case with all statistics.

3166. You say that a comparison of our Hospital with the general average of other hospitals is of no value?—I consider it of no value unless you know the factors in the different cases.

3167. You have pointed out in the course of your evidence a number of things in the way of improvements, such as a ventilating-shaft, alterations to the floors, walls, &c.: do you think that if these alterations were carried out the Dunedin Hospital could be made a satisfactory hospital?—Other improvements would also be necessary—for instance, I consider it would not be at all satisfactory unless you had some proper provision for heating. With regard to heating, I found that in the Wellington Hospital—and of course Wellington has a higher temperature than Dunedin—throughout a large portion of the year the temperature was far too low. I had the temperature taken regularly in different parts of a large ward for three weeks in the winter of 1888, and found that, except in the immediate vicinity of the fireplaces, there was no appreciable warmth from the two open grates; in fact, the general temperature of the ward rose and fell with that of the outside atmosphere, tempered only by the enclosure of the space and the animal warmth of the inmates. It was often as low as 45° Fahr. throughout the greater part of the ward, and several times it fell to 42° ; and these low figures were reached in spite of the fact that ventilation was somewhat restricted in order to prevent too excessive chilling of the patients. The patients complained bitterly of the cold, and cases of rheumatism and chest complaints were often aggravated. There must be a similar state of affairs in the Dunedin Hospital.

3168. What would there be available for warming in connection with the ventilating-shaft?—The fire at the bottom of the shaft would serve to heat one or more boilers connected with a system of hot-water pipes traversing the wards.

3169. Then, the fire would be in the basement?—It would have to be.

3170. With these improvements, and others which suggest themselves to you, the present Hospital might be made a satisfactory hospital: do you think so?—Yes; with some additional minor improvements.

3171. There is one matter of detail the Commissioners have noticed. Have you inspected the kitchen?—Yes.

3172. That is unsatisfactory?—Yes, I think it should be better ventilated. More extensive ventilation might be obtained by means of a large shaft without any extra heat, because there is plenty of heat generated down there. By the way, in my answer to your previous general question, as to whether the present Hospital could be rendered satisfactory, I did not mean to preclude the erection of such additional wards, &c., as might be required; I merely meant that, so far as the