

MONDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1890.

DR. WILLIAM MACSTRAVICK STENHOUSE sworn and examined.

4174. *Mr. Chapman.*] What is your name?—William MacStravick Stenhouse.

4175. You are a duly-registered medical practitioner of New Zealand?—Yes.

4176. What were your qualifications in the Old Country?—I am a Doctor of Medicine and Master of Surgery of the University of Glasgow.

4177. How long have you been registered in New Zealand?—Fifteen years.

4178. Have you been practising in Dunedin during the whole of that time?—Yes.

4179. Are you a member of the medical staff of the Dunedin Hospital?—Yes.

4180. How long have you been a member of the staff?—For five years; from 1883 to 1890, except 1885–86, when I was out of practice for two years owing to an accident.

4181. You went out of practice to go Home, did you not?—Yes. I went on the staff again in 1888.

4182. Now, I suppose you recognise that there are shortcomings in the Dunedin Hospital?—Yes; there are structural deficiencies. I have always recognised that.

4183. I suppose, if you had any amount of money at your disposal, you would like to see the building pulled down?—Yes; I should suggest such a thing. I was the first to suggest it.

4184. At any rate, in order to put up a perfect modern building you would have to completely sweep away the present one?—Yes; it would be a new building entirely.

4185. What do you think of the building as it stands?—I believe it is as healthy a hospital as there is in the world.

4186. Will you be kind enough to briefly state to the Commissioners what your opinion of it is?—Yes; I will do so. For a number of years past I have been in the habit of using it as a sanatorium.

4187. *The Chairman.*] For many years?—Yes, for a number of years—say, from 1883 or 1884.

4188. And you have used it as a sanatorium?—Yes. I think I then had the largest practice with friendly societies, and went out a great deal among the working-classes. I often came across people, especially women, who had broken down in health, without there being any serious organic mischief about them. I saw that they wanted pure air, nursing, rest, and nourishment; and I sent many of such cases into the Hospital. After various periods of residence in the Hospital these patients were invariably discharged with a renewed lease of life.

4189. That is to say, they were discharged cured?—Yes; they were discharged strong and vigorous and able to battle again with the world. Many of them were in a very low condition when they went into the Hospital, and it is not reasonable to think that they would have improved in the Hospital if that institution were a nest of septic disease. Whenever I wanted to use the Dunedin Hospital as a health resort it has invariably responded to my expectations.

4190. During what period would that be?—During the whole of my connection with the Hospital, but particularly in the years 1883 and 1884, when I had more of those cases than I have had during the last three years.

4191. In 1883 and 1884 you had more of these cases than you have had since up to the present time?—Yes; but I have had such cases coming in continually, even up till now. Besides those cases, I have had a large number of very serious diseases.

4192. Do you mean cases in the Hospital?—Yes; they were treated in the Hospital. They were very serious diseases. I may say there was every kind and variety of disease; and I ask you to remember this: that the patients whose cases come under a physician's care are those in which the vital organs have generally been affected—such as diseases of the lungs, of the heart, of the kidneys, and so on, in which the vital powers are greatly depressed.

4193. Is that limited to medical cases?—Yes. I should like to follow that up by saying that in serious medical cases it is of the very greatest importance to the patients that they should be in a condition of having pure air, and, that being the case, I think I am within the mark when I say there has not been a mortality of 3 per cent. in cases where the patients were not obviously dying when they were admitted.

4194. That is the result of your practice in the Hospital?—Yes.

4195. *Mr. Chapman.*] No matter how serious the type of the disease, the deaths were only 3 per cent., you say, if the cases were not in a moribund state when admitted?—Yes, if they were not moribund or suffering from chronic old age when admitted. There were no acute cases occurring in young or middle-aged persons but what recovered: that was the almost universal rule. I will take the last few months of the present year, and I am speaking now only from my own recollection, I have had two cases of peritonitis, which is recognised as a very serious disease.

4196. *The Chairman.*] Will you give the names of those cases?—I cannot give them by name, for I have not a good memory for names.

4197. *Mr. Chapman.*] Was not one that of Mary R——?—No, I do not think so; but I will come to that case by-and-by.

*Mr. Carew:* If you do not give the name you do not give the other side an opportunity to cross-examine you upon it.

4198. *Mr. Chapman.*] One of them was in the beginning of the year?—It might be in January or February. The house surgeon will have no difficulty in finding out the case if he consults the book. The arguments I want to adduce from these cases of peritonitis—and one of them was more serious than the other—is that they are cases in which it is recognised that pure air and healthy surroundings are essential to their recovery.

4199. And you say one was a very serious one?—Yes; it was a very serious one.