

4303. *Mr. Solomon.*] We will deal first of all with this report. I find, on referring to the minute-book of the staff's proceedings, that at a meeting of the staff on the 12th April, at which you were present, that "Dr. L. Ferguson read a paper, and showed a plan prepared by him containing suggestions whereby the present hygienic defects in the ward-construction of the Hospital might be amended. The late hour prevented any discussion thereon, which was postponed till next meeting. Dr. Ferguson was thanked for the trouble he had taken in the matter, and the secretary was directed to convey the following resolution to the Trustees: 'That the honorary medical staff are engaged in considering and preparing a report dealing with the present defects in the hygienic conditions of the Hospital, and embodying suggestions by which these may be obviated.'" Did you at all dissent from that?—If I did my dissent should be recorded there.

4304. I find that it is not recorded. At page 173 it is stated that—you were also present—"Dr. L. Ferguson's suggestions for remedying the existing hygienic defects came up for discussion. Those present were unanimous as to the main contentions therein contained; but some difference of opinion prevailed as to the details of their being carried out. The secretary was requested to see such members of the staff as were absent from the meeting, and, if they were unanimous as to the main contentions, also to forward copies of the suggestions to the Trustees, and to add a paragraph to the effect that they were unanimous as to the main contentions, but were not entirely agreed as to the methods of carrying them out." Is that true?—I believe so.

4305. I see that these minutes are confirmed as correct; in the usual way, I suppose?—Yes, subject to the explanation I have already given of my views, which were thoroughly pronounced and thoroughly well known.

4306. Never mind about that: were you present at that meeting?—I do not recollect it.

4307. Have you any reason to doubt these minutes? Your name appears as having been present, and I find it minuted that the staff were "unanimous as to the main contentions" of the report, although differences of opinion prevailed as to the details thereof being carried out; and the secretary was requested to see such members of the staff as were absent from the meeting. I want you to tell me if that is a true record of what took place?—I suppose it is; I have no reason to doubt it.

4308. I find it stated at this meeting, held on the 27th May, 1889, that the staff—that is to say, those who were present at the meeting, and you were one of them—were "unanimous as to the main contentions" of this report. Now, you have stated to-day on your oath that you have never seen anything to lead you to believe that the Hospital was overcrowded, but quite the reverse?—Yes; I have always said so.

4309. If that be so, how do you explain this statement in the report: "As, practically, there are only two walls available for beds, one of which in each ward is broken up by the chimney-breast and a doorway, the beds are necessarily placed too close to each other for either the health or comfort of the patients"?—I do not think I ever heard it.

4310. Is it true or not?—It is not true.

4311. *The Chairman.*] Is it true that you agreed as to the main contentions of the report?—It is not true.

4312. *Mr. Solomon.*] Did you ever say so?—It is very likely that I did not; but I do not remember whether I did or not. You do not expect me to recollect what took place years ago. I recollect now that I did not vote on that occasion.

4313. Tell me is that, or is it not, a true statement of what took place—that the medical staff passed that resolution, which affirms that they were "unanimous as to the main contentions" of the report?—If that is there, I suppose they did.

4314. How do you explain these two things?—I explain them by saying that this is not an important matter. I was really not aware that such a thing had been put down.

4315. You say that that is not an important matter?—It depends altogether on the degree.

4316. Do you mean to tell me that it is not an important matter that the beds should be too close together for the health of the patients?—I do not admit that.

4317. But you told us just now that it was not an important matter?—I do not admit that it is, even if they were too close together; the importance would depend on a good many other circumstances.

4318. If they were too close together for the health of the patients, would you allow them to remain?—Certainly not.

4319. Is that statement in the report true?—It is not true.

4320. Although you were present at a meeting of the staff when it was agreed to "unanimously" you did not offer any objection?—That may easily happen. As I have already explained, my views were perfectly well known to the staff, and I allowed that to pass "unanimously" rather than divide the staff when I saw that there was a majority in favour of it.

4321. You sat by and heard the staff say that they "unanimously" came to the conclusion that the beds were too close together?—Perhaps I heard it, and perhaps I did not. If I did not actually dissent, then the members were at liberty to put it down as having been agreed to "unanimously."

4322. How far, in your opinion, should beds in a Hospital be apart from one another? What square space, in the first place, should each patient have?—It depends altogether on circumstances.

4323. Take the Dunedin Hospital?—It depends altogether on where the hospital is.

4324. Take London, then?—I say that in London they require more space than they do in Dunedin.

4325. I want you to tell me how much square space each patient ought to have, in your opinion, in the Dunedin Hospital?—I think patients would be very well off indeed when they have 80 square feet, though 100ft. is allowed by modern requirements.