

4383. We have been told that the Dunedin Hospital violates the rules as to walls, floors, and ceilings; that it violates all the recognized rules in regard to ventilation, to the number of patients that a ward in a proper hygienic condition should contain; that the waterclosets are not what they should be, and that the baths are also what they should not be; that general surgical cases are treated in the same ward as gynecological and ophthalmic cases; so that in all these matters the Hospital violates the rules laid down by authorities on the subject. In your opinion, are these things true or not?—Theoretically, they are violated.

4384. Can you tell me one rule of sanitation that the Dunedin Hospital complies with?—Perhaps not on theoretical grounds, but I say that none of these things you have mentioned need to be the cause of a single death.

4385. Then you say that what the authorities have written on these matters are all matters of no importance?—I say that they are matters of theory more than anything else.

4386. Then it is a mere matter of theory?—Yes. If it were so important, why do not they pull down the old hospitals, many of which are worse than ours, and erect new ones.

4387. Listen to what Erichsen says on the subject: "The faulty hygienic conditions that are still too frequently met with in hospitals are alike a cruelty to the patient and an injustice to the surgeon. The cruelty to the patient consists not only in exposing him to an increased chance of death, as it is commonly called to a 'higher rate of mortality,' from septic diseases that are preventible, and that are the direct outcome of the defective hygienic arrangements of the institution, but in subjecting him to a prolonged and imperfect convalescence, either or both of which conditions may be taken as the measure of the neglect of sanitary arrangements in a hospital." What do you say to that?—Of course, we all wish to see hospitals made as perfect as possible.

4388. Do you admit, or do you not, that the Dunedin Hospital directly violates every rule laid down by authorities as to the sanitation of a ward?—Yes, theoretically, it does.

4389. Are you of opinion that that is a matter of no importance?—I am of opinion, apart from the question whether the air of the wards is pure, that the Dunedin Hospital is healthy.

4390. Though it violates every principle of sanitation?—Yes.

4391. If you consider that the Hospital is so grossly imperfect as to ventilation, that the walls, flooring, and ceilings are imperfect, that the waterclosets and baths are not in the positions they should be in, and that there are more patients —?—But I do not admit these things. I say that they compare favourably with any condition that has existed at any time during the twenty years it has been a hospital. Nor do I admit that there has been any overcrowding of the wards.

4392. Now, about that patient of yours who died with septic symptoms?—I do not admit that she died with septic symptoms.

4393. But she died with a temperature of 103°. Is not that septic symptoms?—It may or it may not be.

4394. I wish you would answer my question?—I say she did not die with septic symptoms.

4395. In your opinion, I understand, there is no necessity for remedying all these sanitary defects?—I admit that the Hospital can be improved,—I have always taken the same ground,—but I do not admit these alleged inferences. I say that the Dunedin Hospital is in a better condition to-day than it has ever been in its history.

4396. And your opinion is that these sanitary defects need not to be altered, but can safely be allowed to remain as they are?—A great deal can be said in regard to certain hospitals as charitable institutions—

4397. I do not want a lecture from you. I want your opinion—yes or no—as to whether these sanitary defects can safely be allowed to remain unaltered?—Yes. And I think that, if we have the same results in the future as we have had in the past, we shall have no reason to be ashamed of the Dunedin Hospital. When you reflect on the conditions and circumstances, surroundings of the houses, &c., of the majority of the patients in our hospitals, I say that you are not under any obligation to make your hospital into a perfect institution, but simply to make it very much better than these places whence the patients were taken from; you endeavour to improve their condition in the Hospital, and not to make it worse.

4398. I find that this resolution was passed unanimously by the staff: "That, in the opinion of the staff, there are certain sanitary defects in the Hospital which ought to be remedied." Is that true?—I do not admit that there are any sanitary defects, subject to the explanations I have made.

4399. Here is a resolution that was passed at a meeting at which you were present. It was also carried unanimously: "That it be a recommendation from the staff that arrangements be made to have separate wards for ophthalmic cases, gynecological cases, and children's cases." Did you agree with that?—Very likely I did, subject to the explanations I have made already.

4400. Did you dissent from it?—I did not consider it worth while to dissent. If I think I can carry my own way, I try to do so; if I cannot, I let the thing pass.

4401. Do you remember this being stated at that meeting by yourself: "Dr. Stenhouse was quite sure every one there would like to see a new hospital built on the most modern lines. Some of them might think that he was bidding for too much, and that they were not likely to get it. He thought that seeing such an agitation had arisen at the present time, that they were justified in endeavouring to secure this. . . . It was not a Dunedin but an Otagan question, and every rich man in the province would feel bound to add a stone to the new Hospital. To spend £6,000 or £8,000 in adding to the present building would be almost a crime"—I do not think I said that. I said then, as I say now, that if it would take so much money to give us these theoretical improvements, then we, as any sensible body of men would think of doing, ought to go in for a new Hospital.

4402. Have you never complained of the want of accommodation in the Hospital, or have you never had anything to find fault with?—Well, I should certainly have liked to have a ward for