

1895.

NEW ZEALAND.

CHRISTCHURCH HOSPITAL

(REPORT OF INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Christchurch, 16th July, 1895.

In pursuance of your Excellency's Commission, dated the 13th March last, and afterwards extended by an instrument of the 2nd July, directing me to inquire into certain matters connected with the management of the Christchurch Hospital, I have now the honour to submit to your Excellency my report of the result of my inquiry, and of the conclusions at which I have arrived. In consequence, partly of illness, and partly of the engagements of Mr. Stringer, who has acted as counsel for the Hospital (Government) Department, I was unable to formally open the business before Friday, the 7th June.

The first sitting for the taking of evidence was held on Monday, the 10th June, and the sittings were thereafter continued daily until Friday, the 14th; again on Monday, the 17th; Wednesday, the 19th, to Friday, the 21st; Monday, the 24th, to Friday, the 28th; and on Monday and Tuesday, the 1st and 2nd of July. There have thus been seventeen public sittings, and about one hundred and eighty witnesses have been examined. I have also twice visited the Hospital, and have obtained such information as I could gather in that manner.

At the opening of the inquiry the following counsel appeared :—

Mr. Joynt, with Mr. Knight Hunt, for the following associations or persons: The Canterbury Liberal Association; the Ballance Liberal Association; the New Zealand Workers' Union; the Canterbury Branch of the New Zealand Railway Servants' Society; the Women's Political Union; the Women's Branch of the Orange Society; the Canterbury Women's Institute; Christina Cameron, late nurse in the Christchurch Hospital.

Mr. Caygill, for the Progressive Liberal Association.

Mr. Stringer, for the Hospitals and Charitable Aid Department.

Mr. Loughrey, for the Hospital Board.

Mr. Maude, for the matron of the Hospital.

And at a later period there appeared :—

Mr. Kippenberger, for the secretary and steward of the Hospital.

Mr. Fisher, for Mr. Richard Brown, chief wardsman.

Mr. Russell, for Dr. De Renzi, late House Surgeon of the Hospital.

Dr. Murray-Aynsley, the present House Surgeon, appeared on his own behalf.

Mr. Joynt and Mr. Caygill, on behalf of the various persons and bodies respectively represented by them, put in two written statements containing charges or allegations respecting the management of the Hospital, upon which they proposed to lead evidence. These allegations are to a large extent identical with those contained in the letter signed "Tongariro," which has been by your Excellency's Commission specifically referred to me for inquiry, and where they are not identical they are yet so similar in their general scope and character that it will be convenient to take these documents together, and to consider seriatim the allegations made or implied in them before proceeding to more general matter.

It is desirable to begin by stating that the writer of the "Tongariro" letter is Dr. Francis McBean Stewart, who up to nearly the end of last year had been for twelve years one of the honorary surgical staff of the Hospital, and who since his retirement from that position has been on the honorary consulting staff.

I now proceed to consider the allegations in order, premising that "Tongariro" puts his specific charges in the form of questions, making no positive assertions except of a general character, which will be incidentally dealt with under other heads :—

1. The first question asked by "Tongariro" is thus expressed: "Is it true that the House Surgeon compels young girls to be present and assist in holding the limbs of men during delicate operations at which none but male attendants should be present?" This is put in the form of a positive assertion in the other two papers, although a little modified in one of them.

The answer is that none of the things alleged are true. Young girls are not compelled by the House Surgeon, or by any one else, to be present or assist on the occasions and in the manner alleged; and, further, there are no operations—and Dr. Stewart himself does not venture in his evidence to assert that there are—at which none but male attendants should be present. As a