

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

SEACLIFF, FRIDAY, 30TH DECEMBER, 1892.

WALTER PERRY sworn, examined.

1. *By Dr. MacGregor.*] I am charge-attendant in B ward. I have been about three years in the asylum. I, Wilson, Watts, Sneeston, Miller (and Sheppard, but I am not sure), all signed a paper saying that the attendants were unanimous in complaining that the food was badly cooked.

2. *By Dr. King.*] I do not recollect that the paper wanted the Medical Superintendent to apologize. I did not sign this paper as soon as it was brought to me; I was pretty near the last. I had nothing to do with getting up the paper. I was not willing to sign. I did so reluctantly; but I was not threatened. I consulted Downes as soon as we heard it was being got up, and we agreed not to sign it. The paper was brought up at the dinner-table in the hall, and read out by Impey; and he asked us all to sign it. I gave way to Impey and Arundel when I saw the other attendants sign.

3. *By Dr. MacGregor.*] Were you told that if you did not sign something would be written on the back of the paper?—No, I was not told; but I heard it hinted about. A good many hesitated, but were told those who did not sign would be no men but a lot of turncoats. It was hinted that those who refused would get their names put on the back of the paper. Merely putting the names on would not hurt; it was the memorandum added, that we had all complained previously but would not now sign when asked.

4. Who brought the paper when you alternately signed?—It was lying on No. 3 table, and we were all standing round. There had been several meetings, but I never attended any of them, simply because I wished to keep out of it.

5. How many days were you wavering before you signed?—I think it must have been about two days from the first meeting till I signed the paper. I think only a few were there, and that was the reason the paper was got up. I do not know, and I never heard, whether any complaint was made to the doctor about the food before the agitation was commenced. Mr. Stewart's attention, I think, was called to the meat being underdone. The complaints about the meat did not refer to its quality but to its being underdone. The complaints were general. I think I spoke to Mr. Stewart myself. I do not now think this was the right way to approach Dr. King. I never thought so. I was never refused redress of any complaint I made to the doctor. I have always been treated with great consideration and kindness by Dr. King.

DECLARATION BY FOUR ATTENDANTS.

6. ANDREW MILLER, JOHN AITCHESON, ALEXANDER ANNAN, and ANDREW WILSON, being collectively sworn, said: We all signed this paper complaining of the food. We none of us heard the doctor use the expressions complained of. We never heard him call any one a liar. We have never been treated tyrannically, but always with great consideration.

JAMES MAY ARUNDEL, sworn, examined.

7. *By Dr. MacGregor.*] The food for a considerable time back has not been properly cooked. The meat was mostly underdone. Salt meat in that state is not palatable; but none of the meat was properly cooked. The vegetables were only half-cooked, as a rule, and very dirty—that is, containing slugs, worms, &c. Very often the porridge was undercooked and full of lumps. The bread is sometimes very good, and we sometimes have a month when it is almost uneatable. Various complaints have been made to Mr. Stewart by different attendants. I complained myself. Clarkson did so on several occasions. Perry drew Stewart's attention to the bad state of the food, also Downes. This lasted for some months. Mr. Stewart usually said, "I will see the doctor." Sometimes he would bring back a reply as if he had seen the doctor. Once a loaf, badly baked, had all the crust taken, and the rest left. I took it and showed it to Mr. Stewart, saying, "Look at that. Is that fit for human food?" He said, "Certainly not. I will lay it on the doctor's table, and speak to him about it." Another instance: Once, at breakfast, all the attendants' porridge was returned to the kitchen. Stewart was spoken to, I think, by Clarkson, and he said he had seen the doctor, and that the doctor had seen the matron, who said the porridge was beautifully cooked. Twenty-four attendants returned their porridge. This was about the time of the cook's return from her holidays. One evening, about five o'clock, before the paper was signed, I went into the hall when the tea-bell rang. I went up to the table. There was nothing on it but half a loaf. Downes had plenty in the cupboard. We used to help ourselves from there. Of course, there was tea, sugar, and milk besides. There was no butter. We had our allowance of butter.

8. *Dr. King:* The attendants prefer to get their butter and sugar by the week, and bread by the day.

9. *Witness continued:* I asked Perry, who is in charge of our ward (No. 2), if there was anything else for tea. He said, "No." I said, "I will go home to tea." With that, I went to my bedroom to wash and change my clothes. I was going out by the back-door, leading from the corridor into the yard, when I met Impey. He said, "Have you seen Mr. Stewart?" I said I had not. He then said the attendants had been talking about the food, and had requested him to see Mr. Stewart, and ask him to inform the doctor that the attendants wished to see him. I said, "I won't stay. I'll see how you got on in the morning." He went into No. 1 ward to look for Stewart. I was going to hang up my keys in the office, when I met the doctor. He asked if I had seen Stewart. I said, "No." I remarked that Impey was looking for Stewart, as the attendants