

Would it not be a saving to go to the Hospital?—It would, if the Board would remit the fees, as they sometimes absolutely have to do.

Dr. Robertson: Do you remember being a member of a deputation from the Medical Association which waited on the Board in March, 1903?—Yes; I went with Dr. Purchas and Dr. Inglis to point out to the Board in what respects the more economical running of the Hospital could be insured. We offered a number of suggestions as to how the expenditure could be curtailed. There had been considerable dissatisfaction, owing to an impression that the Hospital was costing too much. When we had finished speaking Dr. Collins replied to our suggestions.

He was not a member of the Board. Why did he reply?—I have no idea. It was purely a financial matter.

Dr. Lewis was then cross-examined by Mr. Reed, who handed to the witness a copy of the resolution forwarded by the honorary staff to the Board in 1901. Witness expressed dissent from some of the recommendations in the letter, but agreed with the following clauses: "He (the Senior Medical Officer) shall be responsible to the honorary staff that all treatment prescribed by them be properly carried out. He shall be responsible for the proper administration of anæsthetics, but may delegate their administration to the junior medical officer. He shall see that the clinical records are properly kept, and that they are up to date."

Mr. Reed: By whose advice do you think the Board should be guided on these points?—If the Board had carried out the advice of the honorary staff in years gone by, there would not have been so much friction as there is now.

But the Board carried out the staff's suggestions in making rules in 1902?—Yes, in some respects.

Do you think these rules would conduce to the good government of the Hospital?—I do not think the Hospital could be satisfactorily and amicably worked under such rules.

Mr. Reed: You have said that during practically the whole of the past twenty years the Board and the honorary staff have not got on well together. Can you suggest how that could be remedied?—Yes; I think it could be remedied perfectly well by separating the Hospital Board from the Charitable Aid Board, and have one distinct body for the government of the Hospital.

What would you suggest should be the constitution of that Board? It should be partly elected on the popular franchise and be partly nominated by the Government, with one medical member elected by the medical men, resident in the Hospital district.

From your knowledge of local matters, can you say that nomination by the Government has acted satisfactorily in other cases, taking the Harbour Board as an instance?—I do not know anything about the working of the Harbour Board.

Can you suggest what persons the Government should nominate? Do you mean all and sundry, or any particular class of the community?—I would leave it in the hands of the Government, which contributes a large amount of money to the upkeep of the Hospital, and should therefore be represented.

Have you any suggestion to make as to the proportion of nominated members?—No; but I am distinctly of opinion that the Hospital Board should be distinct from the Charitable Aid Board.

Can you say how a Board so constituted would be more likely to get on well with the staff than the present Board?—I think it would be more likely to keep in touch with the staff.

Can you say why?—No, I cannot.

Mr. Reed: You find fault with the Hospital-management in regard to the treatment of patients. Do you suggest that treatment in the Hospital should be absolutely free?—It is no good me making a suggestion to alter the laws of the colony.

Mr. Reed: I think the Commission has been set up to deal with matters affecting not only the management of the Auckland Hospital, but of all hospitals in the colony.

The Chairman: I think the Auckland Hospital affords quite wide enough scope, judging by what I have seen. We have to inquire into matters connected with the Auckland Hospital, and if as the result of our inquiry the Government obtain knowledge which may be of use to other hospitals, so much the better for them.

Mr. Reed (to witness): Do you think treatment in the Auckland Hospital should be free?—Yes; the sick poor having preference. I think it would be best.

You say you have known cases in which patients have been afraid to go to the Auckland Hospital on account of the fees. Do you know of any such instance, or were you speaking from hearsay?—I know a number of instances from what people have actually told me.

These people preferred treatment in their own homes?—Not necessarily; but when they were advised to go into the Hospital they said that they could not go, as they could not afford to pay the fees.

Do you mean that they went without treatment altogether, or that they were treated in their own homes?—I have in my mind a case of this sort in which the patient was treated at home.

Could a person be treated at home for less than 4s. 8d. a day?—Certainly.

Including medical attendance?—Oh, we get nothing for attending such cases.

Do you know of any case in which hardship has been caused through the Board enforcing payment of the Hospital fees?—Well, I have known of servant-girls' wages being mortgaged for a long time to pay Hospital fees—that is, they have had to pay the fees out of their wages after recovering.