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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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HOBART GENERAL HOSPITAL:

REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

*Return to an Order of the House of Assembly. (Mr. Crowther.)*

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Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, August 30, and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed, September 8, 1887.



*REPORT of the Board of Management, General Hospital, Hobart, on the working of the Hospital*

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SIR,

It having come to the knowledge of the Board of Management of the Hobart General Hospital that there has been some disorganization in the internal management of the Institution, the Board appointed a special Committee of Enquiry, consisting of D. M'Millan, Esq., Chairman, T. T. Watt, Esq., J. Wemyss Syme, Esq., and J. Mitchell, Esq., "to enquire into the whole working of the Hospital, with power to take and call for any evidence they may deem necessary, and to report thereon to the Board."

The Committee held 37 meetings, of from two to three hours' duration each, and have examined 18 witnesses, whose evidence extends over 533 pages of foolscap. They found some difficulty in obtaining the evidence requisite to enable them to ascertain the working of the Institution, and consequently passed the following Resolution, which was communicated by the Chairman to the witnesses; viz.—"That as the object of the present enquiry is to ascertain details connected with the internal management of the Hobart General Hospital, and as the principal witnesses will be the officers of the Institution, it is resolved that the evidence taken shall be held strictly confidential."

The Committee made a Report, which has been duly considered by the Board, and adopted, with verbal amendments, and is now submitted for the information of the Government. For the reason above given the evidence is not attached.

Considerable disorganization has prevailed in the Hospital for some time past, and there has been a want of harmony between the officers, which has been detrimental to the interests of the Institution. This has been in some measure owing to the responsibilities and duties of the principal officers not having been clearly defined. The following recommendations will show in what points the Board consider amendment necessary.

1. *House Surgeon and Assistant House Surgeon.*—The House Surgeon—in his capacity of House Surgeon—shall be the recognised head of the Hospital as regards its internal management and discipline, subject to the authority and control vested in the Board of Management and Honorary Medical Staff. The official hours of attendance should be from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. daily, and the existing Rules should be altered to meet these recommendations.

2.—*The Secretary.*—The duties devolving on this officer are at present rather onerous. The Board recommend that the present Messenger be appointed to assist him in the work of the Store, and that an intelligent boy be employed as Assistant Messenger.

3. *Lady Superintendent.*—This title should be done away with, and the term "Matron" substituted. The Board are of opinion that the welfare of the Hospital should be paramount to every other consideration, and recognising this, recommend that the Lady Superintendent receive notice that the Board terminates the existing engagement.

4. *Nursing Staff.*—The term "Sister" should be dispensed with, and the Nursing Staff designated as under:—

1. The Matron.
2. Staff Nurses.
3. Junior Nurses.
4. Probationers.

5. *Probationers.*—The term of probation should be three instead of two months; the Staff Nurses should report weekly to the Matron on the conduct and qualifications of Probationers under their charge; such reports to be in writing. Probationers should during their term work under at least two Staff Nurses, and the reports, with the remarks of the Matron, should be submitted to the Visiting Committee through the House Surgeon before the Probationers are bound.

6. *Training.*—No adequate arrangements have yet been made for the training of Nurses. The Board recommend that a system of training, under three heads, be at once established and rigidly carried out; viz.—

1st. Theoretical training, under the Matron and Staff Nurses.

2nd. Professional training, under the House Surgeon or any of the Honorary Medical Officers.

3rd. Practical training at the bedside, under the Surgeons and Staff Nurses: Cookery for the sick.

The details of these several systems should be laid down by a special Committee appointed to consider them.

7. *Nurses' Home.*—Attention was drawn to the present management of the Nurses' Home, which is unsatisfactory. The Board recommend that the existing system of allowing head-money to the Lady Superintendent for the maintenance of the Nursing Staff be done away with, and that the Nurses be rationed from the Hospital Store, the Matron being held responsible for the returns and the proper boarding arrangements of the establishment.

8. *Accommodation of Nurses.*—Under present arrangements the "Sisters" occupy the same apartments at the Home as their subordinates. This system tends to lower the status of the "Sisters," and is subversive of proper discipline. The Board recommend that as soon as practicable separate rooms shall be provided for the Staff Nurses, but so arranged that they shall have constant supervision over the Junior Nurses and Probationers serving under them.

9. *Equipment.*—The equipment of the establishment is deficient in certain respects, especially as regards forms, chairs, bed-tables, &c. The lift also requires attention. The Visiting Committee should report specially upon these matters, and the necessary expenditure for improvement should be authorised. The means of summoning the House Surgeons in case of emergency are deficient, but a system of electric bells has been authorised which will meet the difficulty.

10. *Lending Instruments, &c.*—A system has prevailed of lending surgical instruments and appliances to private practitioners and other persons. The Board recommend that this system be discontinued, excepting in cases of extreme emergency, and even then no article to be issued from the Hospital excepting upon the order of the House Surgeon, who shall specially report on each case to the first meeting of the Visiting Committee held after the issue.

11. *Complaint Book.*—A book should be kept—accessible to every officer of the Institution—in which any matters of complaint should be entered at the time of occurrence. Such book to be submitted weekly to the Visiting Committee; and it should be clearly understood that no complaints of any kind will be entertained which are not recorded in this book.

12. *Spirit Store.*—The supplies of spirits, wines, beer, &c., kept in Hospital should be stored in a special locker, under the immediate care of the Secretary and Steward, who should be held responsible that no issues are made without the order of a Medical Officer. It would be an improvement were spirits kept in glass or stoneware vessels instead of in wood as at present.

13. *Rules and Regulations.*—The existing Rules and Regulations require revision, and the Board recommend they be referred to the Rules Committee for that purpose. The Chairman of the Committee of Enquiry will afford information which will enable them to be altered in accordance with the evidence taken.

14. Head Nurse Turnbull having, when before the Committee, expressed a wish to be allowed to resign her appointment, the Board think that her wish should be acceded to, and the present engagement cancelled by mutual consent.

15. The Board desire to express their entire satisfaction at the manner in which the Secretary (Mr. T. C. Just) has recorded the very voluminous evidence, and generally performed his official duties.

In submitting this Report to Government, the Board suggest that, if approved, immediate steps be taken to give effect to it, especially in so far as it affects the Officers of the Institution.

THOS. C. SMART, *Chairman*

*The Hon. Chief Secretary.*