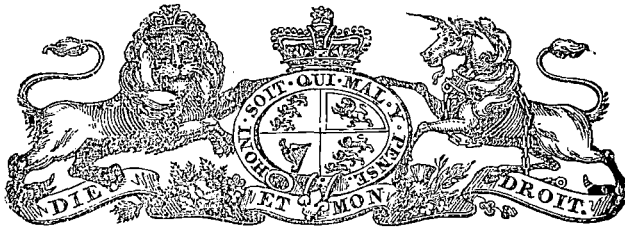


(No. 149.)



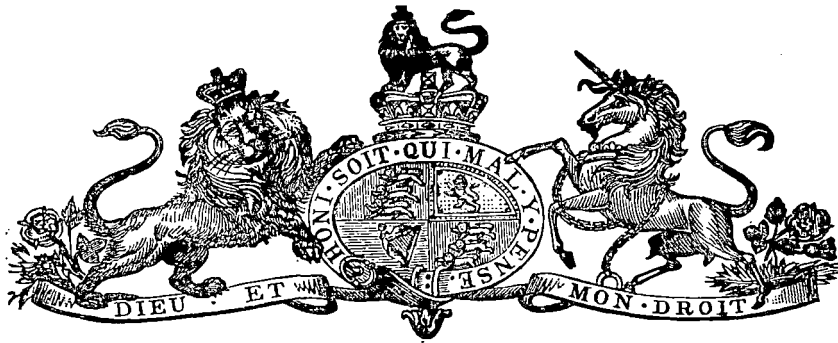
1889.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

ROBERT WILLIAMS:

CORRESPONDENCE *RE* DOCTORS CRAMPTON AND DINHAM.

Laid upon the Table by the Treasurer, November 14, 1889, and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.



Chief Secretary's Office, Hobart, 8th November, 1889.

MEMO.

WITH reference to Dr. Crowther's question, "Notices of Motion," No. 5, the Chief Secretary forwards herewith to the Hon. the Treasurer the depositions taken at the inquest upon the body of the man Robert Williams, with copy of a Memorandum sent to the Chairman of the Official Visitors to the Hospitals for Insane.

The Chief Secretary desires to add that the Rules and Regulations of the Hospital for Insane, New Norfolk, are silent upon the subject of the medical officers attending upon any case outside the Institution, but they are debarred by their agreement with the Government from engaging in private practice.

P. O. FYSH.

Chief Secretary's Office, 8th November, 1889.

MEMO.

THE Chief Secretary desires to call the attention of the Official Visitors to the report in the *Mercury* of the inquest upon the body of Robert Williams, who was run over by an engine on the Derwent Valley Line.

The subjoined extract from the report, so far as it relates to the statements and proceedings of Doctors Crampton and Dinham, requires some explanation.

According to the sworn evidence of Constable Jolly, the former gives as his excuse for not going to see a man suffering from a terrible railway accident, that "it was useless his coming, as a man would be required to attend deceased two or three times a day; he said it was impossible for him to do that, as he was in charge of the Hospital for the Insane, Dr. Macfarlane being away on leave;" the latter, that "it was no use his going, as Miss Shoobridge, or any qualified nurse, could do what he could, and he said he was prevented from doing outside work by arrangement with the Government."

The Chief Secretary is at a loss to understand how any professional gentleman could advance such reasons for neglecting to offer their prompt assistance in a case which they could not but know was one of extreme emergency.

These reasons, as put forth by both gentlemen, as sworn to by the witness, are utterly insufficient to warrant their neglecting to visit the case in the first instance. No regulation debaring an officer of the Institution from taking work outside the hospital could for a moment be construed as preventing him from affording his assistance under the circumstances. As regards Dr. Crampton's excuse, the subsequent treatment of the patient could easily have been arranged for; and Dr. Dinham was not in a position to express an opinion as to whether "Miss Shoobridge or any qualified nurse" could do what was necessary.

The Chief Secretary is perfectly aware that the services of these gentlemen rendered to the Government are restricted to their duties in connection with the Hospital for the Insane; but as the course they adopted reflects injuriously upon them as failing to recognise the paramount claims of humanity, he is anxious that they should have the opportunity of affording any explanation they may desire to make which would tend to relieve them of the imputation of indifference to the sufferings of a fellow-creature.

P. O. FYSH.

The Chairman of the Official Visitors, Hospital for Insane.

Hobart, 12th November, 1889.

SIR,

IN compliance with your Memo. of the 8th instant, the Official Visitors have the honor to enclose the Reports of Drs. Crampton and Dinham, Medical Officers of the Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk, as to their not having attended the late Robert Williams after the accident he met with on the Derwent Valley Railway on the 2nd instant.

As these Reports speak for themselves, we have only to add that it should be unmistakably understood that the rule debaring them from private practice does not extend to cases of emergency, or indeed to any cases where prompt medical assistance is required.

I have, &c.

C. E. BARNARD, M.D.,
Chairman of the Official Visitors.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Hobart.

Hospital for the Insane,
New Norfolk, 9th November, 1889.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a Memo. of the Honorable the Chief Secretary, asking for an explanation of the conduct of myself and Dr. Dinham with regard to the Railway accident that occurred on the Derwent Valley line on the 2nd instant.

I beg to state that I arranged to take charge of the Asylum on the night of the 2nd inst. Shortly before 2 o'clock on the morning of the 3rd inst., a constable informed me that a man's leg was badly injured in a railway accident which had occurred about 7 or 8 o'clock on the previous evening, and asked me to come and see him. I told him that I was on duty, and I advised him to ask one of the medical gentlemen practising in the District to attend to the accident, and if his services were not available, to ask Dr. Dinham to attend.

He said he would ask Dr. Huston. I told the constable that I thought it the wisest course to ask Dr. Huston to visit him, and, if the Doctor thought fit, to have him sent without delay to the General Hospital, Hobart, where expert surgeons and relays of nurses would afford the best chance of recovery.

Nearly all serious accidents that I have heard of in this District have been sent at once to Hobart. I did not think that he would be moved to the Cottage Hospital, but was under the impression that the injured man was on a trolley awaiting the arrival of an engine to take him to Hobart.

I knew that Dr. Huston had attended to the call, and if he required my assistance and sent for me, I would have immediately gone to his help. If the constable came back and told me that he could not procure the services of Drs. Huston and Dinham, I would have promptly attended, and would not think that I was violating any rule by doing so. If I had been told that the man was bleeding to death, or that the local practitioners could not attend, or if he were brought to the Asylum and I refused to treat him, I would richly deserve public reprobation.

Dr. Crowther is reported to have stated in the House of Assembly that he was brought to our door. If he had been brought to our door he would at once have had the services of myself and Dr. Dinham. Dr. Crowther asserted that the man was allowed to bleed to death: Miss Shoobridge informed me that he did not suffer from hæmorrhage when at New Norfolk.

As to my presumed neglect of the claims of humanity, I may say that during the frequent and occasionally prolonged periods that this District has been left without any general medical practitioner, I have rarely failed either by night or day to the very numerous sick calls made upon me, to give them my prompt attention.

Recently, for a period of about three weeks I was obliged by a sense of humanity to voluntarily attend most of the sick calls of New Norfolk, and contented myself merely with the gratitude of those whom I aided in their time of need. I have invariably refused to accept fee or reward for such services, believing it to be contrary to the spirit of my engagement. At that time I received friendly warnings from various sources that public notice would be directed to the fact that I was paid to attend to my special duties only. Since then I have been more careful in discriminating the urgency of sick calls when the services of other medical men might be commanded.

I deeply regret that I should be regarded as one who was indifferent to the sufferings of others, and in future I shall be most careful to prevent the recurrence of such a misunderstanding by personal and prompt attendance on all cases of serious accident when called on to do so.

The incident gives me the keenest mental distress, and I am very thankful to the Honorable the Chief Secretary for affording me this opportunity of making this explanation.

Dr. Dinham has read the Memo., and will also forward his explanation.

I have, &c.,

J. S. CRAMPTON, *Assistant Medical Officer,
Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk.*

To C. E. BARNARD, *Esq., M.D., Chairman of the
Official Visitors, Hospital for the Insane, Tasmania.*

Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk, 9th November, 1889-

SIR,

IN reply to your Memo. of 8th November, I have the honor to submit, for the information of the Hon. the Chief Secretary, the following particulars:—

At half-past two A.M. on Sunday last I was called by Constable Jolly to visit a man who had been injured on the railway. The constable informed me that Dr. Huston had ordered the man to be taken to the General Hospital, Hobart, and I was at a loss to understand why this order was not promptly carried out. The constable said Miss Shoobridge had sent him to me. I asked him if the man was bleeding, and was told there had been no bleeding since his arrival at New Norfolk. I then observed to the constable that nothing would be gained by my seeing the man placed in a conveyance, and that Miss Shoobridge or any qualified nurse could do all that was necessary to make the man as comfortable as possible to bear the journey.

I have, &c.

GEO. J. DINHAM.

The Chairman of the Official Visitors, Hospital for Insane.

Forwarded to the Hon. the Treasurer with reference to the Memo. of the Chief Secretary to the Official Visitors in the case of the man Robert Williams.

B. TRAVERS SOLLY.
12th Nov. 1889.