

(No. 72.)



1880.

T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

HOSPITAL FOR INSANE, NEW NORFOLK :

**CORRESPONDENCE ON APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR TO
DR. HUSTON.**

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, August 25, 1880.



Colonial Secretary's Office, 13th August, 1880.

SIR,

WITH reference to the approaching retirement of Dr. Huston from the office of Medical Superintendent of the Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk, I have the honor to acquaint you that the Government are desirous to receive from the Commissioners the expression of their views in connection with the appointment of a successor to that gentleman.

I should be glad to hear from you upon this subject at as early a date as may be practicable, in order that the required provision may be made in the Estimates for next year.

I have, &c.

WM. MOORE.

*The President of the Commissioners of the Hospital
for Insane, New Norfolk.*

16th August, 1880.

SIR,

IN accordance with your desire expressed in a communication (No. 2104), addressed to me as President of the Commissioners of the Lunatic Asylum, New Norfolk, I called a meeting of the Commissioners for Saturday, 14th August; and I am happy to inform you that the full body of Commissioners met at New Norfolk on that day.

We had the opportunity of hearing from the Hon. Dr. Agnew, in forcible and precise terms, the views of the Government on the question. After a prolonged discussion, during which each member of the Commission expressed his opinion, the following resolution was passed unanimously by the Commissioners, except the Hon. Dr. Agnew:—

“The Commissioners are of opinion that it is desirable to secure the services of Dr. Macfarlane as successor to Dr. Huston at the same rate of salary as his predecessor, viz. £500 per annum and residence, but that he be precluded from private practice; and that, with a view to the miscellaneous duties which devolve upon the Superintendent, and to meet the professional requirements of the Institution, it is necessary that the appointment of an Assistant Medical Officer should be provided for as heretofore.”

I am further instructed by the Commissioners to urge upon the attention of the Government their reasons for having come to these conclusions.

In recommending Dr. Macfarlane to the Government for the offices of Medical Officer and Superintendent, which will be vacant on the retirement of Dr. Huston, the Commissioners were influenced by their knowledge of the highly satisfactory manner in which the duties of the offices were fulfilled during the absence of Dr. Huston, as well by the skill and attention brought to the performance of this duty, as the urbanity and courtesousness of his manner to the officers of the Institution and to the patients.

In recommending that the salary of the office should be £500 as heretofore, the Commissioners recognised the arduous duties of the offices not being confined to the medical charge of the patients, but also having to superintend the economical working of the Institution, the supervision of the officers of the Establishment, the management of the farm, and the care of the Idiot Asylum; also the peculiar harassing and depressing nature of the duties to the medical charge. The altered character of the Institution during the last few years must be also taken into consideration.

The number of admissions has been steadily increasing; and from the generality of new cases being of a different type, the responsibilities and anxieties of the Medical Officer are much increased.

In concluding this subject, it must be noted that the Medical Officer being precluded from private practice, and the claim to pension being not now existent, would make a considerable diminution in the emoluments of the office.

Referring to the necessity of an Assistant Medical Officer, the Government may not be aware that this subject has engaged the serious attention of the Commissioners for a long period of time; and it has been their opinion that it is essential to the good conduct of the Institution and the safety of the patients to provide for a second Medical Officer.

It will be in the knowledge of the Government that the experiment of carrying out the duties of the Institution was tried several years ago with one officer. After a short time the appointment had to be reverted to. It is essential also to allay the natural anxieties of the relatives and friends of the patients in the Asylum that the same adequate staff should be continued which has heretofore obtained. The attendance of Dr. Huston could not, in many cases, be secured. On his retirement from official life his practice will be extended over a large and widely-spread district, having no medical man nearer than Hamilton or Hobart Town; and, further, what is most important, Dr. Huston is not himself desirous of undertaking the new duties.

I have, &c.

HENRY BUTLER, *President of the Asylum, New Norfolk.*

To the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Hobart Town.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hobart Town, 20th August, 1880.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 16th instant, having reference to the appointment of a successor to Dr. Huston, the present Medical Officer and Superintendent of the Hospital for the Insane, who retires on the 30th September next.

I regret that the Commissioners should entertain opinions and recommend the adoption of a course in which, at the present time, the Government are unable to concur.

The Government will have much pleasure in giving effect to that portion of the resolution passed by the Commissioners which refers to the appointment of Dr. Macfarlane as successor to Dr. Huston; but they demur to the payment to that officer of a higher salary for the year 1881 than £450.

As regards the appointment of a second Medical Officer, I would mention that the Government contemplate making additions to the present buildings, with the view of concentrating all the insane within the Colony in one Establishment; and the Government are of opinion that as the Institution was under the charge of Dr. Huston alone from 1855 to 1866, and again from 1871 to 1878, that gentleman being also allowed private practice in addition to his hospital duties, it will not suffer as regards its efficient management when in charge of Dr. Macfarlane (whose time will be devoted solely to his official duties), until the Government are able to carry out the arrangements above referred to.

I have, &c.

WM. MOORE.

*The President of the Commissioners of the Hospital for
the Insane, New Norfolk.*