

(No. 60.)



1871.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

**ROYAL COMMISSION ON CHARITABLE
INSTITUTIONS.**

CORRESPONDENCE AS TO DR. TURNLEY'S EVIDENCE.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Wilson, December 13; and ordered by the Council
to be printed, December 18, 1871.



1, Albert Terrace, December 5, 1871.

SIR,

UPON a perusal of the Charitable Commission Report, laid upon the table of the Legislative Council by you, I find the following, paragraph 477, page 89, being part of Mr. George Turnley's evidence, taken April 12th, 1871, before the Commissioners:—

“The system of prescriptions has crept in since Dr. Crowther left the Hospital. When he was an Honorary Medical Officer he did not take all this care of the poor—but since.”

As I cannot consider the paragraph in question other than a gratuitous insult, as well as a deliberate untruth, I feel constrained to bring the same under your notice, feeling assured that as head of the Government, a sense of justice to myself, after holding the position of Honorary Medical Officer for *nine years* at Her Majesty's General Hospital, if not propriety as far as the Civil Service is concerned, will call forth such an expression of opinion at your hands as will in future have the effect, if not of restraining, at least reducing within the bounds of decency, the evidence of Civil servants when taken before Royal Commissions upon questions of public interest; and that this case will prove how important it is that both the constitution of the Commission, and evidence procured, should be of such a character as will tend only to the public good, the elucidation of truth, which alone can make it valuable, and be free in every particular from the suspicion of prejudice against individuals, or bias as to the subject matter upon which information may be solicited. In support of the opinions expressed above, I beg leave to draw your attention to the enclosed letters.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

WILLIAM LODK. CROWTHER.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

(Copy.)

1, Albert Terrace, November 27th, 1871.

GENTLEMEN,

WILL you oblige me by answering the following queries:—

1st. What system was adopted by me for supplying the poor with medicines during illness from 1842 to 1860, the year in which the General Hospital was transferred from the Imperial to the Colonial Government?

2nd. Did the number of gratuitous prescriptions materially diminish from 1860 to 1869?

3rd. Have you made up many of my prescriptions for gratuitous medicines from March, 1869, to the present time?

An early answer will oblige.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM LODK. CROWTHER.

Messrs. JOHN and F. WILKINSON, Chemists.

Elwick, November 28th, 1871.

DEAR SIR,

IN reply to your note of yesterday I beg to state that, by arrangement, I dispensed every prescription having a distinguishing mark ordered by you from 1842 to 1860, amounting to a very large number in each year. From the time of your becoming an Honorary Medical Officer of the General Hospital in

1860 to your removal from that establishment in 1869, very few gratuitous prescriptions were sent; the poor obtaining their medicine upon your order from the Hospital. During the last two and a half years, as I understand from my son, a great many gratuitous prescriptions have been made up—principally at night or before Hospital hours in the morning.

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours truly,

JOHN WILKINSON.

To the Hon. W. L. CROWTHER, Hobart Town.

Colonial Secretary's Office, 12th December, 1871.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 5th instant, in which you bring under my notice a portion of the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions and Out-door Relief by Mr. George Turnley, printed with the Report of the Commission, page 89, paragraph 477, and forwarding me a correspondence between yourself and the Messrs. Wilkinson, Chemists.

I regret that any portion of the evidence given by an Officer of the Government before such a Commission should present itself to your mind as "a gratuitous insult as well as a deliberate untruth." But I cannot conceive that it falls within my province, "as head of the Government," to "express an opinion" upon "the character" of the evidence taken by the Royal Commission, or upon the relevancy or truth of the particular portion of the evidence of Mr. George Turnley of which you complain.

I must add that for me, or for any Minister in my position, to give expression to an opinion on such a subject with the design of placing any "restraint in the future" upon officers of the Civil Service when called upon to give evidence before a Royal Commission, would not only be a grave impropriety, but would tend to defeat the attainment of those objects which, as you rightly state, such enquiries are instituted to accomplish, namely, "the public good and the elucidation of truth."

At the same time I trust I need not assure you that the correspondence transmitted with your letter was not required to acquaint me with the nature and extent of your philanthropic and disinterested services—during nine years as Honorary Medical Officer at the General Hospital, and throughout your professional career in this City—in the cause of suffering humanity, and for the relief of the necessitous sick.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) J. M. WILSON.

The Hon. W. L. CROWTHER, M.L.C.