

work, there was the usual sandwich of pleasure, including the annual dinner, a trip to the Deaf and Dumb Institute at Sumner, and the meeting of the Canterbury Jockey Club, for which each of the visitors received complimentary tickets from the Club.

At the general business meeting of the Branch, after the adoption of the annual report and statement of accounts (which showed an addition of thirty-one new members and a slight credit balance on the workings of the year), the President (Dr. Scott, of Onehunga) announced that the Council had accepted an invitation to hold the next annual meeting in Wanganui.

The election of officers resulted as follows: *President-Elect* for 1901: Dr. G. R. Scunders (Wanganui). *Chairman of Council*: Dr. W. Fell (Wellington). *General Secretary*: Dr. Graham Campbell (Christchurch). *Parliamentary Secretary*: Dr. J. Malcolm Mason (Otaki): *Editor*: Dr. J. Malcolm Mason (Otaki).

The incoming President (Dr. Walter Thomas, of Christchurch) was inducted at the completion of the business meeting. The question of resuscitating the *New Zealand Medical Journal* came before the meeting and provoked a lengthy discussion, which eventually resulted in a motion strongly urging on the Council the desirability of resuscitating the *New Zealand Medical Journal* at the earliest possible date as the organ of the Branch. In his presidential address, Dr. Thomas discussed the relations between the Colonial Practitioner and the Public. He pointed out the great difference noticeable in the relations between doctor and patient in the Colonies to what was usually found in older-established countries; that the public had a craving for advice from the latest comer irrespective of his experience; that there was a great tendency to stray after strange gods, and consult quacks and take patent medicines; that there was a distinct want of gratitude exhibited by patients, and that instinctive antagonism and opposition were displayed towards the members of the profession. Though laying most of the blame on the shoulders of the patients, Dr. Thomas claimed that medical practitioners themselves were also responsible for a certain amount of the trouble, by their want of the observance of the ordinary rules of etiquette, and the exhibition of petty jealousies. Though agreeing with many of Dr. Thomas's statements, it is difficult to believe that they are all correct, and it seems a little unfair to class the whole community as antagonistic because we find a small minority who are grumblers.

The papers which excited most interest were Diseases requiring Institutional Treatment (Colquhoun), the Prevention of Tuberculosis (Irving), Direct Medication of the Lungs in Tuberculosis (Mason), the Treatment of Insanity (Truby King), Consolidation of the Public Health Act (Scott), and A Minister of Public Health (Mason). Dr. Colquhoun's paper was an exhaustive appeal for the establishment of homes for the treatment of consumptives and inebriates. He showed that in New Zealand we were neglecting our best asset—a good climate—and that phthisis could be successfully attacked only in suitable homes, and not in general hospitals; while for the inebriates he claimed that although there was a law providing for the seclusion of these cases in institutions, it was inoperative from the Government having failed to make the necessary provisions. Dr. Irving's paper advocated the dissemination of information to the general public, giving them certain facts about the prevention of tuberculosis, and the formation of a branch of the National Association for the Prevention of Consumption. Dr. Truby King in his paper on the treatment of insanity showed that there was no provision in the Act regulating admissions to the asylums by which it was possible to take in "voluntary" patients, and asked for the assistance of members in bringing this want before the Government. He also advocated that the legal name of asylum should be altered to "institutions for the treatment of mental diseases," and asked that provision should be made for the establishment of out-patient departments in connection with the general hospital, to which an alienist should be attached.

The fact that bubonic plague has reached Sydney, and will with difficulty be kept out of New Zealand, gave an added interest to the papers on public health read by Drs. Scott and Mason.

Dr. Scott's paper clearly showed the inadequacy of the present Act, and proved that there were many incongruities

in it which prevented it being properly administered. In this Colony every local governing body is a local Board of Health, with all the powers and duties imposed by this Act. In consequence, in the large towns—for example, Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland, with an average population of 50,000, and consisting of several boroughs, each of which is a local Board of Health—the Act is quite unworkable, as the inspectors cannot overstep their boundaries, and are unable to interfere even when they have traced some infectious disease beyond the limit of their jurisdiction. The Central Board, appointed by the Governor in Council, is without any recognised medical expert, or surveyor, and appears never to have issued any regulations for the carrying out of the provisions of the Act. Both papers advocated a Minister of Public Health, with an expert adviser, and the appointment of medical officers of health in the four large centres; the consolidation of small local Boards into one for each district, and a vigorous administration of the Act.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF GYNÆCOLOGY AND OBSTETRICS.

SIR,—I beg to forward you a copy of a letter to Professor Simpson, of Edinburgh, drafted at a meeting of the past and present teachers of gynæcology and obstetrics in the metropolitan medical schools now practising in London, which was held at my house on Tuesday last.

You will observe that it is signed by everyone who comes under that description, without, I believe, a single exception.

I need only add that our objection to the election of a President is in no way personal to the distinguished obstetrician to whom the enclosed letter is addressed. To many of us—certainly to myself individually, since he is one of my oldest and most valued friends—he would have been a *persona gratissima* for the post.

Our objection is not to the man, but to the manner in which he was elected.—I am, etc.,

Grosvenor Street, W., May 5th.

W. S. PLAYFAIR.

To Professor A. R. Simpson, M.D., President-Elect of the International Congress of Gynæcology and Obstetrics.  
38, Grosvenor Street, London, W.  
May 1st, 1900.

Dear Sir,—We learn from a circular dated "37, Queen Anne Street, April, 1900," that it has been decided to "hold the Fourth International Congress of Gynæcology and Obstetrics in London in 1902" under your presidency.

As past and present lecturers and teachers of obstetrics and gynæcology in the London medical schools, we wish to explain to you, and especially to such of our foreign colleagues as might contemplate attending such Congress, that those who have issued this invitation have assumed a representative position to which they are, in our opinion, not entitled, and which we find ourselves unable to recognise.

We cannot, therefore, take any share in promoting or joining in such Congress, but trust that you will accept our assurance that our decision has been arrived at with regret, and with no intention of discourtesy to yourself or other visitors, either British or foreign.

We are, dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

(Signed)

J. WATT BLACK

AMAND ROUTE

T. W. EDEN

A. L. GALABIN

P. HORROCKS

J. H. TARGETT

W. S. PLAYFAIR

T. C. HAYES

J. PHILLIPS

G. E. HERMAN

A. H. N. LEWERS

W. DUNCAN

R. BOXALL

F. H. CHAMPNEYS

W. S. A. GRIFFITH

W. R. DAKIN

A. F. STABB

M. HANDFIELD-JONES

W. J. GOW

C. J. CULLINGWORTH

W. W. H. TATE

J. WILLIAMS

H. R. SPENCER

G. F. BLACKER

J. B. POTTER

W. R. POLLOCK

MARY SCHARLIEB

Charing Cross Hospital.

Guy's Hospital.

King's College Hospital.

London Hospital.

Middlesex Hospital.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

St. George's Hospital.

St. Mary's Hospital.

St. Thomas's Hospital.

University College Hospital.

Westminster Hospital.

London School of Medicine for Women.