

LYTTELTON CASUALTY WARD.

1870.

An accident ward was completed and brought into use in 1870, when the Lyttelton Hospital "Emergency Ward" ceased to exist. The accident ward was later known as the Lyttelton Casualty Ward, with A. B. Savage as caretaker. His successor was James Scott. The population of Lyttelton in 1871 was 2,551.

1874.

The accident ward was made available to all patients through the strenuous endeavours of James Callender, administrator of charitable aid. Previously, many patients were allowed even in their suffering to await transport to Christchurch. A petition for the establishment of a hospital was presented to the Provincial Government signed by the Mayor and Councillors and numerous residents of Lyttelton, stating that in a seaport town, owing to the large amount of shipping, accidents occurred more frequently than in an inland town and were usually of such a nature as to require prompt and immediate surgical and medical care and treatment.

1875.

The Casualty Ward, which was situated on an eminence near the tunnel-mouth overlooking the railway, was opened in 1875, when the Provincial Government was on the eve of extinction.

1879.

The Casualty Ward was, with the other charitable institutions, under the control of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board of the Provincial District of Canterbury. There is a record of a Board Meeting held at the Christchurch Hospital on the 2nd July when H. Thomson (Chairman), the Mayor of Lyttelton, the Mayor of Christchurch, the Mayor of Sydenham, W. Montgomery, J. E. Brown, Dr. Turnbull and J. E. March (Secretary to the Board) were present. The receipts for the half year ending 31st December, 1879, were £21 and expenditure £72; the number of patients admitted from the 1st July to 31st December was six.

1882.

There were no patients in the Casualty Ward in November, and the caretaker resigned owing to ill health. The Mayor of Lyttelton brought under the notice of the Board that a statement had appeared in the newspapers in February, 1883, to the effect that the Casualty Ward was supposed to be closed. The Board then informed the Charitable Aid Medical Officer in Lyttelton and the officer-in-charge of the Police that the ward was open for urgent cases and had not been closed.

The Railway Engineer's Department asked for the Board's permission in December to remove the Casualty Ward and other buildings under the control of the Board on the Railway land at Lyttelton to another site on the tunnel reserve near the Union Bank. The Board resolved to comply with the request on the condition that it was put to no expense and that the building would be left in good order and condition.

1883.

For the year ending 30th June, 1883, the receipts were £11 and expenditure £49 (the expenditure for the previous year was £77), the number of patients admitted during the year was seven.

Lyttelton Casualty Ward, contd.1886.

Dr. J. O. Guthrie was asked by the Hospital Board to regard the Casualty Ward especially for the reception of casualties, while any cases more fitted for treatment, in a medical ward should be forwarded to the Christchurch Hospital. Rules for the caretakers were drawn up, and Mr. and Mrs. George Johnston were appointed.

1892.

The Lyttelton Borough Council considered that the Casualty Ward should be kept in a thoroughly efficient state to meet the growing requirements, and to this end the Council pointed out the necessity for enlarging the operating room in July, 1892. The Casualty Ward consisted of two rooms, two beds in each, kitchen and bedroom for the resident attendant who received £39 per annum together with fuel and lighting. A letter was written to the Police stating that the Board would meet any charges for telephone or other message that might be incurred by the Police at Lyttelton in notifying the Christchurch Hospital authorities of any accident at Lyttelton requiring hospital treatment. The ward was frequently used for other than severe injuries, and the Board decided that no cases, except accident cases of such a nature that removal to Christchurch would be dangerous, should be admitted. The surgeon attended without fee from the Board, but was permitted to charge a patient, who also paid the Board 4/- per day whilst an inmate. The total cost of maintenance was approximately £100 per annum. A return from the Casualty Ward showed that a patient, not a casualty, had been admitted in direct opposition to the Board's resolution. The caretaker was requested to explain the reason for such a case being admitted. As arrangements in connection with the Casualty Ward were unsatisfactory, the Board was recommended to take the whole matter into consideration and give the requisite notice to dispense with the services of the caretaker. The Committee conferred with Dr. J. O. Guthrie, and a much more satisfactory arrangement than that previously existing was arrived at, putting the Ward on a better footing. It was placed under the immediate direction of two local medical men subject to the control and supervision of the Hospital Board. Members of the Board inspected the Ward, and the first expenditure was incurred by the Board in 1893.

1902.

It was reported that two cases - cirrhosis of the liver and cancer of the breast - had been admitted in 1901 by orders of Drs. Upham and Fairman. The Board resolved that the doctors be again communicated with protesting against the Casualty Ward being used for such cases. A return in 1902 showed that there had been another admission of a woman suffering from cancer. The Hospital Committee took exception to the practice of the doctors ordering patients other than accident cases into the Casualty Ward, and imperative instructions were given to the attendant to refuse admission of such cases. The Secretary was instructed to prepare a draft arrangement for casualties only to be treated. Dr. Fairman interviewed the Committee with regard to the new arrangements for carrying on the working of the Ward. It was decided to pay the doctor at the rate of £50 per annum. The caretaker received a free house, firing and lighting, but no victuals. Dr. Upham wrote to the Board regarding the admission of paupers to the Ward and was reminded that the Ward was for the treatment of severe shipping accidents only.

Lyttelton Casualty Ward, contd.

The Committee considered that arrangements might be made to transfer casualties to the Christchurch Hospital and then to close the Casualty Ward. It had become quite a hospital in itself and the Lyttelton doctors sent their patients there. Costs were rising steadily each year, and patients were treated who should have been sent to the hospital in Christchurch. It was decided that the House Surgeon from the Hospital should visit the Casualty Ward at intervals, especially to ascertain the nature of cases in the Ward. The Chairman pointed out that the land was not vested in the Board, the building being erected on railway reserve; consequently there was no tenure. The District Railway Engineer was communicated with as to the likelihood of the ground being required for railway purposes in the near future. As the Department had reserved the site for the Stationmaster's house, it was, therefore, not desirable for the Board to carry out any extensive repairs to their building. T. H. Davey, M.H.R. drew attention to the inadequate equipment of the Ward and suggested that very necessary improvements should be carried out.

1904.

The Board proposed closing the Ward, and the Town Clerk, Lyttelton, asked for careful consideration to be given to the claims of the Shipping and Railway employees. The Council emphasised the fact that in continuing the use of the Ward it was not for the townspeople of Lyttelton, but for the large number of men who were engaged in highly dangerous callings at the port. Many men were non-residents of Lyttelton and in the event of accidents it was necessary to have a suitable place for the reception of these cases.

1905.

Dr. Fairman resigned in 1904 and Dr. J. H. Howell was appointed. The Board decided that the Casualty Ward and the services of the staff be dispensed with at the expiration of three months from May, 1905. A public meeting was held in Lyttelton in August, 1905, when strong reasons were advanced for its continuance. Monetary assistance was offered towards maintenance, and the hope was expressed that the Board might yet recognise that S.S.D. were trivial matters compared with the alleviation of suffering and the preservation of human life.

An appeal was made to the various Shipping Companies and others for a contribution towards the cost of maintenance. The wharf labourers contributed \$15, annual grants were promised from the Railwaymen's Union and the Union Steamship Company. The Trades and Labour Council, the Lyttelton Stevedores' Union, and the Lyttelton Council, all urged the necessity of the Board assuming management of the Casualty Ward.

1908.

The Mayor of Lyttelton stated in May, 1908, that the Casualty Ward was required for accidents to be attended to until the patients could be transferred to the Christchurch Hospital. It was suggested that a properly equipped railway car would not be of any use if an accident occurred during the night after the last train had left.

Members of the committee visited the Casualty Ward together with the Mayor of Lyttelton, Mr. Radcliffe (who

Lyttelton Casualty Ward, contd.

had been instrumental in managing the ward since the Board surrendered control in 1905), and Drs. Newell, Upham and Guthrie, to make an inspection of the buildings and surroundings. The Railway Department was asked to ascertain whether the Government would be prepared to grant a fixed tenure of the land on which the building stood, with a view to the Board improving the same and rendering it more suitable for the reception of casualties occurring in connection with the work of the port. The committee recommended a grant of £50 as a subsidy until the question could be re-opened. The Railways Department notified that a lease at a yearly rental of £1 had been prepared. It was decided to accept the lease and take over on the 30th September, 1908. The committee recommended that the Casualty Ward be maintained, and a committee be appointed annually by the Board to manage the institution. It was also decided to grant a sum not exceeding £200 for making improvements to the building.

1909.

In January, 1909, the deeds in connection with the Casualty Ward were received for execution, and were authorised to be signed by the Chairman on the Board's behalf.

1912.

Dr. Newell accepted the appointment of surgeon and was requested to report monthly to the Board. In 1912 he expressed his willingness to work the Ward with Mrs. Johnson as caretaker, on the understanding that a nurse from Christchurch Hospital would attend if required in the case of accidents. It soon became necessary to replace the caretaker with one holding a nurse's qualifications, and Sister Gooding was appointed to replace Mrs. Johnson.

The Minister of Railways notified that, in the case of accidents occurring in Lyttelton, every assistance would be given by the Department to facilitate the transport of any patient to the Christchurch Hospital.

1919.

The borough being in need of improved hospital accommodation, the Council advocated the equipment of a new hospital comprising a Maternity Hospital and a Casualty Ward (the old one had ceased to meet the requirements of the district). It also suggested that provision should be made for taking in the children of maternity patients who could not otherwise be provided for during the mothers' confinements.

As it was anticipated that the St. Helen's Hospital in Christchurch would soon be rebuilt, the establishment of a separate institution in Lyttelton would, according to the Minister of Public Health, be obviated. A deputation waited on the Minister, and suggested that a two-bed maternity ward be provided and put in charge of a nurse midwife from St. Helen's, who would be paid by the Department.

By so supplementing the provision for maternity cases in Lyttelton, emergency cases should be dealt with only, and where possible, every use be made of St. Helen's Hospital in Christchurch. The services of the district nurse under the Public Health Department proved very satisfactory, and the Department asked if the Board was prepared to take her over and control her duties. As

Lyttelton Casualty Ward. contd.

Sister Gooding, who was in charge of the ward, was a registered midwife (London Obstetric Society's certificate) and had done district work in England, this was unnecessary. Nurse Boyd ceased to be a Department officer in 1922, and worked as a private nurse in Lyttelton.

By extending a portion of the Casualty Ward by twelve feet, accommodation was made for three or four maternity cases, and an extra bathroom was added. This met the needs of the poorer people whose houses in many cases were unsuitable for maternity purposes.

The number of births notified in Lyttelton in 1921 was 102. In twelve instances, notifications were lodged in Christchurch or elsewhere, making a total of 114 registrations.

Owing to the lack of accommodation, it was not possible to house a night nurse at the Casualty Ward, and to avoid daily visits from Christchurch, Nurse Boyd was engaged to work in conjunction with Sister Gooding; at the same time she could continue her district work. There was a steadily increasing demand for admissions and the ward was more of a cottage hospital than a casualty ward.

1927.

In 1927, plans were drawn up for alterations to a house to be used for the purpose of a maternity hospital, and also for a new building. It was decided to build in 1931 on the old hospital and orphanage site belonging to the Board on Brittan Terrace. The Casualty Ward was reinstated and known as the Casualty Dressing Station.



Lyttelton Casualty Ward.



Lyttelton Maternity Hospital.

LYTTELTON MATERNITY HOSPITAL.1919.

In 1919 the Lyttelton Borough Council drew the North Canterbury Hospital Board's attention to the necessity for a new hospital comprising a casualty ward and maternity hospital. At that time it was expected that extensions should be made to the St. Helen's Hospital scheme. Up till 1927 nothing eventuated, alternative plans were prepared by the Board for a new hospital, or alterations to an existing building.

1928.

In December, 1928 it was proposed to erect a hospital on part of the section occupied by a Mrs. Heeney. (This property belonged to the Board in the form of a trust with the Canterbury Orphanage). The Borough Council expressed its willingness to form a suitable entrance from Cressy Terrace free of cost to the Board when the new hospital was completed.

1929.

In 1929 plans were approved with the recommendation that the building be erected in brick. A great deal of consideration had been given to the accommodation required, and the plan provided for the minimum. Owing to a high bank on the northerly side shutting out the sun in winter, rooms on the first floor were considered to be more suited for patients. However, the authorities in Wellington came to the conclusion that the proposals contained in the Board's application were somewhat ambitious and that it would be better to reconsider the scheme for Lyttelton, still anticipating a large St. Helen's Hospital in Christchurch. The Board asked that reconsideration be given to its application, especially as there was serious objection by many women, to entering the old institution, a dwelling of a very old type in the vicinity of stable yards, and containing the most antiquated equipment. A Departmental Officer was sent from Wellington to confer with the Board's architect so that the best results could be obtained. After three years of deliberate efforts on the part of the Board to secure a satisfactory site, it was disappointing and confusing to say the least, that these were frustrated. The Board had endeavoured to obtain some other site but each one was either occupied by a building or the cost was too high. It was anticipated that at least 70 to 80 patients would use the institution for maternity purposes and that the accommodation provided was not by any means too great. The Committee would not recommend the Board to alter the plans without better reason being advanced from the Health Department.

1930.

In June, 1930, the plans were reviewed by the officials in Wellington, and application was made to the Minister to allow the work to proceed as soon as the raising of the necessary funds had the approval of the Loans' Board. In October, 1930, the consent of the Minister to the erection of a Maternity Hospital was given, and the tender of P. E. Muagrove was accepted for £3,500.

1931.

Nurse Boyd's services as district nurse in Lyttelton were terminated by the Board when the Maternity Hospital opened on 10th November, 1931. Sister Gooding was transferred from the Casualty Ward and resigned in 1934 when Miss E. Houston was appointed Matron.

LYTTELTON CASUALTY DRESSING STATION.

1931.

With the erection of the new Maternity Hospital in 1931 on Brittan Terrace, the use of the Casualty Ward on Norwich Quay as a combined casualty and maternity ward was superseded. The Harbour Board, Railway authorities and the Wharf Labourers' Union, were approached to see if there was any inclination towards assisting the Hospital Board in finding a suitable position nearer the wharves for a dressing station, but they each disclaimed having any available space or section suitable.

As the Hospital Board had no intention of leaving Lyttelton without suitable provision for accident cases, it endeavoured to secure a section near the Union Bank and the tunnel-mouth belonging to the Defence Department, also a site in London Street, but to no profit. The waterside workers, with the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, Lyttelton Ship Tally Clerks' Union, Lyttelton Branch of the Carpenters' Union, Engineers' Union, Harbour Board employees' Union, Foreman Stevedores and Permanent Hands' Union, and the Seamen's Union, entered a protest against the Casualty Ward being removed from Norwich Quay.

The Casualty Ward on the Railway reserve site continued as an institution, but was known as the Casualty Dressing Station. Mr. and Mrs. Richardson were placed in charge as caretakers in 1931, and the only emolument was the free use of the building, until the Board recognised the great improvements which had taken place. In consideration of this, free firing and lighting were granted. Mrs. Richardson carried on after her husband's death, and in recognition of her service the Board grants her a bonus from time to time.

1937.

In 1937, the Railway Department recommended a twenty-one years' lease with a conditional right of renewal of the whole or part area. It was anticipated that the whole area would be required by the Board, as the mortuary is included on the same property, though controlled by the Borough Council. The renewal of the lease was completed in August, 1938.

