

## Opunake Cottage Hospital

### *Hawera & Normanby Star 17 Apr 1899 The Premier's Visit – Proceedings at Opunake*

The Premier visited the Kaupokonui and Pihama dairy factories and took a very lively interest in the work and appliances. At Pihama the right hon. Gentleman was met by Messrs John Stevenson, Wagstaff Bros., McKown, and Conaglen, and from thence to Mr John Stevenson's house, where the Premier and party enjoyed the hospitality extended. The scene at Opunake on arrival was exciting. A large party of Maoris greeted the visitors with a haka whilst there were a large crowd of pakehas as well. The town was hung with bunting in honor of the occasion. At Mr Hawkin's Hotel the Premier was met by the members of the Town Board, headed by the chairman Mr Dudley. Deputations... Mr Dudley asked that the Government grant Major Tuke's old residence to them, and put in repair for the purpose of a cottage hospital. He pointed out the inconvenience and hardship of having to convey people injured by accident some 40 miles before reaching a hospital. He did not think the whole thing would cost £200. Mr Seddon said the Charitable Aid Board would have to deal with it out of its revenue. The board got 24s from the Government on contributions. If they got the house and land, he thought the State would have done its share. It was simply a question of handing the house and building over to the board. As to getting a special grant, he did not think there was much show. However, he would take a note of the request...

### *Hawera & Normanby Star 13 Aug 1900 News and Notes*

Stratford wants a cottage hospital... Mr Corkhill and Mr Sutton... pointed out that there were excellent hospitals at New Plymouth and Hawera, and that other places – Opunake and Inglewood, for instance – had claims equally strong as those advanced on behalf of Stratford...

### *Taranaki Herald 19 Nov 1900 Hospital and Charitable Aid Board*

... The Opunake Town Board forwarded a resolution passed by the Board to the effect that a formal application be made to the Board to establish a cottage hospital at Opunake. Mr Stewart said Opunake was a very isolated position, and no doubt provision of some sort should be made. The Chairman agreed, but the question to be considered was: How is provision to be made? The medical men in other townships had clubbed together and offered to equip and carry out the necessary arrangements providing the Board gave a small subsidy and provided the necessary accommodation. Would Opunake be prepared to take the same steps? Mr Stewart: I am not in a position to say. Mr McCullum was firmly of opinion that something should be done, though he quite agreed that the Board was not in a position to establish a cottage hospital. Mr Dingle said he was willing to support a proposal providing for urgent cases, but a cottage hospital was out of the question. Mr Bellringer said that it seemed to him the Board, in establishing these small hospitals, had undertaken a larger contract than was generally thought. Between New Plymouth and Stratford there was talk of establishing 3 or 4 local reception rooms and no doubt the time was coming when other places further inland would require some provision being made. He moved that the question of subsidising the accommodation rooms for urgent cases be postponed until after the next meeting, when the election would be over. Mr Scott stated that he would like to see provision made in most of the townships, but the Board must go carefully into the question, as the expenditure was gaining rapidly. Mr Lepper seconded Mr Bellringer's motion. Mr Sutton pointed out that the Board had already committed itself as regards Stratford. The Chairman: We have engaged a room, but we can give it up at any time. Mr Stewart thought it was a mistake to keep putting these matters off, and he favoured the request of the Opunake Town Board being referred to a committee of members of the district

(Messrs McCullum and Stewart.) Mr Bellringer explained that he did not intend his motion to apply to Stratford, which had already been dealt with by resolution of the Board. The motion moved by Mr Bellringer was then put and carried by seven votes to five; the dissentients were Messrs McCullum, Wilkinson, Sutton, Stewart, and Dingle, who approved of the application being referred to a Committee, as suggested by Mr Stewart.

*Taranaki Herald 18 Aug 1903 Hospital and Charitable Aid Board*

... Notices of Motion. Mr Mackay have notice to move at next meeting that a cottage hospital be established at Stratford, and Mr Gray gave notice that a similar institution be established at Opunake. The meeting then adjourned.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 16 Sep 1903 Egmont County Council*

... Resolved, that steps be taken to obtain, if possible, the establishment of a cottage hospital at Opunake (Dudley-Maxwell).

*Hawera & Normanby Star 21 Sep 1903 Hawera Hospital and Charitable Aid Board – Cottage Hospital for Opunake*

The Egmont County Council wrote forwarding resolution passed that steps be taken to institute a cottage hospital in Opunake. The Chairman thought it too big an order at the present time. Mr Boddie agreed, but thought the Board would have to face the position taken by the New Plymouth Board in respect of Stratford and Eltham for receipt of imperative cases, such as providing private treatment for patients. Mr Robbins agreed, and considered the New Plymouth Board would assist in the matter. He moved, that at present the Board cannot entertain the proposal, but if arrangements can be made by the residents for the use of a room in Opunake for urgent cases, and the New Plymouth Board will co-operate, this Board will consider the proposal. Seconded by Mr Boddie. Mr Wilkie agreed with the motion, but said the Board would have to deal sooner or later with other places with equal claims. Mr Tayler considered Opunake was justly entitled to consideration, owing to its isolated position. Mr Boddie acquiesced, and said Opunake people would no doubt put forward a scheme which would be favourable to the Board. The motion was carried.

*Taranaki Herald 22 Sep 1903 Hospital and Charitable Aid Board*

... Correspondence was read relative to the proposal to establish a cottage hospital at Opunake. The clerk of the Egmont County Council in his letter urged the necessity of the application being complied with. Mr Gray said he had a notice of motion on the question, and he asked that the matter be deferred. The Chairman said that it would be the better course to adopt...

*Hawera & Normanby Star 15 Oct 1903 Egmont County Council*

It was moved by Cr Maxwell, that the Clerk confer with Dr Morrison, and ascertain what arrangements can be made, and what proposals he will make towards establishing a cottage hospital. Seconded by Cr Stevenson, and carried.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 05 Dec 1904 Opunake Town Board*

Mr Stewart said he had intended to move in the matter of a cottage hospital but being unable to get necessary information he would have to hold it over.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 14 Dec 1904 Egmont County Council – Cottage Hospital*

Cr Dudley moved that it be an instruction from this Council to their representatives in the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board to bring up the matter of a cottage hospital for the Egmont County to be situated at Opunake, and that they try their utmost to obtain same, as it is urgently needed. Cr Stevenson seconded. Cr Dudley in support of the motion said there was recently a case of typhoid in the district, and fortunately it was in capable hands, as otherwise it might have been spread all over the town. If there had been a cottage hospital the case could have been treated there, and all danger of spreading have been mimimised. There were also three surgical cases lately, all of which could have been treated in such an institution. Then again there were cases of accidents occurring in the bush where men severely injured had to be taken over rough roads 30 or 40 miles to the nearest hospital at great pain and inconvenience and at risk to their lives. Failing the establishment of a cottage hospital, if a couple of trained nurses could be induced to establish themselves here and provide a couple of beds, and be subsidised by the Boards, it would go a long way towards improving the present unsatisfactory position in which the district is in. The chairman was of opinion that provision would be made for taking in typhoid cases, but there should be some accommodation for accident cases. The motion was carried. – Opunake Times.

*Taranaki Herald 16 Jan 1905 Hospital and Charitable Aid Board – Cottage Hospital at Opunake*

The Clerk to the Opunake Town Board forwarded a resolution passed by his Board asking the New Plymouth Board what assistance they were prepared to give towards the establishing and upkeep of a cottage hospital at Opunake. It was further pointed out that Opunake and district labour under a grave disadvantage in having to send serious cases so far by road. A similar resolution has been sent to the Hawera Board. As Opunake is outside of the New Plymouth district, the Board decided that it should not entertain any proposal in the direction indicated.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 17 Jan 1905 Hawera Hospital Board – Cottage Hospital for Opunake*

The Secretary of the Opunake Town Board forwarded the following resolution, which was passed at the last meeting of the Board: That the Board communicate with the Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards at New Plymouth and Hawera, asking them what assistance would be given towards the establishing and upkeep of a cottage hospital at Opunake, and also point out the grave disadvantages Opunake and district labor under in having to send serious cases so far by road. Mr Forsyth said the Egmont County Council had passed a resolution, stating that the matter was very urgent. This has been generally recognised, but nothing had been done. It was a great hardship for patients in having to be taken thirty or forty miles. The great trouble was that many of the people who lived near Opunake were away from home, and when taken ill had nowhere to go. The people in Opunake had not very large ideas, and he thought they would be perfectly satisfied with a trained nurse and one room. Mr Sutton said he was of opinion that an ambulance was the best. He was quite sure that they could not do with less than a four-roomed house and two nurses. Mr Forsyth said they did not desire to keep a patient at Opunake until well, but just to keep him awhile, and then send him away. The Chairman said they would be retarding the recovery of a patient if they moved him after the first part of the illness was over. Mr Wilkie said they must not do anything which they could not give to

other localities. They might have to give places like Manaia, Kaponga, and East Road similar concessions. Mr Boddie moved, That the request of the Opunake Town Board and Egmont County Council be referred back to those bodies for some more definite proposal, when this Board will be prepared to give the matter its most favourable consideration. The mover said he was in favour of assisting the Opunake people. He had been deeply impressed in a recent trip with the awkward position they would be in if an accident occurred. Mr Robbins agreed with Mr Boddie. He felt sure that the sympathy of the whole Board was with the Opunake people, and he hoped the Board would give them any concession possible. He would second the motion. Mr Wilkie could not agree to a cottage hospital. Before committing themselves they should consider their financial position. He would be in favour of emergency wards. He was in favour of sympathising with outside districts, but it must be on a very limited scale because he imagined a tight time was coming. He thought they might subsidise the doctors in various places, and arrange with them to keep a room for emergency cases. Mr Forsyth thought the scheme should come from the Board and not from Opunake. Mr Wilkie thought it was reasonable thing to ask the Opunake people if they had a scheme which could be worked successfully by the Hawera and the New Plymouth Boards. Mr Forsyth said the resolution was putting the matter off. He would move as an amendment That the Board subsidise a trained nurse to live in Opunake. The arrangements for payment could be arranged afterwards among the Boards. The Chairman disagreed. He thought they were going too fast. He asked, Where was the nurse going to live? He was in favour of an ambulance. Mr Forsyth repeated that Opunake did not want a hospital where a patient might stay till he was better. All they wanted was a place to keep a man until he could be safely moved either to Hawera or New Plymouth. Mr Robbins said the resolution simply opened up the matter for the Opunake people to make a suggestion. Mr Wilkie objected to the resolution. The last part of it pledged the Board to "favourably" consider the idea. Mr Boddie replied. He considered they were bound to favourably consider any application from any part of the district. The motion was carried.

*Taranaki Daily News 21 Feb 1905 Hospital and Charitable Aid Board*

The Town Clerk of Opunake wrote regretting the Board's action relative to a proposed cottage hospital for Opunake.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 03 Mar 1905 Opunake Town Board*

Concerning the matter of cottage hospital the committee asked for a month's extension of time to report.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 08 Dec 1905 Hawera Hospital Board*

Ambulance. It has been deemed advisable to procure an ambulance waggon for the better and easier conveyance of all patients wishing to take advantage of the hospital, and as sufficient funds have been subscribed, together with a subsidy, to purchase a conveyance of that description, the Board determined to call for tenders for the same, which will be laid on the table at the meeting to-day; and as the Opunake settlers have approached the Board with the view of procuring one for that district, and having it stationed there, the Board thought it advisable to call tenders for two, the understanding with Opunake being that the Board pay one-fourth of the price. This, I might say, is in lieu of a request for a cottage hospital for Opunake.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 10 May 1913 Egmont County Council – Hospital and Charitable Aid Board Matters*

[... topic – raising loans so as to contribute towards a new hospital at New Plymouth...] Cr Willcox contended that if the county had to raise its contribution, there should be added to it sufficient to build and equip a cottage hospital at Opunake. That locality was so far removed from any central point that if an accident happened it might mean the loss of life before medical aid and proper attention could be obtained. Cr Maxwell, whilst in thorough sympathy with the sentiment, pointed out that such institutions were very difficult to efficiently maintain, and the tendency to-day was to centralise and have thoroughly equipped institutions with all the latest appliances. The cost of maintaining smaller institutions, such as cottage hospitals, was altogether out of proportion to the benefits received. Furthermore, if a cottage hospital were established at Opunake, other centres would have a claim for one. The chairman: Let each county have one...

*Taranaki Daily News 12 May 1913 The New Hospital – An Opunake Proposal*

The need for a cottage hospital at Opunake was emphasised at the Egmont County Council meeting on Friday. When the demand was received from the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board for £3621, the county's share of the cost of erecting the new hospital in New Plymouth, Cr Campbell asked if something could not be done to provide a cottage hospital for Opunake. He understood that recently there were seventeen patients from Opunake in the New Plymouth Hospital... Cr Willcox considered that a sum for a cottage hospital in Opunake should be included. The district was far removed from the railway, and many a life had been lost through delay in getting the patients to the hospital. Cr Maxwell said that no one realised more than he did the need for a cottage hospital in Opunake, but there was a general feeling that such institutions were very costly and ultimately became a very heavy burden on the ratepayers. Indeed, the cost of keeping them efficient was out of all proportion to the benefits received. This centralisation was not the wish of the Board, which was composed of country as well as town members. The chairman: We've heard all that before. It's all right from a town point of view, but it is ridiculous to ask people living 40 or 49 miles away from the hospital to go there. Cr Willcox admitted that good work was done at the town hospitals, but they should have a small hospital in Opunake to deal with bush accidents. Cr Maxwell said that it would entail great cost, which would fall on the ratepayers. If the ratepayers found the money the Board would provide the building and maintain it. Other places also would want cottage hospitals. Practically each contributing county would require one. Cr Willcox moved that the Hospital Board be asked to add an additional sum to the proposed levy, so as to provide and equip a cottage hospital for Opunake. Cr Burgess urged them to be careful. The ambulance had proved a white elephant. The chairman: "Because someone writes to the paper, like a silly idiot. It is not correct to say the ambulance is a white elephant." The chairman went on to say that it was there for anyone to use, but it was a big, heavy affair, and required a team of horses to move it. They could not expect any town board, county council or hospital board to keep a team of horses ready, but anyone could use it if he provided the horses. Anyway, it had not been in much demand since motor cars came into vogue. Cr Burgess: If it is necessary to maintain nurses and a doctor, the cost would be enormous. Cr Willcox thought the local doctor would always be available. A building and appliances and nurse would be required. Nurses were provided in other places, so why not here? Cr Burgess thought that motor cars had done away to a certain extent with the necessity for a local cottage hospital. Cr Hirst seconded the proposal, which was carried. On receipt of a reply from the Hospital Board it was decided to make application to the Government for the proposed levy or the increased amount to include the cottage hospital.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 22 May 1913*

Opunake's requirements as regards hospital accommodation for its residents were ventilated at the meeting of the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board on Wednesday, when representations from the Egmont County Council were considered. The chairman (Mr F. C. Bellringer) stated that he had been considering the advisability of purchasing a motor ambulance, which would bring Opunake within a few hours' journey of the hospital. While regretting that it could not accede to the request to add to the loan proposals provision for a cottage hospital at Opunake, the Board decided (the News reports) to inform the Council that it had under consideration the question of making better accommodation for hospital patients in the outlying districts.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 14 Jun 1913 Egmont County Council*

The usual monthly meeting of the Egmont County Council was held at Opunake on Friday, when there were present: Crs Dudley (Chairman), Maxwell, Campbell, Farquhar, Harvey, Davey, and Willcox... Correspondence... From the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board stating that the Board could not accede to the Council's request to add to the loan proposals provision for a cottage hospital at Opunake. The Board had under consideration the question of making better accommodation for hospital patients in the outlying districts. The chairman remarked that, as the present Government had decided that, under the present law, it could not make any loans for the hospitals, the whole matter was hung up for the present...

*Manawatu Standard 04 Dec 1913*

The Hawera Star states that a donation of £50 has been received from a leading Maori on the coast towards the erection of a cottage hospital at Opunake.

*Wairarapa Age 05 Dec 1913 Local and General*

It is not often one hears of Maoris giving donations to charitable objects, much as they delight to scatter loose cash, but £40 has been given by a leading Native on the coast towards a cottage hospital at Opunake.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 06 Dec 1913 Local and General*

On Thursday afternoon a meeting was held at Opunake to forward the movement for the erection of a cottage hospital and the engagement of a district nurse. A suggestion which received approval was that about £1400 or £1500 should be spent on a building, and that the money needed should be provided by a special rate which would yield about £700 and receive a subsidy of an equal amount. A committee was set up to go into the matter further, and the acquisition of a motor ambulance was favoured.

*Otago Daily Times 06 Dec 1913 Omnium Gatherum*

It is not often one hears of Maoris giving donations to charitable objects (says the Feilding Star), much as they delight to scatter loose cash, but £50 has been given by a leading Native on the coast towards a cottage hospital at Opunake.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 13 Dec 1913 Egmont County Council – Hospital matters*

The discussion then veered around to the claims of a cottage hospital at Opunake, and Mr Rogers mentioned that four natives had promised £50 each to complete the purchase of a property for the purpose. This would carry a £ for £ subsidy, and already £100 had been paid for the purpose. Cr Maxwell reported that the Taranaki Hospital Board had been informed that a Miss Muir had been asked to take up the position of Maori district nurse. The Government paid her salary but the Board had to provide her with accommodation and medicine and requisites, and Mr McReynolds was deputed to see to the accommodation. There the matter ended so far as the Board was concerned. Subsequently he learned from a newspaper report that a public meeting had been called at Opunake by Mr McReynolds, but of the outcome of this he knew nothing and nothing was before the Council.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 31 Dec 1913 Cottage Hospitals – Dr Valintine's Views*

At a conference at Opunake relative to the proposal to establish a cottage hospital, Dr Valintine said (the Opunake Times reports) he would consider the proposal from two points – the financial and the humanitarian. Would a cottage hospital be of real utility to Opunake? And asked his hearers if they read the blue book of statistics, issued by his department, and, if not, to summon up courage to do so. In this Dominion of a little over a million souls £500,000 was spent annually by his department, which means 9s 6d per head. No country in the world provided so many hospital beds per 1000 of the population as this Dominion, and the demand is increasing as the country progresses, so that they must be very cautious, otherwise they would outrun the constable. In support of the good work done he said the Dominion had the lowest death rate of any country in the world; the lowest infantile death rate from tuberculosis or consumptive causes, and the lowest from infectious diseases, which showed that the money voted is being well spent and that legislative measures of the Health Department were working for the good of humanity, although he was not going to be egotistical enough to take all the credit to his department. The doctor said he had to be very careful of the manner and mode of spending the money. Already the ratepayers are getting restive on account of the increase of rates. We must look to the maintenance fees to supplement our source of revenue to assist to pay the hospital rates. People have got accustomed to the idea that because they pay rates they have a right to all the privileges of the hospital. That argument is not used in municipal affairs. Considering the request of the cottage hospital from a humanitarian point of view, he asked them to contrast a serious case and the attention that can be got at a well-equipped hospital with that to be obtained at a cottage hospital. He appealed to the audience: If they had a near and dear one suffering seriously, would they prefer to take that near and dear one to a cottage hospital near by, or to a hospital forty miles away where all modern equipment was to be obtained for successful treatment. Not one of you would, he said, prefer the cottage hospital. A cottage hospital is not to the advantage of the community. Take an abdominal case, which is a serious operation. At the New Plymouth hospital, before such an operation was performed, a consultation of at least two or three doctors of the eminent staff is held, and the hospital bylaws say no operation shall be performed without a consultation. Then why should you in Opunake give the power to one doctor? Not one of you would submit your dear ones for preference to a cottage hospital. Not only from a financial point but that of a humane point of view did he consider this request, and particularly the latter. To his hearers he said: If you carefully consider it you will not go in for a cottage hospital. This is an age of operations, and he was of opinion that many operations might be avoided if more consideration is given and a consultation of two or more doctors is held before an operation is performed. The right to operate is used more pronouncedly where one doctor is in charge than is the case where two or more doctors in rival practice hold consultation. He knew of an hospital with twelve beds where more operations took place in one year

than in the base hospital where 100 beds are kept. He is in entire sympathy with more medical attention for our remote districts, and he made it a practice of paying a visit to outlying districts at least once a year, and his experience is that a well qualified nurse is in a position to be of great service, especially to coming mothers, by giving advice and her teaching, and going about amongst the people, and is much less potential for harm. He urged not for a cottage hospital, but for a home for a nurse at the centre of her activity. A room could be added for urgent cases. The natives had taken the initiative, and, conscious of their responsibility, had guaranteed £200; this, with a Government subsidy, should be sufficient. More than that he would have to put his official face against. A good suggestion had been made in respect of motor ambulance service, which would reduce the terrors of a long journey by road. He let those present understand that any proposal should be for provision of a nurse for Europeans or a home the expense of which must be borne independent of any present grants or levy made for hospitals. He appreciated the efforts made by Mr McReynolds on behalf of the suffering, which was the outcome of the largeness of his heart, but he (the speaker) knew more of the other side, and he had to be very careful in matters of granting supervision, etc. There is one class of settler that does require assistance – the coming mother and the women have the worst of it in this country. He was doing his best to increase the maternity nurses. He advised his hearers not to make a request for a cottage hospital, but go on the lines he had indicated. He paid a high compliment to the medical, clerical, and nursing staff and chairman of the New Plymouth Hospital Board. (Applause.) Mr MacReynolds said that their pretensions were for no more than had been outlined by Dr Valintine.

*Taranaki Daily News 23 Apr 1914 Backblock Nurses – Opunake*

The County of Egmont Nursing Association having taken the matter in hand and guaranteed her salary, the board has appointed a district nurse (Nurse McKinven) for Opunake. The nurse took up her duties towards the end of the year, and should be of great assistance to the people of the district. From the enterprise and energy displayed by the residents of Opunake on the occasion of the visit of the Inspector-General of Hospitals and myself, I feel sure that a cottage hospital suitable for the work of this nurse will soon be erected. The distance of the headquarters of these nurses from the main hospital fully warrants the appointments and will prove a great boon to the settlers in the districts in question. The settlers have proved their interest in the scheme by the substantial contributions they have made and are making. The thanks of the board are due to all those who have assisted in the promotion of this scheme, more especially to... Mr MacReynolds (secretary of Egmont Nursing Association)...

*Taranaki Daily News 23 Apr 1914 Native Nurse*

I referred in my last report to the greater interest which the Natives are now taking in the health of their race and to the influential deputation headed by Rua Bishop and the Rev Mr Hammond, which waited upon the board. Since then a Native nurse (Miss Muir) has been appointed by the Health Department, who pays her salary, the board providing all incidental expenses. The nurse has been very busy, and the nature of her reports shows that the appointment was made none too soon, and that her services are much appreciated by the Natives.

*Taranaki Daily News 05 May 1914 District News – Opunake*

... Big preparations are being made for the hospital ball in aid of the funds of our cottage hospital.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 15 May 1914 Cottage Hospital Ball*

The ball held under the auspices of the District Nursing League, for the raising of funds for the erection of a cottage hospital at Opunake, eventuated on Wednesday night in the Town Hall, Opunake, and was an unqualified success. The night was rather warm for dancing, but the excellency of the music and floor rendered sitting out almost impossible and with the large number present a thoroughly enjoyable time was spent by all. The hall was hung with flags and festoons, the stage decorations being a work of art; and Mrs Grey and her assistants deserve great credit for the effect obtained. Taken altogether the scene while the Grand March was in progress was a particularly pleasing and animated one. The bright dresses of the ladies contrasted vividly with the more sombre garb of their escorts and the bright decorations of the hall. Excellent music was supplied by Mr Ken Cannell's band, consisting of the Misses Cross and Mr Brennan (violins), Mr Clegg (cornet), and Mr Cannell (piano). Dr Barron and Messrs O'Sullivan, A. Taylor, and W. Blythe were most attentive as masters of ceremonies. Just previous to the supper adjournment Mr Knell, in apologising for the unavoidable absence of Mr MacReynolds, thanked all those for their patronage who had made the function such a great success. Continuing, he said doubtless some might wonder why they wanted all these funds which they were endeavouring to collect. It was felt that the time had come when Opunake people should have better hospital accommodation than at present existed, seeing that if anyone had to go into the hospital it meant a forty-mile run, with car expenses added, and to obviate this hardship representations had been made to the Defence Department for the acquisition of a building site, and if they were successful in obtaining the section it was intended to erect a cottage hospital. In conclusion, he again thanked them most sincerely for the manner in which they had responded to the call for assistance. A very daintily laid out supper was served by members of the Ladies' committee. During the evening Mrs Bradley, Misses O'Rourke and Muir, Dr Barron, and Mr Taylor graciously contributed extras, which added to the enjoyment of the evening.

*Taranaki Daily News 19 Nov 1914 Hospital Board – Opunake Cottage Hospital*

Mr MacReynolds again brought up the question of obtaining a site for a cottage hospital at Opunake. He referred to the possibility of securing an education reserve at Opunake for the purpose, and on his recommendation, it was decided that a deputation, consisting of the town members of the Board and Mr McAllum, should wait on the Education Board in connection with the matter.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 17 Dec 1914 Local & General News*

At the meeting of the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board at New Plymouth on Wednesday it was resolved to abandon, on the score of cost, the proposal to secure an education reserve near the centre of the town of Opunake as a site for the proposed cottage hospital. It was subsequently decided that further efforts should be made to obtain a portion of the prison reserve for that purpose. In regard to the appointment of a native nurse for the Opunake district, Miss H. MacLean, assistant inspector of hospitals, suggested that Nurse Kelly, the present district nurse, might include the care of the native in her work. After a discussion, during which eulogistic reference was made to the work Nurse Kelly was doing, it was resolved to forward the letter to her. The name of Miss M. Goodwin, of Hawera, was added to the outside probationers' list.

*Taranaki Daily News 17 Dec 1914 Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board – The Opunake Cottage Hospital*

The site of the proposed cottage hospital at Opunake came up for discussion. A deputation had been appointed to wait on the Education Board with a view to endeavouring to secure an education reserve near the centre of the town. Mr C. A. Wilkinson, M.P., had also moved in the matter, and the position was that the Education Board could dispose of the property, one acre, for £450, the Government valuation, and must devote the money for the purchase of other sites for educational purposes. On the motion of Mr McReynolds, it was resolved to abandon that proposal on the score of the cost. Two other sections in the district were discussed, and it was finally decided to secure the section in Domett street. Mr Maxwell considered that the prison site, originally proposed, was an ideal one. He understood that the Police Department was a block to this being obtained. There was, he affirmed, no possible chance of this site being required for a police station, as it was at the outlying corner of the town, and the police station required to be in a central position, as it was at present. The site was only required for grazing purposes, and he thought it preposterous that one Department should be allowed to keep for grazing purposes only a very valuable section, that was wanted badly by the Health Department for a cottage hospital, and who would possibly be forced to occupy a less suitable site. He considered the Board should not abandon the idea of obtaining at least an acre of this section, and should assist Mr Wilkinson, M.P., as much as possible. In reply to Mr J. Brown, the chairman said that the matter had been referred to the Minister of Justice, who had referred it to the Commissioner of Police. The latter had stated that he would not give up a portion of it until forced to do so. To a further question, the chairman said that they had the power to take the land under the Public Works Act, but this was an expensive process. On the motion of Messrs Wilson and Brown, it was resolved that further endeavours be made to obtain a portion of the prison reserve at Opunake. It was decided to ask the other Taranaki members to assist Mr C. A. Wilkinson in his efforts to this end.

*Taranaki Daily News 17 Dec 1914 Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board – Native Nurse For Opunake*

In regard to the appointment of a native nurse for the Opunake district, Miss H. Maclean, assistant inspector of hospitals, suggested that Nurse Kelly, the present district nurse, might include the care of the native in her work. She might, it was suggested, occasionally visit the more distant pas, and the Maoris near Opunake might come to her cottage. In order to facilitate this, Nurse Kelly should, as much as possible, confine her work to visiting nursing, and not remain with an ordinary midwifery or general case as a private nurse. It was never intended that a district nurse should do this. She must hold herself free to attend cases on visiting lines, and only in cases of actual need, remain in one patient's house. In that way, her work might have a wider scope. The Department Miss Maclean added, would recommend payment to the Board of an additional £50 per annum, £25 of which would be additional payment for the nurse and £25 towards the expense of providing a cottage and travelling expenses. The chairman thought it would be in the interests of the Board and of the people to amalgamate the two positions. He was not convinced that there was enough to keep a nurse wholly and solely engaged in native work. Mr MacReynolds agreed to the proposal, but he thought Nurse Kelly already required assistance. A discussion then ensued as to the scope of a district nurse's work. Mr Halcombe stated that in the Uruti district it was difficult to get the service of a trained nurse, and unless the nurses were allowed to remain with the patient (unless needed elsewhere) the scheme would lose a good deal of its value. It was finally decided to forward the letter to Miss Kelly. Mr Maxwell considered that Nurse Kelly was doing excellent work, and the present proposal would be the best possible solution. He pointed out that they must guard against people coming to rely too much on the district nurse. The more assistance they provided, the more the services of the district nurse would be availed of, to the detriment of private nursing. It was, he felt sure,

the intention of the Department that the services of district nurses should only be available on emergency cases, so as to give people time to look round and obtain the services of a nurse elsewhere.

*Taranaki Daily News 22 Apr 1915 New Plymouth Hospital – A Year's Progress – Native Nurse*

Nurse Muir was appointed by the Government as native health nurse, they paying her salary and the Board her incidental expenses. Her services were from report, much appreciated. She however, resigned in October, and since then, although the Department has been asked to fill the vacancy, no suitable nurse has been found. As the natives live within a very short distance of the main road and a doctor and dentist visit as far as Rahotu weekly and many of the natives have their own motor-cars they are within easy reach of the main institution. The position, therefore, is not as bad as it looks at first sight.

*Taranaki Daily News 09 Sep 1915 District News – Opunake*

At a meeting of the County of Egmont Nursing Association on Friday it was notified that the Health Department had agreed to contribute towards the salary and keep of a nurse, providing she attends to Native cases, which will be done. It was decided to hold a ball later on in the season in aid of the finances of the association. The building of a cottage hospital was discussed and financial arrangements outlined.

*Kai Tiaki: The Journal of the nurses of New Zealand January 1918 – Resignations, Appointments, etc.*

Sister Mary Elliott, district nurse at Opunake, has entered St Helens and hopes later to resume her district work under the Public Health Department.

*Taranaki Daily News 04 Dec 1918 The Epidemic – Opunake*

The epidemic continues to make inroads into various homes around Opunake. There were 17 patients in Opunake emergency hospital on Tuesday. The Rev Father Doolaghty and the Sisters of the Mission have kindly placed the Catholic buildings at the disposal of the sick. The rooms in the Convent are used as a children's hospital and the Sisters have charge of seven children patients, and the Presbytery is used as a convalescent hospital. The town hall has been shaped into an auxiliary hospital.

*Oamaru Mail 23 Dec 1918*

Word was received on Saturday afternoon of the death as a martyr to duty of Miss Cecily Mary Rowland, the younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Edward Rowland, of Wharfe street. The deceased young lady, who was 28 years of age, was born and educated in Oamaru. She was engaged under the Taranaki Education Board as sole teacher at the Mangahume School. When the schools were closed because of the influenza epidemic, she volunteered for nursing service, and was placed in charge of a cottage hospital at Opunake, and won golden opinions for the work she performed. Relinquishing the responsibility of care of the hospital because of the strain put upon her, she accepted lighter nursing work, and in the end herself was attacked by the epidemic disease with fatal results. She gave her promising young life in the service of others, and much sympathy will be extended to the sorrowing family.

*Taranaki Daily News 16 Jan 1919 Local and General*

There are only four or five cases of influenza in the Opunake cottage hospital, only one case being regarded as serious. The temporary hospital has been closed, and it is expected that the cottage hospital will be closed to influenza cases in a few days... The need for a permanent doctor for the Opunake district was referred to by members of the Egmont County Council on Tuesday. Cr Cornish considered that the Council should support the Opunake Town Board in their efforts to have a doctor appointed, adding that the last three months had shown more than ever the dire need for a medical man. The Town Board had passed a resolution urging on the Public Health Department the necessity for providing a medical man for Opunake and the surrounding district, and, in the event of their being unable to provide a man, that they arrange for Dr Barrow to be immediately released to resume practice. The Chairman stated that the new provision allowing local bodies to strike a rate to pay a medical man had considerably simplified matters. The discussion tended to show that the main stumbling block was that Dr Barrow had enlisted and left his practice, and his interests had to be safeguarded; so that another doctor did not care to come into the district. Moreover there was a scarcity of doctors and it was pointed out that it might be possible to arrange to buy out the practice by striking a rate to cover the cost. Finally, it was resolved, on the motion of Cr O'Brien and the chairman, to call a conference of the Opunake Town Board, Egmont County Council and Parihaka Road Board with a view to thoroughly discussing the matter, and in the meantime Dr Valentine will be communicated with for information.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 19 Jun 1919 Local and General News*

The position with regard to the nursing service at Opunake was before the board, when the resignation of Nurse Holdsworth was considered and accepted. The chairman stated (the News reports) that efforts had been made to get a new nurse, but without success, and he was of opinion that some better accommodation should be provided at Opunake for the nurse. The only satisfactory way to meet the need, he thought, was for the Opunake Committee to go in for a cottage hospital, as had been done at Uruti. The Government would subscribe, by £ for £, any moneys subscribed by the public for such a hospital. Mr Halcombe stated that he was quite satisfied that for successful nursing, such as district nurses had to do, some such place was necessary. He strongly recommended the Opunake Committee to build a cottage hospital. Mr Campbell favoured the idea of a cottage hospital, as he was quite sure no satisfactory state of affairs would come about till something of that nature was done. Mr C. Andrews said he was surprised that, considering the accommodation at Opunake, nurses had stayed there as long as they had. He thought the conditions were a disgrace to the committee.

*Taranaki Daily News 19 Jun 1919 Hospital Board*

Nurse Holdsworth (Opunake) reported the district to be fairly free from sickness. Two Maori pahs had been visited and all the natives were well at the time of the visits. The position with regard to the nursing service at Opunake was before the board when the registration of Nurse Holdsworth was considered. The chairman stated that efforts had been made to get a new nurse, but without success, and he was of opinion that some better accommodation should be provided at Opunake for the nurse. The only satisfactory way to meet the need, he thought, was for the Opunake Committee to go in for a cottage hospital, as had been done at Uruti. Two clergymen of Opunake had made representations to him in regard to the cottage hospital idea and he had told them that the Government would subsidise, by £ for £, any moneys subscribed by the public for such a hospital, and that they should get into touch with the Uruti Committee and find out how they worked their hospital. Mr Halcombe stated that so far he had had

no communication from the Opunake people on the matter. He stated, however, that the Uruti hospital had been built by public subscription. He was quite satisfied that for successful nursing, such as district nurses had to do, some such place was necessary. The nurse must have some place quite to herself, and it was impossible for her to take cases into a house in which she merely occupied a room. He strongly recommended the Opunake Committee to build a cottage hospital. Mr Campbell said he favoured the idea of a cottage hospital, as he was quite sure no satisfactory state of affairs would come about until something of that nature was done. He had had some communications from the Opunake Committee, but on account of having been away from home had not been able to meet them. Mr C. Andrews said he was surprised that, considering the accommodation at Opunake, nurses had stayed there as long as they had. He thought the conditions were a disgrace to the Committee.

*Taranaki Herald 21 Aug 1919 Opunake Hospital Matters – Discussion by Hospital Board*

The Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board yesterday discussed various matters in connection with the District Nurse and proposed hospital district for Opunake. Rev. Palmer, on behalf of the Opunake Nursing Association, wrote that as there was now a resident doctor in the town arrangements would be made for two or three rooms for the use of the district nurse, until a permanent home was available. The chairman stated that two clergymen had come from Opunake, and stated that they desired to have a cottage hospital at Opunake. They were told that unless accommodation was provided for a nurse it would be impossible to get one. He also thought it would be impossible to get a nurse for less than £250 per annum, and he suggested that the Opunake Nursing Association should let the Board know definitely what amount it was prepared to contribute. Mr S. J. Campbell pointed out that there was another move in Opunake. He thought it was the duty of the Board to send a nurse to Opunake and pay her salary. The chairman stated that he had interviewed Miss McLean, who stated that it was impossible to procure a nurse. The nurses from the Defence Department were being engaged by various hospitals, etc., and naturally nurses preferred to live in the towns. The only way that Opunake could get a nurse was by offering a higher salary. Mr A. H. Halcombe said that it was hard on the settlers in the backblocks because they not only had to find their own nurses, but also had to pay their quota to the Hospital Board. Opunake was in a slightly better position, as the Native Department also contributed its quota. The chairman stated that the Native Department paid £50 per annum and £25 towards the rest. Mr Halcombe said now that salaries had been increased the Native Department should be approached to increase their quota, and he moved in this direction. Mr George Young seconded. Mr S. J. Campbell still maintained that the Board should provide a nurse. They paid their quota at Opunake, and got nothing for it. The chairman said Opunake had 15 patients in the hospital now, and 204 patients for Egmont were treated at the hospital last year. There were also five inmates in the Old People's Home so that they a fair share of custom from that district. Mr James Young said that the trouble was a few people were supporting the nurse in Opunake all the time and everyone was taking advantage of it. It should come out of the rates in some way. The chairman stated that Miss McLean said definitely that she had no nurse to send. So far it was not because they were not paying sufficient salary, it was because no nurse was available. He, however, thought if they advertised at a high salary they might induce a nurse to take the position. He pointed out that the Board had done all it could to fill the vacancy. Mr Halcombe pointed out that subscribers should be charged less for the nurses' services. The resolution was carried.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 10 Sep 1919 Egmont County Council – The Hospital Question*

A deputation consisting of the Revs Strand and Palmer waited on the Council in regard to the cottage hospital question. Mr Palmer said that the Nursing Association desired to know the Council's opinion on this matter. Recently he and Mr Strand waited on the chairman and secretary of the Taranaki Hospital Board, and one of the subjects brought forward was the difficulty of securing suitable accommodation for a nurse. Mr Fraser suggested that the memorial for wounded soldiers should take the form of a cottage hospital and both he (Mr Fraser) and the secretary assured them that they were not in any way opposed to such an institution; on the contrary, they would welcome it. The deputation pointed out that Opunake had not a resident doctor, but Mr Fraser pointed out that neither had Urenui or Uruti, where there were cottage hospitals. Such a proposal would not present any great difficulties and would carry a £ for £ subsidy. They pointed out the saving of expense, apart from the risk to the patient by travelling strain, in sending a motor ambulance or special motor car to New Plymouth. The doctor at Kaponga realised that a cottage hospital at Opunake would be a very great advantage and would relieve much suffering and inconvenience in many cases. The nurse they recently had went away simply because of the impossibility to get suitable accommodation, and if only a small beginning could be made in the way of securing a small cottage for the nurse it would be a relief to the public mind. Subsequently the interviewed Mr Wilkinson again, and later received a reply from him, dated August 16, stating that he had interviewed the Minister in Wellington. Mr Wilford was sympathetic, but required to know the mind of the Taranaki Hospital Board before coming to any decision. Mr Wilkinson added that he noticed from reports in the press that the Council was now demanding a separate hospital district, and apparently it would now be necessary to settle the question among themselves as to what course they now proposed to take. The deputation now desired to know the Council's mind on the matter.

Cr O'Brien replied at some length to the criticism of the Hospital Board secretary in regard to his proposals for a separate hospital district. He contended that a cottage hospital would not meet their requirements. It would be lacking in the necessary ventilation and equipment of a modern hospital. He moved that the chairman call a public meeting of citizens to consider the question of establishing either a cottage hospital or a separate hospital district. Seconded by Cr Coffin. The chairman agreed with the necessity for a cottage hospital at Opunake. The larger question of a separate hospital district was one for the ratepayers, but he was of opinion the county had now too much capital sunk in the New Plymouth institution to think of seceding. The Council would do all it could to assist in getting proper accommodation for a nurse in Opunake and Crs Campbell and Young, the county's representatives on the Hospital Board were of the same opinion. He was in favour of calling a meeting for the purpose of considering a cottage hospital, but he was not in favour of the Council calling a meeting to discuss severing from the Taranaki Hospital Board. Cr Sinclair moved, as an amendment, that the Council express its sympathy with the steps taken by the Nursing Association to establish a cottage hospital at Opunake and would do all in its power to assist. Seconded by Cr Green. On a show of hands the amendment was carried. The Rev Strand remarked that the Nursing Association had asked the Government for a reserve for a hospital site, and were practically assured that if the Hospital Board and the Council approved of the proposal this reserve would be granted. The Rev Palmer, replying to Cr O'Brien, said that the latter's description of a cottage hospital was largely drawn from his imagination. The cottage hospitals that he had seen were excellent and airy buildings that served their purpose excellently, and the nurses were exceedingly happy there.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 14 Nov 1919 Opunake*

The monthly meeting of the Egmont Nursing Association was held in the Council Chambers on Thursday. Correspondence was read from Mr C. A. Wilkinson, M.P., in connection with the proposed cottage hospital. It was decided that negotiations for the site for same be postponed in the meantime. The Taranaki Hospital Board wrote notifying that Nurse McFadgear had been appointed to this district and would be commencing her duties early next week. Suitable arrangements were decided upon for meeting the nurse, and a committee of ladies was appointed to see that the rooms for the nurse receive any necessary attention prior to her arrival. Mr M. O'Brien wrote asking that he be made a member of the Nursing Association Committee. It was decided that Dr Watt and Mr M. O'Brien be appointed members of the association.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 29 Nov 1919 Opunake*

The efforts of the Nursing Association to have a cottage hospital established in this district are evidently not without avail. It is reported that the members of the Taranaki Hospital Board are favourable to the proposal, and a conference between delegates of the Board and Egmont County ratepayers to discuss the question is now being arranged. It is to be hoped that the people of this district will avail themselves of the opportunity to secure this long-felt want by putting their claims unitedly before the Board's delegates.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 03 Dec 1919 Advertisement*

Egmont County Ratepayers and Cottage Hospital. Important Notice. A Deputation from the New Plymouth Hospital and Charitable Aid Board will meet the County Ratepayers and the Nursing Association at 2 p.m. on Saturday, December 6, in the Town Hall, Opunake, to discuss the question of erecting a Cottage Hospital for this district. W. R. Wright, County Chairman.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 08 Dec 1919 Opunake Cottage Hospital*

A meeting of Egmont County ratepayers, convened by Mr W. R. Wright, county chairman, was held on Saturday to discuss with delegates from the Taranaki Hospital Board and the Opunake Nursing Association the question of erecting a cottage hospital for this district. Messrs M. Fraser (chairman), C. Andrews, J. Halcombe, and E. Holden (secretary) represented the Hospital Board, and the Nursing Association's members were all in attendance. Mr W. R. Wright, chairman of the meeting, briefly explained the question in view, and called on Mr Fraser to explain the proposals of the Hospital Board to the meeting. Mr Fraser said that the Hospital Board were prepared to establish a cottage hospital at Opunake with a much lighter contribution from the residents of this district than obtained in other parts of the hospital district. In arriving at this decision the Board had been actuated by a communication from the Health Department asking the Board not to drive too hard a bargain with Opunake. He went on to describe the building suggested by them, and produced a plan of same.

The proposal was to erect a building comprising a ward for accidents and general sickness and a maternity ward, in addition to living rooms for the staff. Their estimate of the cost was £1500, and they were going to ask this district to subscribe approximately one fifth of the cost, viz., about £300. The Board and the Department will provide the balance. The practice where cottage hospitals at present exist has been that the residents have found 50 per cent of the cost of the buildings, etc. Therefore Egmont ratepayers now had the opportunity of securing these benefits on a very light contribution. Mr Fraser then went on to say that the Board had not definitely decided that the building suggested would be the furthest that they would go in the matter, and they were present to hear the views of the Nursing Association on the question, and hoped that an amicable arrangement would be arrived at.

Rev Mr Palmer, on behalf of the Nursing Association, considered that the proposal as set out by Mr Fraser did not meet the case, as it was desired that accommodation should also be provided for natives. Mr O'Brien then went on to deal with the question of the county severing from the Hospital Board and establishing their own general hospital. He also charged the Hospital Board with collecting a levy from this county which was being expended for the benefit of residents of New Plymouth. The chairman asked Mr O'Brien to keep to the question before the meeting, and pointed out that the meeting was called for the purpose of discussing the erection of a cottage hospital.

A stormy interlude occurred at this stage, in which Messrs T. S. Hickey and J. Lawn demanded that Mr O'Brien be allowed to proceed. Mr O'Brien then went on to quote figures which he has used on previous occasions, and have already appeared in your columns, by which he endeavoured to show that the severance would be to the benefit of this district. Mr Fraser and Mr Halcombe both hotly refuted the charges made by Mr O'Brien, and deplored the tone that was being adopted by the promoters of the severance proposal in throwing insults and making false charges against the Board. Mr O'Brien eventually moved a resolution to the effect that this meeting express themselves in favour of Egmont severing from the Taranaki hospital district. Seconded by Mr Trotter. Some discussion ensued, and on Mr Campbell's suggestion the mover and seconder of the resolution agreed to withdraw their motion. Mr Campbell then moved, and Mr Young seconded, that a committee of five be set up to confer with the Hospital Board to evolve a scheme suitable to all. On being put to the meeting this resolution was carried unanimously. The committee appointed were Revs C. Palmer and C. Strand, Messrs C. A. Trotter, M. O'Brien and T. H. H. Sinclair. On the motion of the chairman a hearty vote of thanks was accorded the deputation for attending.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 17 Dec 1919 Local and General*

At yesterday's meeting of Taranaki Hospital Board an amended scheme was submitted from Opunake for the establishment of a local hospital. The Rev Mr Strand states (the News reports) that after the meeting at Opunake the committee had met, and Mr A. O'Brien, architect at Opunake, had given his advice and prepared the plans. It was also felt that they should assure the Board that the district could raise an amount of £300, possibly more. He understood the Board's proposed scheme would cost £1600. This would cost £1700 or £1800. It was felt in the district that something should be done to perpetuate the memory of Mrs Palmer, wife of the Rev Mr Palmer, who had sacrificed her life during the epidemic. It was therefore suggested that the maternity ward should be named in honor of her memory, and that subscriptions from the district should be utilised for that purpose. This would give the district some definite aim, and would stimulate the matter. It was possible that £400 or £500 would be raised. Contributions to the memorial would be forthcoming from Mrs Palmer's friends in the Old Country, as well as from all parts of the district. The Rev Mr Palmer said that they would like to feel that the memorial portion was not built by anything but public subscription. The subsidy on it could be utilised for the other portion of the hospital. The chairman said that one could sympathise with the idea as submitted by the people of Opunake, but there was no reason why the Department should not appreciate that action, with no reflection that the subsidy had been utilised in connection with the erection of the memorial portion of the building. He could assure the deputation that their request would have their entire sympathy. After the deputation withdrew it was resolved that upon the Egmont County Nursing Association giving the Board a guarantee that it would subscribe a minimum sum of £400 the Board would proceed with the erection of a cottage hospital as soon as possible. The resolution was communicated to the deputation, who expressed their thanks.

*Taranaki Daily News 15 Jun 1920 Local and General*

The Revs Strand (chairman) and C. Palmer (secretary) of the County of Egmont Nursing Association, waited on the house committee of the Taranaki Hospital Board yesterday morning, and suggested a number of alterations in the plans of the cottage hospital to be erected at Opunake. The members of the Board agreed to the deputation's request, and decided to confer with the architect, with a view of having the proposed alterations incorporated in the plans.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 02 Aug 1920 Opunake*

The monthly meeting of the Opunake Nursing Association was held on Thursday, the most important business dealt with being the consideration of the plan of the proposed cottage hospital as prepared by Messrs Messenger and Griffiths, architects to the Taranaki Hospital Board. It was resolved to recommend some minor alterations which it was considered might be of advantage. The proposed building makes provision for two small accident or emergency wards, also a maternity ward capable of accommodating three patients, living rooms for the staff, and apparently all conveniences necessary for the carrying on of such an institution. It is proposed to construct the building in ferro concrete, and the general design and finish of the structure should prove a credit to the district, as well as filling a most urgent want.

*Taranaki Daily News 20 Oct 1920 Opunake*

The Town Board has decided to form and metal a road to the proposed cottage hospital site. The work will be proceeded with as soon as the cottage hospital is commenced.

*Taranaki Daily News 11 Nov 1920 Advertisement*

To Builders. Tenders are invited, to be received at our office up to 12 noon on Wednesday, November 24, for the Erection of a Cottage Hospital, in concrete, at Opunake, for the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board. Plans and specifications obtainable from Secretary, Hospital Committee (Rev C. Palmer, Opunake) and the undersigned. Messenger, Griffiths and Taylor, Registered Architects, New Plymouth.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 16 Dec 1920 Local and General*

At the meeting of the Taranaki Hospital Board yesterday, the Inspector-General of Hospitals (Dr T. H. A. Valintine) wrote enquiring if any action had been taken by the Board for the erection of the maternity cottage hospital at Opunake. The secretary reported having replied that tenders were advertised for the work, but the time for closing had to be extended. The Board now had two tenders before it, one for £4860 and one for £6470. As the lowest figure was far more than ten per cent above the estimate (which was the limit allowed by the Minister), the Board had not the power to accept any of the tenders. The original estimate of the cost was £2800. The meeting finally decided to refer the matter to the Department.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 17 Feb 1921 Opunake Hospital*

The position as affecting the proposal to erect a cottage hospital at Opunake was again gone into at the monthly meeting of the Taranaki Hospital Board, when a report was received from a special committee which sat last week, recommending that Messrs M. Fraser (chairman) and M. O'Brien be a deputation to interview the Prime Minister at Wellington to secure assistance. It will be recalled that the board secured an estimate for the work, which indicated that the erection could be done at a cost of £2800, and they accordingly made provision to this extent. When tenders were called, however, the lowest received was £4800 a difference of £2000, and for this reason the board did not feel inclined to go on with the scheme, in fact the Department had intimated that they could not approve of paying subsidy on the additional amount. When the sub-committee's report was received yesterday the chairman reviewed the position and also touched on the state of the finances. He stated that the limit of the Board's overdraft was £2500. The overdraft already stood at £1938, which meant that they had only £562 to draw on from this source. "It is just as well, therefore," said the speaker, "that the public and contributing bodies should know exactly how much money we have to spend." With regard to the raising of loan moneys, Mr Fraser quoted letters from the Department, in which strict economy was urged... With reference to the Opunake hospital, a letter was read from Dr Wylie, in charge of buildings, under date January 25, which stated: "I am instructed to advise you that, owing to the disparity between the estimated cost of the above hospital and the lowest tender received, your Board will be well advised to defer the matter of building this hospital at the present time, unless, as you suggest, the people of the district concerned are inclined to guarantee the difference between the two sums in question." The Chairman said that in view of the position he did not think that any good would come of sending him to Wellington with the Opunake deputation, as the Board could not make any further offers. The trouble had come with the difficulties of the period, he said, and people must realise that. The Board could not accept the tender at the increased price, because they had no money. No one had more sympathy for the Opunake people than himself,

and he was sure that all the members desired to see that the people of that district got justice, but they could not see their way to recommend an additional £2000 expenditure. It was stated that one contractor, on being asked for an estimate of the cost of the hospital on a 10 per cent basis, put the amount down at £5800. This represents an increase of £3000 on the original estimate of £2800 made by the architects last April and confirmed at the latter end of last year. Mr M. O'Brien accused the Board of attempting to shuffle. He strongly urged that the chairman should back up the deputation of Opunake representatives. He pointed out that the Opunake people had raised £400 in the early stages, and had collected since a another £200, which was lying at the bank. He stressed the need of a hospital in the district. The chairman said it was not a question of stubbornness, but merely that the Board did not have the money. Personally he was quite prepared to proceed with the deputation if it was the wish of the Board. After discussion it was decided to confirm the arrangement that the chairman and Mr O'Brien form a deputation to interview the Prime Minister in company with other delegates from Opunake.

*Application for consent of Capital Expenditure 1 Oct 1921 – Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

1920 Aug 18 Taranaki Hospital Board adopted plans for building a Maternity and Cottage Hospital at Opunake for an estimated cost of £4,472. Messrs Messenger, Griffiths and Taylor were the registered architects entrusted with the work.

*Taranaki Herald 15 Jun 1921 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

The architects (Messrs Messenger, Griffiths and Taylor) reported that the plasterers had completed the external work under the verandah along the northern frontage, leaving only details in touching up the complete outside work. The tiler had been engaged in tiling the walls of the kitchen and service block. Marble shelving and tile fireplaces had arrived and were ready for fixing in position. The plumbing work had not advanced as much as had been expected, and the boilers to be supplied by Messrs Anderson's Ltd., had not yet come to hand. The question of the substitution of steam for driving the laundry plant, in lieu of the electric motors originally intended, should be decided immediately. District Nurse McFadgen (Opunake) reported having attended 10 cases during the month. There were still a few cases of measles and tonsillitis among the children.

*Taranaki Daily News 13 Jul 1921 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

At the last meeting of the Egmont County Council a resolution was passed stating "That in view of the further delay in the construction of the Opunake Hospital, a delay which the council thinks unwarranted, this council herewith stops its monthly contribution of money until such time as the work of construction of the hospital is commenced. At yesterday's meeting of the council the matter was again under discussion, when it was decided to at once forward a cheque for the amount, it being considered that the desired end had been achieved.

*Letter dated 22 Sep 1921 E. Halden, Secretary of the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board to the Director General of Health  
Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

"I am directed to inform you that my Board has accepted the tender of Mr F. E. COOPER at 4,472 pounds for the erection of the Opunake Cottage Hospital on the plans and specifications as approved by your Department some months ago."

*Hawera & Normanby Star 28 Jan 1922 Opunake Cottage Hospital*

For a number of years the residents of the Egmont County have been battling for a cottage hospital, and yesterday marked the day on which their hopes were realised. The building, which is nearing completion, is a district maternity home and cottage hospital, and judging by the remarks made by some of the speakers there was urgent need for such an installation. Mr M. Fraser, the chairman of the Taranaki Hospital Board, performed the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone.

Mr Fraser was accompanied by Mrs Gray (in the absence of Mrs Fraser), the matron of the New Plymouth Hospital (Miss Campbell), Messrs E. Holden and V. Griffiths, respectively secretary and architect to the board, and the following members: Messrs J. Sutherland, A. H. Halcombe, S. Vickers and G. Capper, and G. Young (a former member). The visitors were welcomed to Opunake by the Rev Mr Stent, who spoke on behalf of the Egmont County Nursing Association, and later they were met by Mr G. W. Rogers (chairman of the Nursing Association), Messrs M. O'Brien and Jas. Young (the Egmont representatives on the Hospital Board), Mr S. Campbell (chairman of the Egmont County Council), and Mr C. A. Trotter (chairman of the Opunake Town Board). Lunch was served at the Club Hotel, and the party subsequently adjourned to the hospital site.

Mr G. W. Rogers, in introducing the first speaker, said they were gathered together for the purpose of asking Mr Fraser to lay the foundation stone of their hospital. He had intended giving a long history of the growth of the movement which had resulted in the erection of the building, but time was limited by a special meeting of the Egmont County Council. Mr Rogers briefly referred to the formation of the County Nursing Association and the good work done by the various nurses who had been stationed at Opunake from time to time. They would agree that the association had been a great boon to the inhabitants, but they were all sure that now they should go a step further than having a district nurse. Mr Rogers referred to the great work done by Mr M. J. MacReynolds, and he spoke appreciatively of the efforts of the Minister of Health (the Hon C. J. Parr), the chairman and members of the Taranaki Hospital Board, and last, but not least, the people of the district, who had subscribed sufficient funds for the building now in the course of erection. The hospital would be a benefit to the district and a great adjunct to it, and he fully believed that it would fulfil its mission. Thanks were also due to the Government for granting the subsidy. Mr Rogers apologised for the absence of Mr O. Hawken, M.P., who was absent on Parliamentary duties in Wellington, Mr J. S. S. Medley (an old member of the Taranaki Hospital Board), and Dr E. A. Walker (superintendent of the New Plymouth Hospital).

Mr S. Campbell (chairman of the Egmont County Council) was then called upon to speak. He said that he was very pleased to see the hospital so far advanced in its course of erection. He eulogised the work done by those who were responsible for it, and he made special mention of Messrs A. H. Halcombe's and M. O'Brien's efforts.

Mr M. O'Brien said that he was pleased to know that Mr Fraser was the man who was going to lay the foundation stone. He thought that the Hospital Board had been very good to the residents of the district in so much as they had provided the grandest institution ever created. He paid a tribute to the co-operation of the Minister of Public Health and the Hospital Board. "The people of the district are splendid," said Mr O'Brien, "and should the board ever decide to enlarge the building they will find that the people of Opunake will assist them wonderfully."

Mr J. Young, a member of the Hospital Board, referred to the great work done by Mr Fraser. Mr Young said that he had known the district for the past 38 years, and he had also known people to die and be buried there simply because a doctor was not available. The people of the district, he said, would not appreciate the value of the hospital until it was urgently needed for someone who was sick. Good nursing attention was the chief thing in sickness. Referring to the hospital site, the speaker said there was not a better in Taranaki, and the best facilities for drainage offered themselves. Mr Young concluded by thanking Mr Fraser and the members of the Hospital Board.

Mr C. A. Trotter (chairman of the Opunake Town Board) said that as far as Opunake itself was concerned they had put up a good fight for the hospital for the last three years, but he wished to thank the people of the district for subscribing so freely to the funds. Mr Trotter was sure that the cottage hospital would be a great benefit as well as a credit to all concerned.

Mr M. Fraser (chairman of the Taranaki Hospital Board) was received with applause. He said that he was in a very awkward position as regards his speech, for the simple reason that he had not got one. (Laughter). Continuing, Mr Fraser said that the board had been thinking of such a cottage hospital as they now had in the course of erection for the last four years, and during the whole of the time the prospect of anything definite had seemed hopeless. When tenders were called the amount was so very high that it looked impossible, but there was always the spirit of the people of Opunake to be considered. By a spirit of splendid independence and self-reliance the residents had managed to raise the sum of nearly £1100 for the building, and their effort had been an example to all the health districts in New Zealand. They had really raised the sum of £2172, for with the Government subsidy that is what the amount came to. The building would cost close upon £5000. Lying behind the action of the people must have been a great goodness; it must have been a deep feeling for the good of humanity that had caused the residents to put their hands in their pockets in the manner they had done. They knew that much pain and suffering had been the result of having to send patients to New Plymouth, but there was more than that in the minds of the residents. Right throughout this Dominion there had been a scare that many deaths had occurred which should have been avoided, but the Department of Health had assured them that the cry of the poor people would not be heard in vain. It was a fact that because of insufficient accommodation young women had lost their lives. Mr Fraser said that highly as he valued the honour that had been conferred upon him, it was not his place to lay the foundation stone. They should have had the Minister of Health or their member of Parliament to perform the ceremony, so that they might get publicity and so that the news of what Opunake had done might travel throughout the land. He understood that some of the rooms in the hospital were in a very sincere sense a memorial. Continuing, Mr Fraser said that they must not forget that while they had such a building New Plymouth was still their hospital. People of Opunake must remember that for all serious cases they would have to go to New Plymouth. They must know that the Department was determined to make New Plymouth a base hospital for Taranaki, where they would have all the most modern appliances and equipment necessary for the treatment of the different diseases; and it would be their hospital. They must not imagine that the building was the beginning of what would become a separate hospital, and that later Opunake would have a board of its own. Their representatives on the Taranaki Board would be fully aware of the expense in running a hospital. They must not run away with the idea that all diseases could be treated at Opunake, because finances would never permit of such a thing. Mr Fraser then proceeded to mention the good work done by the Revs C. Palmer and C. Strand and Mr M. O'Brien. With these gentlemen he had many times been to Wellington to put their case before those in authority. As a result of one of these visits a subsidy of 24s in the £ had replaced that of 20s in the £. Mr Fraser humorously referred to the eloquence displayed by Mr O'Brien on that occasion. Mr O'Brien's picture of the awful tragedies happening in his district had reduced the Minister to a wreck, and had been

responsible for the collapse of the girl who was taking a shorthand note of the proceedings. Mr Fraser referred to the wealthy district of Ashburton, which district, he said, had recently erected a similar hospital at a cost of £3300. Ashburton, with all its wealth and land, was the only other district which had built a cottage hospital. The foundation stone was then "well and truly laid" by Mr Fraser.

Mr A. H. Halcombe addressed those present, and said that, being a member of the Hospital Board who had a close knowledge of the backblocks, he also had some idea of the suffering of the people who lived in those districts. At Uruti 14 years ago the first little cottage hospital in the Taranaki district had been built in something the same way as the Opunake cottage hospital had been erected. Continuing, he said that he was sure the people of Opunake would never regret the time they had put their hands in their pockets and found the necessary money for the good work, and he congratulated those responsible on the building they had planned. Mr Halcombe said that he was not in favour of ever building a larger hospital in Opunake. What they had now would serve their purposes for many years to come, as they would always have the New Plymouth hospital to fall back on.

Mr S. Vickers, also a member of the board, thanked all present for being able to share in their joy in the event which was being celebrated that day. The great difficulty had been that of finance, but he hoped that in future finance would not bear heavily upon them. Referring to the great work which the hospital was to do, Mr Vickers said he hoped that few of the children would ever need to be brought back to it. There was an old saying that a race well begun was half won, and he sincerely hoped that this would apply in the case of the little ones. He wanted to draw the attention of those present to the fact that, according to their experiences in the New Plymouth hospital the children in the country districts were not as healthy as those in the town. He said that it was the duty of members of the local bodies to discover the cause of this.

Mr M. J. McReynolds, a former member of the board presented Mr Fraser with a silver trowel in memory of the occasion. He assured those present that a square deal would always be given by Mr Fraser and the board as long as that gentleman was connected with it. Referring to his 40 years' experience of the district, he said that he had never known any association with which he had been connected to be short of money.

Mr Fraser, in accepting the memento, feelingly replied, and thanked the donors for their gift. He felt that what little he had done for the future of the hospital had been more than rewarded. The party was entertained at afternoon tea at the beach pavilion prior to the return journey to New Plymouth being commenced, and before the gathering dispersed Mr Fraser thanked the Nursing Association for the splendid way in which they had received the visitors.

The maternity home and cottage hospital has been in course of erection for the past three months, and the building is partly roofed. The site is about an acre in area, and is situated close to the township. The hospital will contain one three-bed ward and three single-bed wards, a nurse's sitting room, bedroom and maid's room, kitchen and laundry block, and general conveniences. The building is entered from a verandah 8ft by 30ft looking north. The whole of the walls, including the partitions, are of solid concrete, and the exterior will be finished in roughcast with a pale buff tint, while the roofing is to be of Motueka terra cotta tiles. This should give the building a very attractive appearance. The interior will be finished in white plaster, with woodwork of picked heart of rimu, and furniture throughout of the same material. Provision is being made in the wards for heating by fireplaces

finished with tiles, and arrangements will allow of an electric installation being made when the district power scheme is ready. Water will be supplied from a well pumped to concrete storage tanks by windmill. A hot and cold water service will be provided throughout, and the kitchen block will have all modern equipment. The building completed will cost in the vicinity of £5000. Its completion will take about another two months.

*Extract from letter dated 20 Jun 1922 from Miss E. McFadgen in charge of Hospital - Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

Opunake Cottage Hospital opened but not properly furnished. Furniture from Nurse's District cottage only. Nine medical and surgical patients had been admitted including three Maori patients with pneumonia. Cases were 1 abscess, 1 diabetic, 1 gall bladder, 1 influenza, 1 European pneumonia case, 1 accident. No maternity cases. Help sent when busy from the New Plymouth Hospital.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 04 Jul 1922 Early Opunake and District*

... Mention should be made of the newly erected cottage hospital, a fine modern building. It should be called to mind that about twenty years ago an agitation arose for such an institution, the proposal being to obtain from the Defence Department the dwelling erected in 1882 – on the very site, be it noted, of the new cottage hospital – for the officer commanding. The time was not opportune, and Opunake got a horse-drawn ambulance instead. Moreover, the house was left without a caretaker, and one Sunday afternoon it went up in smoke...

*Hawera & Normanby Star 07 Aug 1922 Opunake*

A meeting of the Opunake Cottage Hospital Committee was held in the Council Chambers on Saturday afternoon, when there were present: Mr G. W. Rogers (chairman), Mesdames F. Carter, D. W. Holmes, P. Feaver, A. Lusk, F. Julian, S. Julian, G. W. Rogers and Messrs J. Pettigrew, R. Ferguson, J. Young, M. O'Brien, M. Hickey, R. Morris and T. H. Sinclair. Correspondence was read from the secretary of the Taranaki Hospital Board, stating that the question of furnishing the local hospital and the defining of the powers of the local committee had been referred to a special committee to deal with. Mr O. Hawken, M.P., forwarded a copy of letter sent by the Minister of Public Health to the Taranaki Hospital Board in connection with the withdrawal of the native subsidy of £75, which had been paid in the past towards the maintenance of a nurse in this district. Mr Simister wrote bringing under the notice of the committee a case for charitable assistance. In view of the fact that the powers of the committee are not yet known it was decided that the letter be handed to the local representatives on the Taranaki Hospital Board. Mr R. J. Campbell was unanimously elected a member of the committee. The question of holding a mart or other means of raising funds to effect necessary improvements to grounds was referred to the lady members of the committee to carry out. The Grounds Committee were given full power to act in connection with urgent works. Accounts totalling £29 were read. It was resolved to forward same to Taranaki Hospital Board for payment. At a subsequent meeting of the Grounds Committee it was agreed to at once put in hand the work of fencing the hospital grounds with post and wire fence and ditch and bank, to be planted with boxthorn.

*Daily News 17 Aug 1922 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

The subsidy of £75 a year formerly paid by the department for the work done amongst the Maoris by the Opunake district nurse has been definitely withdrawn, as was indicated by a letter from the Director General of Health, published recently in the Daily News. When this letter was read at yesterday's meeting of the Taranaki Hospital Board it gave rise to some discussion. Mr M. O'Brien said that since the subsidy withdrawal had been made there had been four Maoris in the Opunake cottage hospital during one week. One of these had died. Now the Opunake people wanted a separate ward for the treatment of Maoris. There had been gross neglect on the part of the board, for even a maternity had to be turned away for want of a bed. He could assure the board that there was a very uneasy feeling at Opunake, and a strong agitation had set in. The Maoris seemed to be monopolising the hospital, even the relatives of sick Maoris congregating round the hospital. If the district nurse was withdrawn from work among the Maoris the only alternative was to build a separate ward for Maoris at Opunake. Mr E. Gilmour: "We've no money to do that." He pointed out that hospitals were not for the use of a class only, but for humanity. No distinction was made in the New Plymouth hospital, so why should Opunake want a separate ward?

*Hawera & Normanby Star 25 Aug 1922 Opunake Hospital – Deputation to Taranaki Board*

The Opunake cottage hospital is now completed and ready to fill its part in the caring for the sick of the district, and the time has arrived for settling the management of the institution, furnishing the buildings, and appointing a medical officer to take charge. The control is divided between the Taranaki Hospital Board and the Opunake Nursing Association, and with the object of placing the position on a proper footing a meeting of those interested was recently held at Opunake. At this meeting action was decided on, and a deputation was appointed to confer with the Hospital Board. As an outcome of this meeting, a deputation from the Opunake Nursing Association, consisting of Messrs G. W. Rogers, T. H. Sinclair, and J. S. Tosland waited on a special meeting of the Hospital Board yesterday morning. In the absence of the chairman (Mr M. Fraser), through illness, Mr S. Vickers presided, and there were also present Messrs J. Andrews, H. R. Cattley, E. Gilmour, A. H. Halcombe, M. O'Brien, J. Young, G. Capper and J. Sutherland. The board dealt first with the question of furniture, the deputation submitting details of what was required, and after discussion it was decided that the board should undertake the task of furnishing the hospital. The question of appointing a medical officer was then discussed, and it was decided that the Opunake committee should approach Dr Watt, of Opunake, and offer him the appointment, providing suitable terms and conditions could be agreed upon. The committee will report to the board the result of the interview with Dr Watt, and the board will have the power of making a decision. The final step to be adjusted was the question of the control of the hospital charges, etc. It was decided to await information from the committee regarding Dr Watt's decision, after which the board will formulate charges, regulations, etc.

*Kai Tiaki Oct 1922 Page 201*

Sister Shirtcliffe, who served during the war with the Queen Alexandra Reserve, and afterwards joined the N.Z.A.N.S., has been working in Nelson, and is now at the Opunake Cottage Hospital, in temporary charge, while Miss McFadgen is at St. Helens Hospital, Wellington.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 18 Jan 1923 Personal Items*

Dr T. N. Watt's appointment as medical officer in charge of the Opunake Cottage Hospital has been approved by the Minister of Health.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 28 Jul 1923 Opunake – The Cottage Hospital*

Dr Watt reported to the Taranaki Hospital Board that for the year ended June 30 he had treated 91 cases at the Opunake Cottage Hospital, representing all classes of general sickness. Of the total 10 per cent were maternity cases and 10 per cent required operations. One case, a Maori, had died following pneumonia. The average time per patient in the hospital was slightly over 12 days. Dr Watt estimated that the admissions during the current year would probably be increased by 50 per cent. The district nurse (Sister McFadgen) reported that during June she had attended and advised at the nurse's cottage one European, and had nursed throughout six Europeans and one Maori. In addition, she had nursed one European in her own home, and had attended and advised one Maori at his own home. Two European maternity cases had been attended. There were a number of cases of influenza and pneumonia in the district, one being removed to the New Plymouth Hospital and one to the Hawera Hospital.

*NZ Truth 26 Jan 1924 Queries and Quandries*

"Truth" would like to know – What is wrong with the Opunake cottage hospital that Mr M. Fraser, Chairman of the Taranaki Hospital, should refer to its business as being "a perfect nightmare?"

*Taranaki Herald 8 Feb 1924 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

"Hospital empty. Position at Opunake. Conference to find out reason. Expenses too great. Since Christmas there has been only one patient in the Opunake Cottage Hospital. Last month the revenue was 1s, the month previous 2s 6d. The hospital was built about two years ago at a cost of £5,000 to the residents of Opunake and the New Plymouth Hospital Board, while the annual expenditure of the board to maintain the institution is stated to be £600 per annum.... Members of the Opunake Hospital committee: G. W. Rogers (Chairman), Mesdames M. Brophy, A. Lusk, F. Julian; Messrs R. Morris Sen., R. Ferguson, T. H. Sinclair, J. Young. The two last are also members of the board.... Opunake people contributed £1500 toward the institution. The committee recognises that the hospital is too expensive... either Opunake was an exceptionally healthy district, or some faction was operating against the institution... Mr Rogers said there had been friction and maternity cases had for some time been going outside the district and were still going... There are sick people in Opunake, said Mr Holden, but there is also opposition which is securing the patients. Comment was made by Mr Sinclair (secretary of the committee) upon the large amount of fees, which remained unpaid. The board had been given a list of these to collect, but he considered that if the committee was given power to sue for the amounts better results would be secured. The hospital was not wholly a charitable institution; it was necessary to collect what little revenue it earned. The hospital is a perfect palace beautifully kept, said Mr Corkill, but the surroundings are not in keeping with it. The building is surrounded with long grass, the windmill would not work for want of oil, the vents of the septic tank required by health regulations to be fourteen feet above the ground, are broken off level.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 08 Feb 1924 Opunake Hospital – Not Paying Its Way – Position Discussed*

From the figures showing the number of patients, revenue and working expenses of the Opunake Cottage Hospital it may be concluded that the institution is not very necessary at the present time. The estimated annual outlay in connection with the hospital is £600, but last month the hospital only earned 1s, while for the previous month the total earnings did not exceed 2s 6d. Since Christmas only one patient has been admitted, and at present the hospital is empty. With a view to discussing the position the members of the Taranaki Hospital Board met the local committee at Opunake yesterday. The meeting was presided over by the chairman of the Opunake cottage hospital committee (Mr G. W. Rogers). Board members present were: Messrs M. Fraser (chairman), J. Sutherland, S. Vickers, T. H. H. Sinclair, H. Lepper, A. Corkill, A. H. Halcombe, J. Young and E. Holden (secretary). The local committee was represented by Mesdames F. Julian, M. Brophy, A. Lusk, Messrs R. Ferguson and R. Morris senr.

In welcoming the members of the board Mr Rogers explained that it was thought it would be advantageous if the board were to meet the committee and have a chat over matters generally. He thought that the Opunake hospital was perhaps a little more pretentious than had been originally intended. Thus it had to be staffed more efficiently, accordingly making the expenditure greater than the board might have contemplated. The committee would like to have the board's views on the present state of the hospital, its administration and cost. "We are here at the request of the local committee, and when we left home we were quite in the dark as to why we were required to visit Opunake," remarked Mr Fraser. Comments made by the board might seem offensive to those who were trying to do their best to keep the hospital, but he believed that Opunake was not unanimous in supporting the institution, and he was disappointed that the chairman had not referred to this matter.

During the last two months the returns from the hospital were 2s 6d and 1s respectively, added Mr Fraser. At the present time the hospital was empty. It might be assuming an attitude of "I told you so," but he had felt all along that the time would come when the hospital would prove disappointing, despite the enthusiasm with which the scheme had been launched. In the last ten months the hospital had cost the board over £500. When people were seriously ill they had to be sent to the New Plymouth hospital, as, owing to the lack of a room and proper appointments, a doctor could not perform operations at the Opunake hospital, which was really just for first aid work, pointed out Mr Fraser. It was necessary for the Opunake people and the board to put their heads together, and their money, too, to help in a reduction of the cost. He hoped therefore, that the Opunake people would say they realised that too much money was being spent and would offer to pay half the doctor's salary. He knew Opunake paid hospital rates, but so did other places in the district, and Opunake had the advantage of extra facilities. The town had a perfect little hospital.

Opunake had collected £1500 for the hospital scheme, admitted Mr Fraser, and the board and the Government had found a lot, making up over £5000 altogether. Since such a large expense had been incurred, it would be a pity if the hospital were to become useless, and people felt it was hard to spend £600 a year at Opunake when a little hospital at Uruti was doing twice the amount of work for about £100 a year. The board was always at the point of the bayonet for funds. The fact that the hospital was too expensive was recognised, replied Mr Rogers. He knew the expenditure was out of proportion to the returns. Now the committee had heard one of the grounds of the complaint, it might be able to make some alterations. Did the committee think that business was going outside that should be going to the hospital? asked Mr Sutherland. Were the people of the district satisfied with the institution? Mr Rogers, "Oh, I think so. I have never heard any complaints." The two nursing homes at Inglewood were always full, and it

seemed strange that the Opunake institution, which was further from New Plymouth, should be practically empty, added Mr Sutherland. Either Opunake must be a very healthy community, or there was some factor at work. Mr Rogers said he had noticed that for the past few years many people, especially maternity cases, were going outside the district for attention. This was still happening. Mr Ferguson said there appeared to be great inducements to go outside the district, medical competition being keen. Regarding finance Mr Ferguson agreed that the Opunake hospital should be made to pay, although he would be sorry to see it under-staffed.

The method employed at Uruti to provide finance was cited by Mr Halcombe. The nursing association there was conducted on a subscription basis at a rate of 10s or £1 a year. Nearly everyong in the district subscribed, and this money carried a subsidy from the Government, which lessened the cost to the board considerably. He commended this idea to the Opunake committee, as the scheme helped to secure the support of the whole district, and was a more certain means of revenue than dependence upon casual donations. Mr Rogers could not see that the circumstances at Uruti and at Opunake were analogous. Mr Halcombe's idea was very estimable, but now that Opunake had a hospital he did not know whether the necessary support could be obtained. Uruti was entirely dependent on the cottage hospital, which served a backblock district, but Opunake had competition from Kaponga, Manaia, Hawera and New Plymouth.

A large amount of fees had not been paid, stated Mr Sinclair, who is secretary of the committee. He thought some legal action should be taken against such people, as the hospital was not a charitable institution and should be made to pay. Mention that the water supply was reported to be bad was made by Mr Morris. Some investigation should be made. Mr Fraser: "A very good thing for your committee to look into." Mr Halcombe explained that the board had asked for a report on the water, but this had not come to hand. If the water were poisonous, all the people must be dead by now. Though the building was "a perfect little palace," the surroundings were not in keeping, commented Mr Corkill, in pointing out that there was a large growth of grass around the hospital, the wind-mill was unoiled, and would not work, and the septic tank vent was broken off level with the ground instead of being carried up to the regulation height of 14 feet above the ground. He trusted the committee would forgive him for drawing attention to these matters. Mr Rogers, "We are glad you did so." Now that hospital matters had been somewhat fully discussed, Mr Rogers said he could promise that, with the changes about to be made, the committee would do all it could to assist, possibly by raising money on lines suggested by Mr Halcombe or by some other method. He thanked the board members for accepting the invitation to meet the committee. The visitors were entertained at afternoon tea at the beach pavilion before returning to New Plymouth.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 03 Mar 1924 Personal Items*

Dr J. S. Church, who has been appointed medical officer of the Opunake Cottage Hospital, visited Opunake on Thursday (says our correspondent), and has made arrangements to take up his duties in the course of a few days.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 13 Mar 1924 Personal Items*

Dr J. S. Church has commenced practise in Opunake, and has entered into his duties as officer in charge of the Opunake cottage hospital.

*New Zealand Herald 16 May 1924 Advertisement – Taranaki Hospital Board*

Wanted a qualified surgical, medical and midwifery nurse to take charge of the Opunake Cottage Hospital, under the above board. Salary £150 per annum. Applicants to state when they can commence duties. Apply Secretary, New Plymouth.

*Opunake Times? 23 May 1924 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

Dr Valentine's action in issuing instructions that in future only maternity cases were to be treated at the Opunake Hospital was strongly condemned at Tuesday's meeting of the Taranaki Hospital Board, and rightly so. When the hospital was first built it was agreed that some such place was necessary for accident and ordinary cases unable to stand the long journey to New Plymouth. The latest edict, if carried out, would place us back in the old unsatisfactory position. This arrangement can be quite all right for Dr Valentine, but it would not be all right for the people here who pay rates to maintain the hospital. It is therefore pleasing to find the Hospital Board intend continuing to use the hospital for all kinds of cases. The risk of treating maternity and ordinary cases in the same building can be overcome by building a separate accident ward and by employing another nurse. The manner in which the Health Department handled the hospital in the past did not inspire confidence and Dr Valentine's latest action does not suggest confidence as to the future.

*Kai Tiaki October 1924*

Miss Lena M. Macdonald has been appointed sister in charge of the Opunake Cottage Hospital.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 20 Aug 1924 Personal Items*

The appointment of Nurse L. A. MacDonald, at present stationed at Mokau, to the position of matron at the Opunake Cottage Hospital, was yesterday confirmed at the meeting of the Taranaki Hospital Board. Nurse MacDonald will take up her duties at Opunake on September 1.

*Hawera & Normanby Star 02 Oct 1924 Advertisement*

Opunake Cottage Hospital. The Ladies of the Committee will conduct a stall adjacent to Main Street, Opunake, on Monday, the 6<sup>th</sup> inst., to provide funds to improve grounds and surroundings of the Cottage Hospital. Donations will be appreciated. Those donating articles for stall may leave same at Mrs MacDonald's Book Shop prior to opening of mart. T. H. H. Sinclair, Hon. Secretary.

*New Zealand Herald 29 Mar 1926 Advertisement*

Medical, Surgical and Midwifery Sister, qualified, wanted as Matron of the Opunake Cottage Hospital, Salary £180 per annum. Applications close with the Secretary of the Taranaki Hospital Board, New Plymouth on March 31.

*Kai Tiaki October 1926*

Miss L. Macdonald, formerly matron of Opunake Cottage Hospital, has been appointed midwifery sister to the Masterton Hospital maternity annexe.

*New Zealand Herald 11 May 1927 Advertisement – The Taranaki Hospital Board*

Wanted for the Opunake Cottage Hospital, a Qualified Medical, Surgical and Midwifery Sister, to take charge. The majority of cases are midwifery, with a few emergency surgical ones. Salary £180 per annum. Applications should reach me not later than 17<sup>th</sup> inst. E. Holden, Secretary, New Plymouth.

*Evening Post 06 May 1930 Midwifery – Examination Results*

The following candidates were successful in passing the recent examinations for the State Registration of Maternity Nurses:- Ethel Gertrude Horn, Opunake Cottage Hospital.

*Taranaki Herald? 9 Jun 1924 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

Opunake Hospital: Dr Valentine's visit. Exception to the Director General of Health giving instructions direct to a member of the Board's staff was taken by members of the Taranaki Hospital Board on Tuesday when a report from the medical superintendent of the Opunake Hospital (Dr J. S. Church) was under consideration. The report stated - On April 20 Dr Valentine paid a visit to the hospital and left a note to this effect that only confinements are to be treated here, and that all other cases must be sent on at once to New Plymouth. Dr Valentine did not consider it worthwhile to let me know he was in Opunake, in spite of Sister's suggestion that she should ring me. I consider such treatment rather unjust and such conduct most discourteous, and take this opportunity of informing the board that I resent this most apparent slur on one of its officers. Mr F. J. Hill said that Dr Church was quite right to protest about this treatment. Neither Dr Valentine nor anyone else had any right to interfere with officers of the board, but should come to the board in the first place. The chairman (Mr M. Fraser) said that this was the only information the board had received on the matter. During the discussion the chairman remarked that Dr Valentine was noted for his genial and kindly attitude towards all persons. This was something unusual. He had not notified the board of what he had done, if he had done it. The purpose for which the hospital had been established was the subject of some discussion. Mr J. Young, an Opunake member, said that he did not agree with Dr Valentine's idea of the hospital. The first idea was that it should be a cottage hospital, and the department insisted that a maternity ward should be attached. It was altogether wrong and misleading to suggest that no cases but those of maternity should be treated there. The serious cases certainly were to be brought to New Plymouth, but ordinary cases were to be treated at Opunake. On the motion of Mr J. Sutherland it was resolved to ignore the matter so far as the working of the hospital was concerned, the board's officers to be instructed to carry on as in the past. After further discussion as to the understanding on which the hospital was established, another resolution was adopted, instructing that a copy of the medical superintendents report should be sent to Dr Valentine with a request for his explanation. - Herald.

*Taranaki Herald 24 Sep 1927 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

There is no doubt that the day of small hospitals has passed. They were justified 50 years ago, when medical treatment was simpler and communications were slow, but today the equipment of a first-class hospital and the staff requirements are so expensive that the proper system is to establish a few thoroughly up-to-date base hospitals to meet the needs of everyone within a radius of 50 miles or more. With modern roads and means of conveyance patients can reach the central hospital in about two hours. There is no objection to the provision in country districts of maternity homes, or small wards where accident cases can receive first aid before being sent to the central hospital. These are to be established principles which hospital boards should keep in view, though their application is not easy in face of local pressure. The hospital at Opunake is a case in point. It was established owing to local enthusiasm which led to the collection of a considerable sum of money, and it can do good work as a maternity home and provide early treatment for some accidents, but the Board must sternly set its face against undue expansion and expense. An energetic and popular local medical man may procure a demand for increased accommodation, but this may disappear with a change in local conditions leaving the Board with a building and staff larger than is required. Local pressure, however strong, for expansion, must not be allowed to obscure the main principles of hospital organisation. The complaint that the building at Opunake is badly planned, as the door to the operating room is too narrow to admit a bed, appears to be well founded. For this the Health Department, which passed the plans, must be held responsible. The inspection of plans by several Government departments appears to be very inefficient.

*Dominion 14 Nov 1927 – cutting within Archives NZ Reference H1 13048 70/8*

Hospital Secretary charged with theft - Thomas Henry Herbert Sinclair pleaded not guilty in the Opunake Court and was committed for trial on twenty three charges of theft, totalling £170. The alleged offences were spread over three and a half years, and related to money received by accused as honorary secretary of the Opunake Cottage Hospital. According to an auditor's evidence, the amounts had been refunded since the inquiries commenced, excepting £46. - Press Assn.