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The Hon. Miss M.B. Howard.

Dear Minister of Health,

It was extremely kind of you to give me the news that you are the Minister of Health and Minister in charge of Mental Hospitals.

Mental Hospitals particularly interest me as when I was the only woman member of the Middlesex County Council, England, I was elected to the Mental Hospitals Statutory Committee, and for a year served as its Chairman, the second woman in England to occupy such a position.

I also served on a Government Committee to inquire into the administration of Mental Hospitals. A few of the impressions which remain with me from my experiences are:-

1. The need for research into the causes of mental breakdowns and mental deficiency.
2. Early recognition of mental trouble would be more easily obtained if the training of all doctors and nurses included at least 3 months in a mental institution.
3. ~~3.~~ The great value of occupational therapy. Some patients were reluctant and slow and the teacher needed great patience and ingenuity which was amply rewarded by the improvement in the patient's health when at last interest was created.
4. Men ought to be able to get a full nursing training as well as the special training for mental nurses and attendants.
5. The need for Matron and Sisters to have a full general and midwifery training in addition to the training for mental nurses.

New Zealand is so advanced in its medical and social services that probably these few ideas are already part of your Mental Hospitals organisation. I hope I have not bored you.

Again congratulations and best wishes for a long and happy time as Minister of Health.

Yours very truly,

Edith How-Martyn.