

to the front at an early date. The following surgeons were appointed to serve with the Hospital:—Professor Thomas Jones, F.R.C.S., Professor of Surgery, Owens College, Manchester; Dr. Lynn Thomas, F.R.C.S., Assistant Surgeon to the Cardiff Infirmary; Dr. Mills Roberts, F.R.C.S.E.

We fear the present powers at the War Office are quite impossible on nursing questions, to judge by the answer given in the House to Captain Norton, who asked the Under Secretary for War whether, seeing that non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Army Medical Corps were on duty for long hours in attendance upon sick and wounded at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, he would consider the advisability of organizing a special staff of night orderlies, who would be excused day duty, as in all large civil hospitals, in order that the sick or wounded soldier might be at least as well attended to as the civilian patient.

Mr. Powell-Williams said that the question had been very carefully considered, and in view of the number of experienced men of the Medical Staff Corps who have applied to re-enlist, and by whose help the pressure would be greatly diminished, it was not thought expedient to form the special staff suggested.

Which appears to us no answer at all.

What may be called a conspiracy of silence has been observed by the press, on the subject of the *Princess of Wales* Hospital Ship, and we have been accused of disloyalty for objecting in these columns, to our soldiers being shipped on to a cranky craft, because the ship was under the personal patronage of the Princess of Wales. The silence maintained on this subject we consider very reprehensible, and it savours of toadying more than loyalty. The Princess of Wales, in the warmth of her sympathy with sick soldiers, would be the very last woman in the Empire to permit them to run any risk, and the persons responsible for the seaworthiness of this hospital ship have failed signally in their loyalty in not guarding Her Royal Highness' name from association with this much to be deplored subject. We are all the more pleased, therefore, to see that *Truth* has something to say on the subject, and that we are not alone in our contention that this ship should be thoroughly overhauled by an unbiassed expert before she makes another voyage to the Cape. Says *Truth*:—

"I am glad to see that the *Princess of Wales* hospital ship has returned safely to England.

Before she sails again there ought to be some inquiry into the numerous stories about the condition of the ship that have lately reached this country. A private letter from an officer of the ship which was shown to me the other day, dated from Cape Town, January 22nd, states that, during the fortnight that she had been then in harbour, the whole time had been occupied in continual repairs, and no use whatever had been made of the vessel for hospital purposes. A hospital staff over forty strong were thus being kept absolutely idle. The writer suggested that the ship was not safe for a voyage back to England, and that this impression generally prevailed among those who had made the voyage out in her. He anticipated that, if she came back with a load of patients, she would not be sent out again.

"The Editor of the *Isle of Man Examiner* has since sent me a letter, which he is publishing this week, from a correspondent of whose trustworthiness he is satisfied. This letter is dated from the *Princess of Wales*, at Cape Town, on January 21st. Here are a few extracts from it:—

"We embarked on November 21st last, and should have set sail on the following Saturday, but owing to an unfortunate accident to one of the boilers, the ship was delayed until December 8th. On that date we made a start from Gravesend, but had only proceeded as far as Deal when something was found to be wrong with the machinery, and we put back into Sheerness. . . . We had a fair voyage, but the boat is a terror for rolling, this being, I should say, one of her worst failings. . . .

"Before we left Gravesend it was found that the salt water supply to the lavatories was insufficient, and larger pipes had to be put in. On the way out the electric wires fused in two or three places, and on arrival here we had some electricians off H.M.S. *Niobe* to relay part of the installation. These are just instances of everyday occurrences. We have been aboard now since November 21st, and in Cape Town for a fortnight, but owing to the number of repairs, which we understand will occupy another ten or twelve days, we have been unable to start any hospital work yet. . . . We are, according to latest reports, to be ready to come home in five weeks' time with patients, and it is understood the boat will not be sent out again. This one trip will probably cost between £15,000 and £20,000. It is a big sum to pay for bringing home 180 odd patients. . . .

"The *Princess of Wales* is a boat built at

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)