

The National Hospital Dispute.

The Board of Management of the National Hospital, Queen's Square, last week passed the following resolution:—"That, in view of allegations in the public Press injurious to the interests of the hospital, it is desirable that an enquiry should be forthwith held into charges formulated by the medical staff against the domestic condition and management of the hospital, and that the board should request some independent legal authority to conduct such enquiry."

However desirable and, indeed, necessary it may be that the enquiry should be conducted by a legal authority, accustomed to sift evidence, something more is, in our opinion, required. The medical staff have complained of both the domestic and nursing arrangements, and the advice of an independent Superintendent of Nursing on these matters appears to be necessary if the enquiry is to be satisfactory.

Again, although the decision to hold an inquiry is so far good, two important points brought forward in a letter from the Medical Board to the *Times* must not be lost sight of. They say: "Our charges concerning the domestic condition of the hospital in the early part of this year formed only a part of the report we made to the governors. To consent to the investigation of one portion of our charges, whilst the greater part are ignored on the supposition that they have been settled by the decision of the meeting of governors held on August 11th, would be to give up the position which we have taken from the beginning of the controversy. This we shall not do. We are perfectly willing to have all the charges which we laid before the governors thoroughly sifted and investigated, but not a part of them as selected by the board. Further, when we hear that the board are going to "request some independent legal authority to conduct such inquiry," we must urge that the board, being in the position of one party to a dispute, are scarcely entitled to nominate their own tribunal."

At the conclusion of their letter the medical staff quote in full the reasons assigned by the board in their communication to the governors, dated July 21st, 1900, for refusing to admit the medical staff to membership. The concluding paragraph is as follows:—"The undue undue exaltation of medical authority would mean that the matron, sisters, and nurses would learn to look to the medical committee, from which they are now, and with great advantage, wholly separated. At present the secretary and director is the officer and servant of the board, and his independence of the medical committee is absolute—a fact to which the board attach the greatest importance. To include members of the medical staff in the board would alter his relation to the medical staff and render some of his most useful functions impossible of performance."

The meaning of this paragraph is somewhat obscure but if, as we understand it, the Matron and Nursing Staff of the National Hospital communicate with the board through the Secretary and Director we have no hesitation in saying the system is a bad one. The three distinct departments in hospital administration are the medical, the nursing, and the secretarial, and each of these should report directly to the Board of Management. As the official responsible for the Nursing Department, the Matron should make her report to the Board, and communications from Sisters and Nurses should be conveyed through her.

Preparations, Inventions, etc.**SPIRITINE.**

WE have pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to a preparation named Spiritine, which has been brought to our notice, and which has, we believe, only to be known to supersede, to a great extent, ordinary methylated spirit for many purposes for which it is now used. Spiritine is solidified spirit, and the advantage of this is at once obvious. For travellers it is a boon indeed. It is lighted in the tin in which it is carried, and the inconvenience and risks of carrying liquid spirit need no longer be incurred. When no longer needed it is only necessary to replace the lid to extinguish the flame. For solitary workers, for those living alone in flats, and for night nurses, it is invaluable, and we strongly recommend them to send for a sample without delay. Having tested it, we feel sure they will send for a further supply, and keep it constantly at hand. It may also, with advantage, replace the ordinary spirit lamp on the test table. It is scarcely the time of year to speak of picnics, but it should certainly find a place in every luncheon or tea basket. It has been extensively used in South Africa, and eulogistic accounts have been received of its utility. The price of the small tins, 1¾ inches high, is 3s. per dozen, and of larger ones, 5s. per dozen. It may be obtained from Spiritine, Ltd., 5, Carteret Street, Westminster, London, S.W., from whom kettle stands for use with it can also be obtained.

HOSEZENE SANITARY TOWELS.

WE have had submitted to us samples of the Hosezene Towels, which appear to be admirably suited for the purpose for which they are intended. They are beautifully soft, and, moreover, have an elasticity which is a distinct improvement on many other similar towels, and we think they have only to be seen to commend themselves. They are obtainable in four sizes, in packets of six at 6d., 9d., or 10½d., or 1s. 3d., the last being recommended for use after accouchement. The first three sizes may also be obtained in packets of 1 doz. at double the above prices. There is no difference in the quality, the difference in price being caused by the size. Sanitary wool sheets for accouchements or operations, are also supplied by the Hosezene Company, in three sizes, 1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. each, as are also washable occasional towels at 2s. 6d., 3s., and 3s. 6d. per packet of six. They can be obtained from ladies' outfitters, drapers, and chemists, or direct from the Hosezene Company, Nottingham.

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