

## The Croydon Infirmary Crisis.

At a meeting of the Croydon Board of Guardians, held on Tuesday, the Infirmary Committee reported that they had considered the letter of the Local Government Board of the 16th inst. relative to the questions which have arisen in connection with Miss Julian, the Matron of the Infirmary, and they begged to recommend that some lengthy observations be furnished to the Local Government Board in reply thereto.

These remarks embodied the desire of the Committee to supersede Miss Julian, the Matron, by introducing another officer, to be called Superintendent of Nurses, to train and supervise the probationers. The Guardians again emphasised the fact that they did not apprehend, nor think it possible, that the resolutions adopted by them would have the prejudicial effects referred to by Miss Julian, and that the Guardians are quite prepared to take the responsibility of their action in the matter.

Mr. Shirley moved the adoption of the Report, and said the Guardians must not have their work upset by "the young people," and must make a stand.

Mr. T. P. Wood seconded.

The Chairman referred to misrepresentations and errors in the Press as to the misunderstandings which had arisen, and in order to show what had really taken place read extracts from correspondence covering the whole period. On July 10th Dr. Wilson, Medical Superintendent of the Infirmary, forwarded to the Board five Probationers' certificates for sealing and signing, but stating that the Matron had refused to sign three of these. The Board referred this refusal to the Special Infirmary Committee. On July 17th this Committee reported that they had considered this refusal, but the Matron being on leave, they could not interview her. The Medical Superintendent, however, reported to the Committee that the Matron said she refused to sign, as the Probationers were insolent. The Committee recommended that Miss Julian, on her return, be requested to sign the certificates in their present form. On August 2nd, the Clerk wrote to Miss Julian on behalf of the Board, requesting her to be good enough to sign the certificates immediately on her return from leave of absence. On August 4th the Matron replied: "I regret I cannot comply with your request, and will give my reasons for not doing so to the Board if required." On September 11th Miss Julian wrote to the Board: "I have refused to sign the certificates—(1) It is generally held that the bestowal of a certificate on a nurse on the completion of her training is a guarantee to the nursing

profession and to the public that the nurse is, in the opinion of the authorities of the institution which has trained her, fully qualified to take her place in the ranks of graduate nurses and to practise the duties of her calling. (2) In my opinion, these women are not so qualified. They are undisciplined, most selfish, and entirely lack the deep sympathy with suffering and that devotion to duty which marks every true nurse and which is essential in every woman who ministers to the sick. (3) For me, a trained nurse and hospital Matron, to certify that the conduct of these three women has been satisfactory, and that they are conscientious, reliable nurses, would be, in my opinion, equivalent to perpetrating a public fraud, and this I decline to do." On September 20th the Board wrote to Miss Julian saying that they were unable to approve of her action, and had decided that the signature of the Matron of the Infirmary on the training certificates of Probationer Nurses be dispensed with. The Chairman having read all these extracts, thought the public would see that there was nothing against these nurses to damage them. The Local Government Board, in its letter, was certainly sitting on the fence, and he thought that the Board should have either held an enquiry or upheld the Board's action. The Local Government Board evidently did not know what to do, and was afraid of its own opinion. He did not think it was the correct thing for the Local Government Board to send the evasive reply which it did. With regard to the recommendation of the Committee as to a Superintendent of Nurses, he could say plainly that it had nothing to do with the letter of the Local Government Board, as the Committee had intended to take action quite independently. He thought after the Press and the public had digested the manner in which the Board had acted, they would uphold the action of the Guardians and consider that the Board were perfectly right in what they did. He was quite certain that no public body having any respect for itself could have done otherwise. Mr. Wustemann said a short time ago Mr. Shirley complimented Miss Julian on the way in which the Probationers got on. He should most certainly vote against the motion, and admired Miss Julian for standing up for her rights. Mr. Sibun was very sorry to go against the Committee. He objected to the introduction of a third officer. If Probationers did not like to come knowing that their certificate would be signed by the Medical Superintendent, let them keep away. Mr. Sibun moved an amendment in opposition to the new appointment. The Rev. R. A. Boyle said if they adopted the amendment they would be knuckling under to Miss Julian. If there were any signs

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)