

## County Hospitals.

By MISS MOLLETT,

*Matron of the Royal South Hants and Southampton Hospital.*

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### GENERAL MANAGEMENT.

The supreme power in this hospital rests, as is usual in England, with the people who find the money for its maintenance, i.e., with the subscribers. Those among them who subscribe two guineas and over—or who give larger sums to the hospital are Governors—and meet once a year to elect the various Committees, pass the report, etc.—or are summoned on extraordinary occasions, generally, I must own, when money is required. Perhaps that is the reason why "Governors' Meetings" are always sparsely attended. They have the further privilege of recommending In and Out-patients in a fixed proportion according to the amount of their subscription—and these "letters" are so much valued that I have been told, that to adopt the free system would alienate many subscribers and be fatal to the interests of the hospital. I doubt it, but that is what well-informed people say. There is one point that should tell in favour of the system; the subscribers are supposed to satisfy themselves that they are recommending "fit objects of charity," but it does not seem to act as well as it sounds in print, and quite the usual amount of patients who can hardly be called "fit objects of charity" trickle in. Of course, all urgencies and accidents are admitted and attended to at once, and this rule is interpreted very liberally.

The Management Committee meets quarterly to alter Bylaws and so forth, or on special occasions to elect a House Surgeon, Matron, etc., the House and Finance monthly, to sign cheques and sanction extraordinary expenditure; the Visiting Committee weekly to inspect the wards and sign the weekly books. To all of these Committees the Matron and House Surgeon respectively have access. The weekly Visiting Committee, consisting of two members who serve for one month, with the Chairman and a member of the medical staff (who hardly ever attends), certainly struck me as very curious when I first came from London. They go round the wards, ask the patients if they are comfortable, chat to the Sisters, run down to Cook and the Laundry—in fact, make a thorough inspection, beaming at the end with the knowledge of duty well performed. Afterwards they gather in the Committee-room, read the House Surgeon's report on the cases, deaths, operations, etc., and the Matron's on the weekly

expenditure, etc., and receive a verbal report of any matters the Matron wants to bring to their attention.

The House and Finance Committee pay the tradesmen's monthly bills, the Matron's cheque for petty cash, and sanction the Matron's requisitions for extra expenditure of any kind.

The Management Committee, which includes the members of the other Committees, consists largely of retired Army and Naval men, country gentlemen living in the neighbourhood, clergymen, and a few townsmen. As on all Committees the work is done by a few members, who are very keen, and attend regularly, whilst others come but seldom.

Those who come regularly take an enormous amount of interest in the details of the Hospital, and in the individual patients, many of whom are the servants or farm hands, or yacht hands of themselves or their friends. In fact the reputation of the hospital in the surrounding hamlets is a tremendously personal and individual thing. In one hamlet it may have a brilliant reputation, because of the wonderful cure it made of Mrs. Brown, whilst in a neighbouring village it may be considered a poor place, because it sent home poor Mr. Burden no better than he was when he went in. I have always found my Committee easy to work with, courteous and reasonable, and most anxious to have everything in the place right and as it should be.

There is one rule, dating from the foundation of the hospital, by which "the primary destination of every legacy of £100 or upwards, not given for any other special purpose, shall be considered to be its investment towards forming a permanent endowment for the Hospital," and this still goes on! As legacies and donations over £100 except the Hospital Sunday Fund donation, do not count as legitimate income, our income and expenditure practically never come out right. I should like to know whether other hospitals have the same rule.

One of the most useful men in the hospital is the Secretary—he comes for three or four hours daily, collects money, writes letters, is a most valuable adviser, and an invaluable buffer in times of stress and hospital ruction. He has been here for many years, and acts for the committee in their absence, if necessary. He is a man of great discretion, a gentleman, and is also very keen on the reputation of the Hospital. From a Matron's point of view he is remarkably useful.

### THE MEDICAL STAFF.

The visiting medical staff are, with one exception, private practitioners residing in the town. We hear a great deal in London about men giving up their time to hospitals gratuitously, and so forth,

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