

hospital—has been, and is, deficient. These sheets are to a large extent washed in the laundry of the hospital itself, where only one woman is employed. The work is such that it is impossible for one woman to do this work efficiently. In the result the sheets are continually returned for use imperfectly cleansed and often damp. It is also stated that they come back very rough, a circumstance of importance, as it tends to create bedsores in some patients. Another circumstance which is said to require attention is the want of some proper place for the storage of the soiled draw-sheets. At the present time all such draw-sheets, except the worst, which are carried away forthwith, are placed in the lavatory or bathroom of each ward till the end of the week, and are then taken away to the laundry.”

“In the judgment of the Committee the nursing is carried on in the hospital with efficiency so far as the staff is able, and the Sisters are both competent and zealous, and the Nurses fairly efficient, but the duties required of them appear to them in some cases excessive. The amount of massage now carried on in the hospital is very large, and makes a correspondingly heavy demand on the nursing staff. During the last year the average number of out-patients subjected to massage and electrical treatment was 27 per diem. The staff of nurses was in the early part of 1900 distinctly below the requirements of the hospital. Since then there has been a slight but, in the Committee’s opinion, an inadequate addition. The result of this deficiency of nursing power was, and to some extent is, that some of the massage ordered has not been given; that patients ordered to receive it daily have now and then received it only on alternate days; that the time of treatment has sometimes been shortened; that at the earlier date some few occasions occurred when the aid to paralytic patients by catheterisation was not properly given, and when the bed-ridden patients were washed less frequently than should have been the case.”

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HOSPITAL.

“The Committee of Enquiry are of opinion that the office of General Director in the hospital should be abolished. They propose an alternative scheme of government for the hospital: (1) That the Secretary should be entrusted with the ordinary duties of a Secretary, and that, in addition, he should be the chief and executive officer of the Board of Management, but should be restrained from interfering in any way with the Lady Superintendent and the members of the medical staff and with all persons and things placed under their control, and that the House-Physician, Lady Superintendent, and Secretary

should be required in all cases of difficulty to consult, so far as possible, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board, and to act in accordance with his advice; or (2) that a Secretary and Medical Superintendent should be appointed as a permanent officer, who should not only discharge the duties of Secretary and House-Physician, but should also be the responsible and resident head of the whole institution under the Board of Management.”

The first suggestion appears to us to be reasonable and practical. We have frequently pointed out that the departments of hospitals naturally fall under three heads, the medical, nursing and secretarial, each with its own efficient and responsible head, reporting directly to the Committee of Management which should maintain the balance of power. Any subordination of one of these departments to the other, any inefficiency in its control, leads inevitably to friction and disorganization. The case of the National Hospital is a case in point. For many years the Matron of this institution—where perhaps before all others the nursing, being that of brain cases, and nervous diseases, should be scientific and intelligent—was an untrained person and therefore incapable of acting as a Superintendent of Nursing. The result was that such irregularities occurred in the Nursing Department and such obsolete methods were in vogue, that it was found very difficult for her successor to inaugurate reforms.

Since then a trained nurse has been nominally in charge of the Nursing Department, but the balance of power to which we have alluded has not been maintained. Communications both from the Medical Staff and the Lady Superintendent have filtered through the Secretary-Director to the Board of Management, and the result has been that these officers have been placed in quite an untenable position in relation to the Board of Management, and to the proper discharge of their duties, while the offices vested in the Secretary-Director are too numerous and onerous to be discharged by one man.

We are therefore glad to observe that the Committee say in their Report: “If the duties of Mr. Rawlings had been confined to the ordinary functions of a Secretary, they are of opinion that no question of a personal character would have arisen with regard to him. They regret therefore that larger and more difficult duties were put upon him by the Board of Management for they are of opinion that Mr. Rawlings does not possess all the exceptional combination of qualities essential to the performance of these duties. Instead

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