

last paragraph of the report that the principal thing which the Committee have to report to the Governors, is that great efforts have already been made by our House Committee, and by several other friends in starting the maintenance fund. You know what tremendous work and anxiety that means, and although I will not allude to it further, I will say that the Hospital cannot be carried on without a balance at its bankers. Unfortunately we begin the year with a debt of £21,000, and we do beg that every friend of the Hospital, and every Governor, will put his shoulder to the wheel, and do his best to help the Hospital in raising that sum of money which is to carry us on and maintain us for the next five years.

Mr. J. H. HALE seconded the motion for the adoption of the report.

Mr. JOHN HALL said: I would like to put it to the House Committee, whether they do not think the time has now arrived when the institution can allow the licensed houses on its property to lapse.

The CHAIRMAN: That shall be brought before the House Committee.

Mr. HUNTER said: I have received, and I dare say every Governor has received, a statement from a Probationer who considers that she has been unjustly dismissed during the past winter. I do not know whether anything appeared in the report about it, because I did not hear the report read, but the Chairman has not noticed it in his remarks; and I have not the advantage of knowing what the answer of the House Committee to that statement is. I have no desire to go into the details of the Nurse's case. I do not know the lady, and I have not the slightest idea whether she has a just ground of complaint against the Committee or not. One can well understand, that although the statements on the face of her paper seem serious, there may be good reasons on the other side why the Committee thought right to dispense with her services; and I quite agree that it would be impossible for a large body like this to try over again the case of a single individual. We must, of course, leave these matters to the judgment of the House Committee (applause). But I refer to the incident simply for this purpose. It does seem to me that it is a pity, in the interests of this Hospital, that a system should obtain which allows a circular of that kind to go forth among the Governors and the public. That circular states, and I believe it is a fact, that a Probationer who has been dismissed by the Matron, and who appeals to the Committee, is tried practically upon what one may call recollections of her conduct from time to time, and to a certain extent, upon hearsay evidence. She is tried, in fact, upon impressions rather than upon facts. In support of that statement, I would just refer to what was said by the Matron herself before the House of Lords' Committee. The Matron produced what was called a register, with reference to certain cases that were brought up, and that register she described herself as a strictly unofficial register, which had never been examined before being produced before their Lordships. It had never been placed before the House Committee. All comments on the Nurses were made by herself within two or three months after the Probationer had left the Hospital. They were seldom written inside the Hospital, because of interruptions, and then she said that she used that register to answer inquiries concerning Probationers. One of the Lords upon the Committee described that book as a defaulters' book of the Nurses, with this difference:—In the army no statements are put in the book which are not records of transactions which have taken place on enquiry when the offender was present together with his officers. But this book was not so compiled. In the appendix to the House of Lords' Committee's report, there was an alternative system elabor-

ately described, and which had, as a voucher for it, the great name of Miss Nightingale. Miss Nightingale has been before now referred to by members of the House Committee in support of your system in regard to some points. With regard to this particular point, her system is very much the reverse of that which obtains in this Hospital. She describes a record which each ward Sister compiles with reference to the Nurses in her ward, from the time a Nurse enters till the time she leaves. It is a table which is drawn up under several heads, such as punctuality, trustworthiness, personal neatness, and various points of medical skill. It is filled up every week by the Sister of the ward with some mark such as excellent, good or moderate; and then at the end of each month the Matron compiles from that a register or book which is filled up to correspond with the Ward Sisters' record, and which, therefore, constitutes a complete history of the Nurse from the time she enters the Hospital. I do not want to say that a system of that sort should be followed in every detail, but it would be greatly to the advantage of this Hospital that some record of a Nurse's performance while she was in the ward should be kept; and if she was suddenly charged with conduct which was considered to justify her dismissal, then the record would be at hand which could be referred to, and by which her conduct from the time she entered to the time she was accused could be judged. A system of that sort would preclude statements such as those that are made in that circular, and would prevent the suggestion that the Nurse has been treated unjustly. As the system stands at present, the Nurse is perfectly, as I understand, ignorant of any charge or any bad opinion entertained of her up to the time that she is told by the Matron that her services will be dispensed with. Then she is dismissed, the House Committee consider the case, and they have vague impressions quoted to them from the register of the Matron. I venture to say that it would be worth the while of the House Committee to consider whether some change is not desirable, and I would venture to say that the recommendations of the House of Lords' Committee on the same point should be carried out. The Lords' Committee distinctly recommended that the appointments and dismissals should be made by the governing body of the Hospital. The present system throws the onus of proof on the person charged; whereas I submit that the fair and just course would be that when cases of complaint arise, they should be referred to the Committee or some sub-Committee appointed by them who would consider each case at first hand. I bring these points forward, not with the view of making any charge against the House Committee. I dare say in this case they have done perfectly right, but you and others have said that these questions of Nursing damage the Hospital. You are in want of funds, and the Hospital is an admirable institution, but in order to prevent any drawback to your appeals, and any difficulty in raising the necessary funds, should you not institute such changes in your treatment of cases of this kind as would preclude any suggestion of such charges as those which have been circulated among the Governors?

Dr. FENWICK said: I wish to refer to the very sad and lamentable circumstance which occurred last night—I mean the death of Dr. James Anderson, one of the assistant physicians of this Hospital. I would say, as a medical man, as one who worked with Dr. Anderson as a colleague at the Victoria Park Hospital for some years, and as one who knew his estimable qualities well, that this institution has suffered a very great and heavy loss by his death (hear, hear). There are two or three things in the report to which I would like to call your attention. I congratulate the Committee very heartily upon carrying out the reform which has been urged for

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)