

all know, Nursing is a very paying concern, and I certainly should like to see carried out a certain grade of percentage given to the Nurses for their services, apart from the reputation and money they bring to the hospital. As to this matter that has been brought before you, we must leave these things to the Committee so long as we trust them, and I hope that will be for a long time. But my own experience is that I can never get complaints enough about such things. I like to get complaints, and I have impressed upon the public that if they have any suspicions, it is no good going about grumbling, but that they should bring their complaint to the Committee (hear, hear). If there is nothing in the complaint, well and good, you can inform your correspondent so. If, on the other hand, there is something that requires redress or improvement, we should be very much obliged to those who bring it to our notice. On the general question, I will say this: First of all I was sorry to hear that there was a deficit of £21,000. My own experience is that in regard to a general Hospital I should never be afraid of spending money. The public give you money to spend so long as it goes for the advantage of the public; they don't give it you to hoard. If you can show a good record of work done, you can go with confidence to the public to support you. Reference has been made in the report to the quinquennial appeal. I believe the head quarters of the appeal are at the Mansion House; and so far as my influence goes, I shall be very happy to support the appeal. I think it is never thoroughly understood by the public, the remarkable difficulties the London Hospital labours under. We have not got the same advantage that perhaps St. George's Hospital has. The situation of that Hospital is its best advertisement (hear, hear). As to the Middlesex Hospital, we are on the way to most of the great railway stations, and so long as we keep the clock correct, I think that we shall stand well with the public (laughter). I have now only to wish God speed to the Hospital in the coming year, and I must say that from the little I know of them, I have confidence in this Board of Management, and whether there is any division of opinion or not about that, I hope we shall all give our warmest support to the Hospital.

Mr. J. H. HALE addressed the meeting as follows: As the present Chairman of the House Committee, I will say some few words on this occasion. I do not wish to interfere with the Chairman in answering the general remarks, but there is one matter I would like to refer to,—the question that has arisen as to Probationer Fisher, and I may answer Lord Sandhurst and Dr. Fenwick with regard to the private Nurses. These Nurses are not sent out broad-cast from the Hospital. We have a private Nursing staff which is independent entirely of our Nurses in the Hospital, and, as the Chairman has pointed out, we were so full and so pressed for Nurses during the past two or three months, that twelve of the Nurses attached to the private staff were used in the wards of the Hospital for the good of the Hospital. They had nothing to do with the general Nurses of the Hospital. We have, day after day, our doctors sending us telegrams asking us to send out private Nurses to cases they may have outside. We have had to refuse them many times, and we on no occasion send Nurses out of the wards. (Some Governors: "Never?" and "That is a very important statement.")

Dr. FENWICK: That surely has been done.

Mr. HALE: Well, it may have been done very rarely. Since my Chairmanship began I can say it has not been done.

Dr. FENWICK: Then I congratulate you upon a remarkable improvement.

Mr. HALE: We have now thirty-four Nurses constituting our private Nursing staff, and these are sent out to

private Nursing cases whether demanded by doctors or private individuals. If we are full, and all these Nurses are out, we have no more to send (hear, hear). With regard to the case of Probationer Fisher, that pamphlet was sent to us as the House Committee. It was distributed among them, and the pamphlet was acknowledged. We had no desire then, as we have no desire now, to enter into paper warfare. Our Matron—our responsible officer—had adjudicated upon her case, and Probationer Fisher was not satisfied with that adjudication. She appealed to the House Committee, and the Committee allowed her to appear before them. She made her charges, and she said all she had to say. The House Committee heard it all, and after that we asked her whether she wished to say anything further, and she said that she desired to call certain of the sisters under whom she worked. We had no objection to that, and the sisters were called before the House Committee. Certain questions were put to them. Probationer Fisher was present with them. She heard all the questions that were put. She had leave to put any question to those Sisters she chose; and, unfortunately for Probationer Fisher, I venture to say that her case was far worse when those Sisters left the room than it was before. Those Sisters did not respond in the way she expected they would do, and the result was that the House Committee came to the determination that they could only support their responsible officer, the Matron, in the way she had acted in Probationer Fisher's case. After that Probationer Fisher chose to issue that first pamphlet—I have not seen this one of to-day—to the House Committee and several of the Governors and Vice-Presidents. I will only refer to particular cases mentioned by Fisher. The first was that she had been called on a November night to go upon the roof of the house to see that there were proper means of escape in case of fire. The committee heard that charge; and they were perfectly aware that what was complained of had been done. She was called on to go on the roof that November night. The visit had been postponed for a week because the House Governor said it was so wet that he would not take the Nurses out. The Nurses knew the day they would be called on, and if they were ill or had any complaint to make, they had only to go to the Governor and say it was not in their power to do the work. Probationer Fisher did not do that, and when we asked why she did not, her answer was that "she did not feel inclined." That is the key to the whole thing. If Fisher had felt more inclined to do the work that she was called on to do in the Hospital, she would have been able to carry on the duties of a sick Nurse. She did not feel inclined to do it. Would it be a right time for our House Governor to call on a June day, say at twelve o'clock, for a Nurse to go on the roof of the Hospital to see that there were proper means of escape? I have been over the roof, and what does it mean? It means that the Nurses are called on at this time of the night to go on to the roof, to proceed along a certain portion of it, and return to the Hospital at a distant portion of it, and not to go over all the roofs of the Hospital. This was necessary and right, because it was the only way to ensure precaution. But the most serious charge Probationer Fisher made against the Hospital was that Probationers were systematically sent from erysipelas cases to assist in Nursing tracheotomy cases, thus recklessly risking children's lives. This is a serious charge, but I say here that there is not one word of truth in the charge. It is utterly false from beginning to end. It never has been done, and I hope and trust it never will be done. I call this a charge; the other I consider no charge at all. I say this is a charge against the administration of the Hospital. There is not one word of truth in it, and Probationer Fisher must have dreamed it. I have questioned

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)