

stated, gave it as his opinion that he found sufficient evidence in the other organs to account for death, so that he did not consider it necessary to examine the brain. Dr. Bates, at the adjourned inquest, stated that the cause of death was a large hæmorrhage which commenced on the left side of the brain, and extended to the right side. The Coroner said that by not examining the brain, as requested, Dr. Wells had neglected the orders of the Court. That amounted to contempt of Court, for which he was liable to punishment. By making the statement on oath that he had examined all the organs of the body he had also laid himself open to punishment. It is quite certain that there was no wish on the part of Dr. Wells to state that he had made the examination, but he was certainly most ill-advised in not carrying out the Coroner's directions to the letter. This is the second case in which a Coroner has recently had occasion to complain of the inadequate manner in which a post mortem examination has been made. It is obvious that it is of the very greatest moment to the public that the utmost care should be exercised in such examinations, and we are of opinion that Dr. Drage was fully justified in making these severe remarks.

A POINT FOR THE PRINCE'S FUND.

WE learn from the daily press that an inquest was recently held by Mr. John Troutbeck with regard to the death of a woman of seventy-eight years of age, who died in the Poland Street Infirmary on January 30th. The son of the deceased woman gave evidence that she fell from the upper landing on to the stairs, and he took her at five o'clock in the morning to the Middlesex Hospital, where she was attended to. He was told by the surgeon that he had not a bed to spare, and that he had better take the old lady to Poland Street Infirmary, but that he would not be able to get her admitted until ten o'clock. As he was unable to get a cab at such an early hour, he led his mother there, the journey occupying two hours.

Medical evidence was given that the deceased was very weak from pain in the right side, which had been plastered, when she arrived. She went on well till Friday, when she developed symptoms of heart failure. At the post mortem examination it was found that she had six broken ribs. It was always dangerous to send out old people with broken

ribs. The witness would have thought they would have kept her at the hospital.

The Coroner was of opinion that if the doctor at the hospital really thought that the infirmary was not open till ten, the deceased should certainly have been kept there—an expression of opinion, which was applauded by the jury—she must have been very bad. A juror also said that he thought the woman might have been sent by the hospital on an ambulance. The Coroner concurred, and added that it was only reasonable to suppose that the condition of a woman of the deceased's age, was prejudiced by exposure to the cold night air. The jury, while expressing the same opinion, returned a verdict of accidental death.

It is quite evident that the medical man who turned this poor old woman of nearly eighty into the street at six o'clock on a January morning, well knowing that neither cabs nor omnibuses were available, and believing that she would have to wait until ten o'clock for admission to the infirmary, has a very inadequate conception both of his professional and humane obligations. We should also like to point out that similar scandals have of late so frequently occurred, that pressure should be brought to bear upon all hospitals receiving accident and urgent cases to follow the excellent example set by St. Bartholomew's Hospital and maintain a certain number of beds in the casualty department, so that no case of illness or accident should be sent out in the night, or until it had been seen by an experienced medical man. This is a point which the Committee of the Prince of Wales' Fund might well take up, and no doubt had there been an experienced woman on the Committee of Investigation which visited the Middlesex Hospital, she would have pointed out this deficiency and it would have been made a *sine qua non* to the bestowal of the very liberal grant from the Prince's Fund to the Middlesex Hospital that a certain number of beds should be maintained in the casualty department.

We should like to point out that unless pressure is brought to bear upon abuses by the Committee of the Fund it will constitute a very serious danger, and one which we have always recognised, and which has been our chief objection to the centralisation of funds, inasmuch as an institution which secures large grants from a central fund can afford to ignore the expression of disapproval on the part of the public evinced in the withdrawal of monetary support.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)