

one—can give the necessary knowledge and command of the countless vital details of the work.”

We like the programme of this committee exceedingly. The provision that there should be a general Superintendent of women nurses in the department of war at Washington is excellent; and further, as we reported last week, the services of the highly trained women who will act as Superintendents are to be well paid. The opinion that a soldier should receive as efficient nursing as a civilian, will commend itself to all, while the rule laid down that training in no other profession—even though it be a kindred one—can qualify for the superintendence and selection of trained nurses, is admirable, and one which needs to be pressed home upon our own military authorities. We shall watch the development of the American Army Nursing Service with much interest.

REORGANIZATION REQUIRED.

WE have from the first condemned the organization of the Nursing Department in connection with the Soudan Campaign; the reason for the inadequate arrangements being, in our opinion, due—not to the arrangements made for this particular expedition—but to the whole organization of the Army Nursing Service, which is, from a nursing point of view, rotten to the core. In these days, it is an extraordinary anomaly that a Nursing Department should be organized by a Board which does not number amongst its members one trained nurse; but such is the present position of our Navy, Army, and Indian Army Nursing Services. We are glad to observe that last week, questions were asked in the House of Commons with regard to the nursing of the Soudan wounded.

Captain Norton wished to know whether an application was made by the Army medical authorities for a hospital ship, in connection with the Khartoum Expedition, in sufficient time for it to have reached Alexandria before the arrival of the sick from the front.

Mr. Wyndham explained that application for a hospital ship was made by the medical officer in Egypt, and the General Officer commanding the army of occupation on June 27th. The General Officer forwarded the application unofficially, on the footing that, if on arriving in Egypt he found it necessary, he would again apply to Lord Cromer. On the receipt of the application, the General Officer was empowered to send the sick and wounded on board Peninsular and Oriental, and other, ships passing through the Suez Canal, supplementing in that

manner the accommodation afforded by the two Government transports. On September 14th the General Officer applied officially for a hospital ship, but, as it would have taken five weeks to fit one out, it was decided to adhere to the arrangement which had already been made. Invalids sent home arrived considerably sooner than they would have done had a hospital ship been despatched.

Captain Norton: In consequence of this, were some sixty or seventy officers and men detained in hospital at Alexandria, with *only two nurses*, while suffering from enteric fever?

Mr. Wyndham: No complaints have reached us to that effect; but, if such a thing did occur, it was not due to the non-employment of special hospital ships. It may have been due to the accommodation at Alexandria and Cairo not being sufficiently ample for the outbreak of enteric fever, which took place some time after the finish of the campaign.

Captain Norton: Will the Under-Secretary inquire whether the wounded coming from the front were properly provided for?

The Speaker ruled the question out of order.

It would be interesting to know what arrangements were made on the P. and O. steamers, both for the accommodation and the nursing of the sick. The quarters are close enough for those who are well, but for the sick the discomfort must necessarily be great. Also unless trained nurses were provided, which would not appear to be the case, there are few worse fates for a helpless man than to be ill at sea; and if between 400 and 500 patients were sent home in the course of five weeks, with no nurses to care for them, it is, we think, quite evident that “someone has blundered.” With regard to the sixty or seventy officers and men who are reported to have been detained at Alexandria suffering from enteric fever, because no hospital ship was forthcoming, we are bound to say that we do not consider a ship, even though it be a hospital one, the best place for cases of this nature, but surely, the obvious way of meeting the situation was to equip and despatch to Alexandria a nursing staff, sufficiently large to afford efficient care to the sick, and to relieve the cruelly over-worked nurses. Nurses could have reached Alexandria in about a week after they left London; and we consider that some nurses should have been sent there, so as to be in readiness for such a contingency, as an outbreak of enteric fever—a contingency which, from the beginning of the campaign, was foreseen by those conversant with the country.

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