

The Chairman in his opening address said that he hoped the Prince of Wales' Fund would not detract from the good done by the other Funds. At present he was afraid that this was to some extent the case.

Sir William Broadbent, in moving the adoption of the report, said, that "the policy of postponement and observation" did not mean simply inaction. The Committee for the Promotion of a Central Hospital Board for London might or might not take to themselves the credit of the establishment of a Central Hospital Council, and of inquiries into the management of hospitals; but the fact remained that from the first these things had been advocated by the Association. The Council did not, however, by any means carry out the full purpose of the Central Hospital Board desired by the Association, as the hospitals represented upon it were only those to which medical schools were attached. It was in these that the minimum of abuse had prevailed, and in which the usefulness of the out-patient department was greatest. If, however, the smaller hospitals were represented, he was convinced that a much larger measure of usefulness would be obtained. It was impossible to bring pressure to bear upon the smaller hospitals by means of a body upon which those hospitals were unrepresented.

The great object of such a Board was that all the hospitals should be represented upon it. He hoped that the Central Hospital Board, by enlarging its borders, might by its own action become the Board outlined in 1897. It was immaterial to the Charity Organization Society, how the objects of the Society were carried out; all they wanted was that the work should be efficiently done. One of the advantages to which he looked forward from the establishment of a Central Board was that, in the district round every hospital there would be a kind of census taken of all the medical institutions, and some kind of co-operation brought about, and patients who had shown a desire for independence by contributing to a provident dispensary would not, therefore, find it more difficult to obtain hospital advice than the improvident. The system of inspection to which the report referred was, he could say, working satisfactorily. At St. Mary's Hospital, with which he was connected, all the reports of the inquiry officer went before a small committee. This committee was entirely sympathetic, and thus the risk of any injury to the feelings of the deserving poor was avoided. It had been found that about one case in every forty was unsuitable for relief. The effect of the inquiries would probably be deterrent, as unsuitable patients would avoid those hospitals where they were made. But here came in a

defect in the partial inquiry. If unsuitable patients found they could not go to a large hospital because of the inquiries which were made, they would go to a smaller one. With regard to the Prince of Wales' Fund, he should regret if any criticism were considered as hostility on the part of the Association to that Fund. It was simply the business of the Committee to analyse whatever was going on in connection with the medical charities. He hoped that in the future there would be co-ordinate action between the Sunday Fund, the Saturday Fund, and the Prince of Wales' Fund, and that, consequently, there would be no danger of their interfering with each other. He also hoped that the apprehensions which existed that the Prince of Wales' Fund would touch upon the other funds would prove baseless. They must keep their eyes open and see that these agencies did not dip their buckets in the same well.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bond, M.P., and after some discussion, in the course of which a speaker objected to centralization, a system which he said was not supported by many influential members of the medical profession, was carried.

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### Nursing Legislation.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Member for Aberdeenshire, W.), recently made an enquiry in the House of Commons concerning the provision of a hospital ship for conveying the sick and wounded from India to this country. Mr. Powell Williams said in reply, that the provision of such a ship would rest with the Indian Government, and after very full consideration, the Secretary of State was not prepared to press the adoption of such a system upon that department. The balance was not by any means all on the side of a hospital ship as against the more rapid and frequent conveyance of invalids on board transports. These considerations applied with special force to our widely scattered colonial garrisons, invalids from which are sent home by packet at the earliest opportunity.

It will be remembered that the "earliest possible opportunity" in the case of Hong Kong is once a year, and if an invalid is not well enough to be sent by the annual transport he has to be kept in hospital for another twelve months to wait for this "rapid and frequent conveyance."

With regard to the accommodation and nursing attention provided by the transports, perhaps if the Secretary of State for India made the practical experiment of returning in one of these vessels himself he might be induced to very materially alter his opinion.

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