

ENDSLEIGH PALACE HOSPITAL FOR OFFICERS, W.C.

A NEW COMMITTEE IMPERATIVE.

We have pleasure in publishing the following letter from Miss Florence Tubbs, recently Matron of the Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers.

MISS TUBBS DEMANDS INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

DEAR MADAM,—I beg to thank you for the space you have devoted to reporting the circumstances connected with my dismissal from the office of Matron at the Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers, and for the trouble you have taken to secure justice for myself and the nursing staff.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, in contradistinction to the commercial nursing press, has approached the question with sympathy and understanding from the nurses' point of view; and, had it not been for the publicity given by it to the case, the professional standpoint would never have been presented.

I beg the courtesy of your columns to make plain the following facts.

Until the Chairman, Sir Archibald Williamson, informed me verbally that the Committee proposed peremptorily to terminate my engagement, I had had no intimation from them that they had any complaint to make of my work.

In regard to the leave given to officers, to which reference has been made in the press, that did not come within my province, but within that of the Commandant. I am aware that I incurred some displeasure because I would not act as a spy in regard to my superior officer, in his performance of this duty, and report to the Committee concerning it. The question of leave for officers was dealt with by the Commandant or the Resident Medical Officer.

I claim that if the Committee, as is now asserted, had cause of complaint against me, it was their duty to acquaint me with those complaints, and to give me an opportunity of answering them, instead of proposing that I should consent to leave the hospital secretly at a few hours' notice, and thus place myself entirely in the wrong.

I claim, further, that in a military auxiliary hospital, subsidized by the State, the nursing staff should have an appeal to an independent enquiry by the War Office, in case of injustice affecting their professional reputation, because the majority of the committees which govern these institutions know nothing whatever about nursing, and have no right to express an opinion about professional work.

As I court the utmost publicity in my own case, I have made a personal appeal to the Secretary of State for War, asking him to direct that such an independent enquiry shall be made into all the circumstances of my summary dismissal.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity of expressing to the Sisters and Nurses and the members of the Voluntary Aid Detachment, who have supported me, my sincere appreciation of their loyalty to the principles for which I am contending; and also our united thanks to those officers who have so touchingly expressed their appreciation of our services. Our only regret in leaving the hospital, is that we are unable to serve them further; but, we feel sure, that one and all thoroughly realized that no woman with any self respect could risk her reputation by remaining in the institution under the absolute authority of the present Executive Committee.

My indebtedness to yourself and THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING needs no demonstration.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

FLORENCE TUBBS,
Late Matron Endsleigh
Palace Hospital for
Officers.

We are entirely in sympathy with the demand of Miss Florence Tubbs, that the Secretary of State for War shall institute a searching inquiry into the whole circumstances of her dismissal at a few hours' notice by five members of the Executive Committee, and we hope the numerous Cabinet Ministers whose names appear on the General Committee will hasten to support this demand.

NO WARNING GIVEN.

We note that the Chairman, Sir Archibald Williamson, states in the press, "The Committee determined after one warning" to dismiss the Matron. The Matron states emphatically no "warning" was ever given to her by the Committee, and we are of opinion that the following letter, sent to her on her request that the accusations against her should be given in writing, proves distinctly that the Committee of five civilians, including Sir Archibald Williamson and his wife, decided to discharge this professional lady at a day's notice—and estimated this professional damage at one week's salary of £3 in lieu of notice!!

Scandalous is the only word which describes such treatment.

THREE POUNDS IN LIEU OF NOTICE.

Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers,
Endsleigh Gardens, London,

October 16th, 1915.

DEAR MISS TUBBS,—With reference to your letter of the 14th inst., addressed to the Executive Committee of the Hospital, I am directed to inform you that the Committee decided to make a change of Matron because they were of opinion that you have not maintained a sufficiently high standard of order and discipline in the hospital.

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