

NURSING AT THE ISLINGTON INFIRMARY.

MISS WAMSLEY'S REPORT.

The Guardians of the Parish of St. Mary, Islington, at their meeting on February 11th, held in the Board Room, St. John's Road, Upper Holloway, received the Report of the Highgate Hill Infirmary Visiting Committee, on their "Enquiry into the whole of the matters raised in the Extract from the Report of Miss L. M. Wamsley, one of the Inspectors of the Ministry of Health."

Mr. W. B. Parker, Chairman, presided.

The Committee state that "the officers in the employ of the Guardians principally concerned in the matters referred to in the Report have been interrogated by the Committee, the Female Nursing Staff being represented by a deputation consisting of four Staff Nurses and two Probationer Nurses, appointed by the members of the Nursing Staff to protest against the allegations made with regard to them."

The following are the principal items; followed by the Committee's reply in each case:—

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

"The Nursing in some of the Wards is unsatisfactory and supports the idea that many of the nurses now think of little else but off-duty time and money, of which there is no lack. I understand they come on duty tired and jaded after late hours and constant excitement. Many nurses seem to have no regard for the inconvenience and extra work caused when they fail to return to work at the appointed time."

INFIRMARY COMMITTEE'S REPLY.

The Committee state that "after the fullest investigation they cannot find any justification in these statements which are responsible for a universal feeling of indignation among the nursing staff."

The Committee hope that the Board will unanimously accept their findings.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

"Third year Probationers receive £82 18s. per annum, including War Bonus; Staff Nurses, £86 9s., rising to £93 11s.; and Sisters, £97 2s., rising to £107 15s."

THE COMMITTEE'S REPLY.

"With regard to the salaries paid . . . the Bonus is calculated in accordance with the terms of the Arbitrators' Award of February 11th, 1919."

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

"In the Male Chronic Ward, nursed by men trained in the R.A.M.C. and Asylum work, the Head Nurse reported two bed sores. On examining the patients, I found twelve others with broken skin on hips, back and heels, of which the nurse knew nothing. In one case only had he applied for a water pillow in spite of the fact that the wool mattresses and springs of the beds are very hard for thin patients with tender skins.

"The sheets and shirts were fouled and in

rucks under the patients' backs, the beds were loosely and badly made, with no protection from pressure on prominent joints and back; crumbs and treasures were found in the beds; lockers were untidy and not clean, and sanitary utensils were not properly cleansed. There was also waste of bread."

INFIRMARY COMMITTEE'S REPLY.

"The male nurse apparently did not regard the twelve cases mentioned as bed sores, and so did not report them to the Inspector, but the majority of the cases had remarks entered on the medical case papers in regard to the abrasions. . ."

"Sufficient water pillows were in stock, but there appears to have been some misunderstanding between the officers in regard to the distribution and issue of the same; this has now been rectified.

"The beds being disarranged, crumbs, &c., in the beds, and the patients' shirts fouled and in rucks is accounted for by the fact that inspection was made immediately after the dinner-time, and the nursing staff had been unable to straighten the Ward in such a short time. One of the staff having been sent off duty sick on the morning the inspection was made, the Ward was understaffed at the time.

"The statement that there was waste of bread does not seem to be fully substantiated, although a certain amount left by the patients is unavoidable in an institution for the sick."

The Medical Superintendent, Dr. A. H. Robinson, reports: "The conditions noted by the Inspector were not all what I should call bed sores. Several were backs which had become irritated by the very rough material used for drawsheets, possibly rendered worse by the chemicals used in cleansing them. In two cases the conditions seen were due to local disease and were not sores due to pressure. In most of the cases the skin was merely abraded owing to the cause stated above."

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

"In B 2 and 3, nursed by women, the conditions were better than in the Male Nurses' Ward, but I found two sore backs unreported and unprotected by water pillows, and there was evidence of carelessness and want of attention to the beds after dinner."

INFIRMARY COMMITTEE'S REPLY.

"The reason for the beds being disarranged is accounted for as in the Male Chronic Ward."

Dr. M. J. Panthaky states: "All the bed sores in B 2 and 3 were reported to me except two, which were considered by the Inspector to be bed sores. One of these two was not a bed sore but it was an eczematous patch on the sacrum. The other was a bed sore quite recently produced. It was not reported by the night nurse to the Sister."

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

"(1) In several wards sanitary utensils were not well washed; (2) In the Male and Female Phthisis Wards no tooth-brushes were used."

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