

An urgent appeal has been issued by the Royal Eye Hospital, 6, St. George's Circus, signed by Lord Iliffe, and a number of influential public men, specially addressed to friends of the printing trade, under the heading "A Great Opportunity for the Craft to repay its debt to the Royal Eye Hospital." Out of 80,000 patients treated last year at the hospital no fewer than 20,000, or 25 per cent. were members of the printing and allied trades or their families.

The Royal Eye Hospital is the only one of its kind serving the densely populated area south of the Thames. It is equipped with only one bed for every 42,000 people in this area. North of the river the eye hospitals are equipped with one bed for every 7,875 people in the area they serve. Thus the Royal Eye Hospital has nearly six times as many patients per bed. The necessity for rebuilding is now vitally urgent. Amongst the most urgent needs are 150 new beds, a special Children's ward, new and completely equipped operating theatres, a new X-ray department, private wards for people of limited means, greater facilities for research and teaching, and proper accommodation for the nursing and domestic staff. Considering the vital importance of the gift of sight we hope there will be a generous response.

The reputation of the Gordon Hospital for rectal diseases, in the Vauxhall Bridge Road, is world wide and specialists come from all parts of the world to study the treatment of cancer of the rectum originated here. The entire hospital has been rebuilt at his own expense by Mr. John A. Dewar, the President.

Two new blocks have just been opened, and their cost has been met by previous gifts from Mr. Dewar totalling £80,000. Now he has completed his gift by giving £50,000 for the reconstruction of the old part of the hospital, bringing his benefactions to £130,000.

The demand for the hospital's services is heavy, and the complete new hospital will now contain 100 beds and rooms for 50 nurses—more than treble the previous accommodation—and the hospital will be equipped as never before.

The Governors of the Whitehaven Hospital, Cumberland, are meeting with encouragement towards the cost of erecting a new hospital, which is greatly needed.

An anonymous gift of £12,000, and another one of £6,000 from the Miners' Welfare Fund, has been announced. The Special Areas Commissioner recently promised a grant of £90,000, the Cumberland County Council £20,000, and the Whitehaven Town Council £2,000. This makes a total of £130,000 towards the total cost of £149,000.

It was announced at the annual meeting of group representatives of the Hospital Saving Association recently held at Kingsway Hall, that the income from contributors last year exceeded £1,000,000. Sir Alan Anderson, M.P., who presided, read a message from the King, in which His Majesty warmly congratulated all concerned on the remarkable achievement, whereby the income from contributors has this year reached a sum of more than one million pounds, and added "I am glad that this splendid result should have coincided with my first year as patron of the association, and I send my best wishes for its ever-increasing prosperity."

BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY.

The British Red Cross Clinic for Rheumatism has benefited to the amount of £1,113 14s. 5d. from the Red Cross Ball, held at Grosvenor House on November 24th, 1937.

THE GUILD OF NURSES TAKES ACTION AT GATESHEAD.

On Christmas Eve a party was held in the Junior Nurses' Lodge of the High Teams Hospital and Institution, Gateshead, by members of the Nursing Staff, as a result of which four Sisters and three Nurses were subsequently suspended. The Guild of Nurses—the Nurses' Branch of the Trades Union Congress—has now entered the arena, and has assured the Nurses of the full legal and financial support of the Guild.

The facts are briefly that the party was arranged without permission having first been obtained, as it should have been, and further, the nurses admitted that stimulant consisting of whiskey to the value of one shilling and fourpence was improperly introduced. They recognised that they were in error in this respect and apologised, their apologies being accepted. Alderman T. Ryan, Chairman of the Public Assistance Committee, informed a representative of the Press: "We were quite willing in certain circumstances to take a lenient view and have the matter squashed as it was the festive season." That aspect of the question is therefore disposed of.

But the situation has assumed a more serious aspect. The point at issue now is not the holding of the party, concerning which Alderman Ryan informed the Sisters that it was advisable that the matter should not go before the Committee of Management, and the Public Assistance Committee were prepared to have the matter squashed, but because the Sisters, who were not satisfied with the preliminary investigation, wrote that they all wished Mr. Esther, the Northern Area Organiser of the T.U.C., to be present at any investigation.

This was refused, and the Sisters and Nurses, on being interviewed, intimated that they were not prepared to answer questions unless Mr. Esther was present; as they adhered to this decision they were suspended by the Committee for insubordination.

It is necessary that this point should be understood quite clearly. The members of the nursing staff implicated were not suspended on account of their irregularity in not obtaining permission to have the party on Christmas Eve. The Master of the hospital stated that "the apologies they gave were accepted earlier in the week." They were suspended for "insubordination," because they declined to answer questions put to them by the House Committee unless their Trade Union official was present.

The nurses implicated adhered to this decision, and they further demand an apology from Dr. L. L. Westrope, the Medical Superintendent, by whom, they allege, they were severely criticised. They resented his attitude on the ground that he had no authority to discipline them. Unquestionably the discipline of the nursing staff of a hospital should be in the hands of the Matron, a position strongly held by no less an authority than Miss Florence Nightingale, and the fundamental basis of all good discipline. A meeting of the members of the Staffs of the High Teams Hospital has passed a resolution giving their "whole-hearted support to the Sisters and Nurses who have been suspended because of their request for Trade Union representation, and resolve that such support should cover such legal, parliamentary and financial aid as may be necessary to bring this single issue to a satisfactory conclusion."

Mrs. Iris Brook, S.R.N., the National Organiser of the Guild of Nurses, has been summoned to Gateshead to handle the matter, and a request will be made to Gateshead Poor Law authorities to allow Mrs. Brook or Mr. G. C. Esther to attend the official enquiry.

On Monday, 10th instant, after a meeting of the Management Committee, attended by officials of the Guild of Nurses, immediate re-instatement of the seven nurses was announced.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)