

MEDICAL NOTES IN PARLIAMENT.

[FROM OUR LOBBY CORRESPONDENT.]

The Nurses Bill.—Dr. Farquharson's Bill for the Registration of Nurses has been blocked by Sir F. Dixon Hartland, who is said to be acting on the initiative of the Central Hospital Council for London. The Bill, which was down for second reading on Monday last, has been put down for March 2nd. Mr. Claude Hay has given notice to introduce on Thursday another Bill on this subject entitled, A Bill to Provide for the Better Training and Registration of Nurses and for the Voluntary Registration of Private Nursing Homes.

Plague at Hong Kong.—Mr. Weir asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies last week whether he had yet received from the Governor of Hong Kong a report relative to Haffkine's plague prophylactic, and, if so, would he state when that system of inoculation was brought into operation in Hong Kong, the number of persons inoculated, and how many had succumbed to plague? Mr. Lyttelton replied that in accordance with the promise given last July, the Governor was asked to embody the information desired in his next general report on plague, and no report having been received, he had been reminded by telegraph.

Dental Surgeons for the Army.—Sir Carne Rasch asked the Secretary of State for War last week whether he had any official reports upon the appointment of two dental surgeons to the First Army Corps; and whether he would state if it was proposed to increase their number. Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster replied that owing to the satisfactory nature of the reports on the employment of dental surgeons, it had been decided to employ eight dentists with the troops serving at home stations.

Dispensary Medical Officers in Ireland.—Sir Thomas Esmonde asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland last week if he would consent to the repeal of Section VI of the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1902 with a view to the settlement of the difficulty which had arisen in Ireland regarding the appointment of dispensary doctors. Mr. Wyndham replied that the necessity for this section of the Act had been explained in the Committee stage of the measure on December 12th, 1902. He could not for the reasons then stated agree to the repeal of the section.

Sewage in the Thames.—Sir Joseph Dimsdale asked the Secretary of State for War whether he was aware of the state of the sewage now being discharged into the river Thames from the military establishments at Sheerness and elsewhere, notwithstanding that the attention of the Secretary of State was in March, 1903, called to the subject by the Corporation of London as the port sanitary authority; and whether he would state what steps he proposed to take to prevent the continuance of the discharge of sewage in its present state. Mr. Secretary Arnold-Forster replied that his attention had been drawn to the matter. As a similar state of affairs existed all along the lower river in the case of the civil population, it was considered inexpedient that the War Department should take action separately from the local civil authorities affected.

Vivisection and Inspection.—Dr. Shipman asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on Monday, whether his attention had been called to the statement made by Mr. Bayliss, in his evidence in *Bayliss v. Coleridge*, that the inspector appointed under the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876, visited University College on an average once a week during the period Mr. Bayliss was conducting his researches and lectures there; whether he would state the exact number of visits paid by the inspector to University College during the year 1902; whether the inspector was officially connected with University College; and how many times the inspector visited each of the other places registered for vivisection in 1902. Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas answered that 12 visits to University College in 1902 were reported by the inspector; but he understood that owing to his constant attendance at the college he was able to pay many visits to the laboratory; and these, when he found nothing special to report, were not included in his return. The inspector is Professor of Anatomy at University College, London. During 1902 the inspector and the assistant inspector paid 106 visits to the other registered places in England and Scotland, making an average of

just under two visits to each place.—On the same day, Dr. Shipman also asked whether, in view of the fact that the inspector appointed under the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876, only witnessed the whole of one and part of 11 experiments out of the total of 14,906 performed in 1902, he would consider the advisability of increasing the number of inspectors. Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas answered that it had to be remembered that, of the 14,906 experiments mentioned in the question, 12,776 were of the character of inoculations or feeding experiments. Further, apart from the actual experiments witnessed, large numbers of the animals had been seen by the inspectors, and their condition after the initial experiment examined. He was satisfied that the inspection was sufficient to keep him fully informed as to the practical working of the Act and the observance of its provisions; but if at any time he came to the conclusion that more inspection was desirable, he should not hesitate to endeavour to obtain the necessary increase of staff.

Vivisection.—Mr. Osmond-Williams asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been drawn to the fact that Professor Starling, in giving evidence in the case of *Bayliss v. Coleridge*, stated on November 13th, 1903, that on February 2nd, 1903, he performed an operation on a brown dog, and instead of killing the dog, as provided by the Cruelty to Animals Act, 1876, handed it to Mr. Bayliss for another experiment; and, if so, whether, in view of Section XIV of this Act, he proposed to take any action. Mr. Secretary Akers-Douglas answered that he considered most carefully all the facts of this case, both before and at the time of the action referred to, and that he came to the conclusion, which he saw no reason to vary, that he was not called upon to take action.

The Medical Lessons of the War.—Mr. Bromley-Davenport, in reply to Dr. Macnamara, said that as a result of the inquiry by a Royal Commission on the treatment of the sick and wounded during the South African campaign the following action had been taken on the Commissioners' recommendation:

1. The establishment of officers had been increased by 100. The Royal Army Medical Corps had been increased by 400 men.
2. The supply of surgeons and trained orderlies in the event of a great war was now receiving careful consideration. The equipment provided by the Mowatt Reserves for three army corps, one cavalry division, and line of communication troops would, it was hoped, be quite complete by the middle of 1904.
3. The supply of candidates was now sufficient, and the quality most satisfactory. A college had been established in London, through which all captains must pass before promotion. Promotion to the higher ranks would be by selection, and all must attain a high standard of qualification. Acceleration in promotion from captain to major could now be obtained by officers who showed special merit at examination. Also special professional attainments would be recognized by appointment to special posts, carrying extra pay.
4. The formation of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service provided for a great increase in the establishment of women nurses.
5. Sanitary officers had already been, and were still being, appointed to important commands.
6. A new and improved pattern of ambulance wagon had been adopted.
7. Experiments were now in progress having for their object the provision of a tent of improved pattern, and more suitable for sick and wounded.

Overcrowding in Poor-law Schools.—Sir Ernest Flower asked the President of the Local Government Board if he was aware that the certificate of the Union Schools of the West Ham Guardians, which in November, 1901, was exceeded by 169 children and in November, 1902 and September 1903 was still exceeded, was at present exceeded by over 200 children; that the boys were entirely without day-room accommodation; that 144 girls had day-room accommodation of 23 ft. 6 in. by 18 ft. 2 in. only; that 86 infants had a day-room, in which they also took their meals, of 27 ft. 2 in. by 18 ft. 2 in. only; and whether, seeing that this overcrowding made it impossible to isolate infectious diseases, and that skin and eye complaints were present in the same dormitory, he would urge on the guardians the necessity of ascertaining if all those children at present dependent on the rates were entitled to such maintenance, and of providing temporary accommodation by hiring houses in which small groups of children might be placed. Mr. Long replied that he was aware of the overcrowding at these schools, and had impressed upon the guardians the serious responsibility which attached to them in this matter. The guardians informed him that

they were endeavouring to make arrangements for boarding-out some of the children beyond the union. He was still in communication with them, and had urged them to hire homes in or near the union or to provide temporary buildings in order to remedy at once the present state of things. He had also suggested that they should have a "call over" of the children with a view of ascertaining if the numbers could not be reduced.

Ireland.

IRISH POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS.

DR. C. F. HUTCHINSON, M.P., has recently represented to the Chief Secretary for Ireland the steps which could be taken to improve the position of medical officers under the Poor Law in Ireland, calling special attention to (1) insufficient salary and the desire that a minimum of £200 a year should be paid; to (2) the fact that there is no superannuation allowance; and (3) to the absence of a recognized annual holiday. Dr. Hutchinson urged upon the Chief Secretary the necessity for doing something to relieve these very just causes of complaint, and, by making these officers contented, securing greater efficiency in the services of men upon whom the well-being of the very poor in Ireland so largely depended. Mr. Wyndham, in reply, has assured Dr. Hutchinson that the matter shall receive his attention.

THE VICEREGAL COURT.

There has been considerable discussion in Dublin of the new rules by which the Presidents of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons are in future to be excluded from the privilege of the private *entrée* at the Viceroyal Court. The daily newspapers have made the matter generally known, and have commented adversely upon the regulation. It is only fair to say, however, that the change does not affect the Presidents of the Colleges alone. The eldest sons of peers and others have also been excluded, and it is explained that there was no intention whatever to slight the medical profession. The privilege was granted to the Presidents so recently as 1887, and seeing that other distinguished people are to share in the prospective unpleasantness the resentment would probably not have been so keen had not the Lord Lieutenant been unwise enough to assign an inadequate reason.

To provide room for the heads of Government departments is, of course, plausible enough, but there are departments and departments. Some of them are of little importance, and those that are of sufficient dignity are certainly not greater in position or influence than the heads of the medical profession. In the official list of those who use the private *entrée* not *ex officio*, but "by custom and permission," there are dozens who could be more properly left out, and whose right to be among the sacred few could not be defended for a moment in competition with the Presidents' claims. The Colleges are not unreasonable in their dissatisfaction, and if the officials concerned had only given a little thought to what they were doing there would have been no need for protest. Perhaps even at the eleventh hour they may realize how wrong they have been.

THE ULSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY AND QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST.

The Council of Queen's College, Belfast, adopted recently a memorial to the Government pointing out the urgent necessity which exists for largely increasing the equipment and staff of the College. This memorial stated that the departments in which extensions are immediately necessary are Natural Philosophy, Natural History, and Chemistry. It also set out that throughout the whole institution enlarged facilities were required for teaching and research, an increase in the number of Chairs, the provision of assistants to the professors, and a larger grant to the library, as well as other additions. Attention is also drawn to the fact that the scheme for the foundation of a Faculty of Commerce remained inoperative in spite of the fact that several munificent donations have been offered. Reference is also made to the need for a wide scheme of higher technical education. The "Better Equipment Fund," of which the Lord Mayor of Belfast is chairman, has, it was added, during the two years of its existence raised about £10,000, and altogether the public has bestowed not much less than £100,000 upon the College. It is contended that this is sufficient evidence of the local support which the Treasury demanded.

The memorial was considered at a recent general meeting of the Ulster Medical Society, when the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

I.

That this Society express its complete agreement with the purpose of the resolutions recently submitted to His Majesty's Government by the Council and Corporate Body of Queen's College, Belfast, regarding the necessity for the provision of increased facilities for higher scientific teaching in the College.

The Faculty of Medicine has always formed one of the most important departments of the College. The teaching of medicine must ever remain in the closest touch with the progress of investigation and research in the various physical and biological sciences. There has consequently been in recent years a great expansion, especially in practical courses, in every medical school in the kingdom. If the teaching in the Belfast Medical School is to be kept up to this standard, adopted as it is by all the universities and licensing bodies, it is essential that Queen's College should now receive the extended equipment described in the resolutions already mentioned.

This Society heartily recognizes and appreciates the manner in which the College has utilized the resources at its disposal in keeping abreast of modern methods of teaching medical science. Without the foundation of the Dunville Chair of Physiology and the Musgrave Chair of Pathology, which the College owes to the public-spirited generosity of citizens of Belfast, this would have been impossible. At the same time it is obvious that the training of medical students in the subjects of zoology, botany, chemistry, and physics is certain to suffer unless more adequate facilities for teaching these subjects are now provided. This Society wishes particularly to draw attention to the necessity for providing the College with the means of taking full advantage of the generous offer of the Right Hon. W. J. Pirrie to build a laboratory for physical science at his own expense.

The absence of sufficient laboratory accommodation and staff further seriously interferes with the development of the post-graduate work in medical science which is now demanded. Not only the vitality of the School, but also the wider interests of the medical profession and the public health of the community are directly dependent on the existence of suitable means for prosecuting work of this type.

The expansion of the medical departments of the College has hitherto been accomplished without Government aid. This Society would respectfully urge that while the College remains a Government institution, His Majesty's Government cannot free itself from the responsibility for its adequate equipment.

II.

That copies of this resolution be sent to the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Secretary, Lord Londonderry, and the members of Parliament for Belfast, Antrim, and Down.

MEDICAL OFFICERS' SUBSTITUTES.

The *Irish Independent* of February 11th states that Dr. Brennan, medical officer of the Castledermot Dispensary District, having been subpoenaed to private cases at quarter sessions twice recently, the guardians had to procure substitutes, whom they agreed to pay 1 guinea a day. They accordingly wrote to the Local Government Board asking if Dr. Brennan was entitled, as he contended, to have his substitute paid, and received a reply that a medical officer, being compelled to attend the courts as a witness on subpoena, was, in their opinion, temporarily incapacitated from duty by "other causes," within the meaning of Article 22 of the Dispensary Rules, and the guardians were bound to remunerate his substitute. The Local Government Board, however, could authorize a deduction to be made in certain circumstances from his salary to recoup the expense incurred, and as a medical witness in a private case could obtain adequate remuneration, they were prepared to authorize a deduction from Dr. Brennan's salary.

COMPENSATION TO MEDICAL MEN.

The Irish Government has selected a large space in Upper Merrion Street for the erection of a new College of Science. This will lead to the disturbance of a number of medical men who reside there, and their claims for compensation have just been decided by the arbitrator. The amounts awarded are as follow: Mr. J. Lentaigne, £4,772; Mr. J. McArdle, £2,200; Dr. McFeely, £1,116; representatives of the late Dr. Charles F. Moore, £1,883; Dr. Coppinger, £2,183; Mr. J. Booth Pearsall, £5,091; Dr. Purefoy, £1,264. These amounts are subject to reconsideration on appeal.

A FRENCH SOCIETY OF ARMY MEDICAL OFFICERS.—A Scientific Association of French Military Surgeons has recently been formed with the approval of the Ministers of War, Marine, and the Colonies. The objects of the society are to study in common medicine, surgery, and hygiene in connexion with the sanitary condition of the army, and the welfare of the soldier.