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RELIEVING STAFF SHORTAGE AT HOSPITAL

Another Cable To England

ACTING PREMIER DEFENDS POLICY

Cabinet To Consider £50 Allowance For Overtime

In a statement of the Government's policy concerning the staffing of the Adelaide Hospital, which he said, had been decided upon in consultation with responsible authorities, the Acting Premier (Sir George Ritchie) announced yesterday that as enquiries had exhausted the possibilities of obtaining house surgeons within the Commonwealth immediately, the Government was advertising throughout Great Britain in the hope of supplementing the present staff. Another cable, seeking additional information, had been sent to London on Saturday.

Sir George Ritchie, who conferred with the Inspector-General of Hospitals (Dr. Morris) during the week-end, stated that he had decided to recommend to Cabinet that each of the present house surgeons be granted an allowance of £50 if they completed their year's service. This would not be a permanent arrangement, but a recognition of the additional responsibility and work which had been loyally undertaken by the men concerned, and which he appreciated.

Sir George Ritchie deprecated the suggestion of special quarters for an increase in salaries of house surgeons, which he said, would not solve the immediate problem of the shortage of house surgeons. This difficulty had been met, according to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, by the appointment of four advanced students as resident house surgeons at the hospital.

Comparative Payments

Sir George Ritchie's statement was as follows:—
The impression is abroad that South Australia is paying less to house surgeons at the Adelaide Hospital than is being paid in similar institutions in other States. I admit that payments are paid in Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia, but in these States the full year of course, is not completed. It has been impossible for students to do this only in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

"In these three States, where hospitals are teaching schools connected with the University, the amount paid to house surgeons is practically the same. In South Australia and Victoria the salary is £100 a year, and in New South Wales £90, with a bonus of £20 a year if the house surgeons remain the full year of course. It is in addition to board and accommodation. If South Australia were to increase the amount, New South Wales and Victoria would be compelled to do so. Unless it intended to remain in relative parity with the other States, it is another increase, making a vicious circle which might result in a serious increase in the cost of the taxpayers."

"It has always been understood in connection with teaching hospitals that the students should complete their full training by service in the hospital for at least one year. This was borne out by the statement of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne (Mr. Mitchell) in the statement published. The advertisement on Saturday. It is to be understood that the Vice-Chancellor is definitely of the opinion that this principle should be maintained. In addition, I have had several conversations with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and he has supported the same principle."

"The service at the hospital, in effect, is the final part of their training, and helps them to qualify for their life work. This is in addition to the tuition already given at the University. It is a grant of help to make possible by which about £40,000 a year, which, of course, is paid over all University activities. In view of these, all University activities, by the State to the services of students, who become house surgeons, and who are to be given a positive reward, what is really part of their education at a salary at further cost to the State?"

Enquiries In England

Sir George Ritchie said that in the matter of the staff of the Adelaide Hospital he had not acted hastily, but without consultation with those responsible for the training of students.

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He had been in touch with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Medicine, and their advice had been valuable and helpful in guiding him in to the important principle of engaging house surgeons.

"The Dean has stated that if it is impossible to obtain house surgeons in Australia, the Government should endeavor to obtain them from abroad," Sir George Ritchie continued. "While the Government is reluctant to do this in the interests of the students trained at the University, the urgency of the case necessitates money from London. Further information from this source was sought by the Government, a cable which was dispatched on Saturday. As recommended by the British Medical Association in London, invitations for young doctors to join the staff of house surgeons at the Adelaide Hospital have been advertised in Great Britain. This has been done only after a full enquiry had been made in Australia. As we have been unable to obtain house surgeons within the Commonwealth, we are extending the enquiry abroad in the hope of securing a better staff."

"The Dean also called on me, and informed me that he thought the difficulty at the Adelaide Hospital was not so much the shortage of house surgeons had been largely overcome by arrangements which the University had made for four fourth-year medical students to go into residence at the hospital. The Dean was of the opinion that this would meet the emergency. One of the house surgeons, unfortunately, is at present sick. There are also two casualty doctors who are not included in the staff of house surgeons, as they receive a special salary."

Allowance For House Surgeons

"After consultation with Dr. Morris, I am assured that there has been considerable overtime, and I desire to express my appreciation of the loyalty of the men concerned," he added. "I have determined to recommend to Cabinet that an allowance of £50 be granted to each of the present house surgeons on the completion of their year's service. The money voted for house surgeons will not be fully used, owing to the vacancies, and I am pleased to take the opportunity of recognizing the service which the remaining house surgeons have rendered."

"Referring to a suggestion that pertaining medical staff should be obtained from the medical profession to assist at the hospital, Sir George Ritchie said he had been advised that the scheme was impracticable, and no doubt, doctors in the metropolitan area would say that they could not give the time required."

Sir George Ritchie added that no good purpose would be served by undue publicity on the matter. Persons had entered the controversy who were insufficiently informed of the principles involved, and who had been led to express an opinion which would be hard to defend. No good purpose would be served by replying to those statements. "The Government will continue its efforts in an endeavor to secure house surgeons fully to maintain the Adelaide Hospital," he added. "In the meantime, the Government is confident that the best interests of the patients are being served by the honorary medical officers and the remaining house surgeons, students and nursing staff, and that patients and friends of patients have the assurance of the medical superintendent (Dr. Sleeman) that no high reputation of the Adelaide Hospital for service is being maintained."

The sudden death occurred at his home on Saturday of Mr. Chris Flannagan, 24, of Wakefield street, Kent Town, son of Mr. J. Flannagan. As he was listening with a friend to a rare broadcast, he collapsed, regained consciousness for a while, but died shortly afterwards. Death was ascribed to cerebral haemorrhage. Mr. Flannagan was in the final year of his medical course at the Adelaide University.

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TREATMENT OF CRIPPLED CHILDREN

SEP. 1935
"Allocation Of Nuffield Grant Satisfactory To S.A."

The chairman of the State Committee for Crippled Children (Mr. C. A. Edmunds) said on Saturday that the committee felt satisfied with the £3,000 granted to South Australia from Lord Nuffield's £50,000 gift for the assistance of crippled children, although it was the smallest made to any of the States. He explained that the grant had been allocated primarily on a population basis, with modifications to meet certain requirements. The grants made to Tasmania and Western Australia (£7,500 and £6,750 respectively) had been increased because those States were giving behind the others in the way of facilities for treatment, and consequently needed more capital. South Australia considered the grant as the Children's Hospital and Stoughton House.

The children who would benefit by the grant were principally sufferers from infantile paralysis. It was also felt that children crippled as a result of hereditary tuberculosis should receive help. Children crippled as the result of accidents were not included in the emergency. Consideration would have to be given to the education of these children, and it was hoped that the Education Department, which had been given behind the others, would be able to help further. It was hoped, also, as a part of the scheme, that the training both at the Children's Hospital.

News 2.9.35 Doctors, The Hospital, And the Cabinet

THE strength of a ruling political party is judged by the strength and actions of the Cabinet it chooses to govern in its name. Gauged by this standard, the Liberal and Country Party would be considered very weak indeed. Fortunately, no one considers that the present Cabinet is the strongest which could be chosen from the L.C.P. ranks. Its blunders have been many, and its changes of policy on important matters have been so tardy and undignified that it retains only a shred of the respect of the electors in general.

The latest indignity which the Ministry has permitted itself to suffer is in connection with the treatment of doctors and patients at the Adelaide Hospital. The doctors are greatly underpaid and grossly overworked. The patients are of necessity left without the full measure of treatment which is necessary for their wellbeing.

The first attitude of the Acting Premier towards this state of affairs was that the Government was doing everything that human intelligence could do in the circumstances. However, having had the Saturday afternoon off—which he declares he likes—the Acting Premier yesterday issued a statement in which he more or less gracefully bowed to public opinion to the extent of granting the overworked doctors a bonus of £50, on condition that they completed 12 months' service in the hospital. For this the public, whose money pays these doctors and supports the hospital, is grateful, but it is not satisfied that sufficient has been done.

The position is not new. It arose last year, but in its Micawber way the Government went on hoping for something to turn up. Now, in its blundering, the Cabinet has trodden on the hoop of public opinion, which has turned up smartly and rapped it on the shins.

Sir George Ritchie says that no good purpose would be served by undue publicity on the matter. This is the

opinion of the maid who has broken a vase. She wishes no undue publicity—in fact, like the Cabinet, she would be glad if the matter were not mentioned at all. But the question having been ventilated, it must be given due publicity until the deplorable state of affairs at the Adelaide Hospital is rectified.

It seems impossible for this Government to do things in a big way—that is, if we except the enthusiasm with which it entered into the grandiose scheme for the expenditure of £156,000 of public money, chiefly for its own comfort, on Parliament House. Whether the Ministry realises it or not, it is being severely criticised for many failures to tackle public business pluckily, and, sooner or later, this criticism will result in a reconstruction. The sooner this comes about the better it will be for the State.

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Messrs. James B. Price, Frank W. Mitchell, and Wilfred C. Schreiber, graduates of the University of Adelaide, will leave by the Nestor for England tomorrow. Mr. Price, who was recently awarded the 1881 exhibition scholarship by the Royal Commission for his published works and research in organic chemistry, will enter Oxford University, where he will work with Professor Hobbs Robinson, professor in organic chemistry. Mr. Price gained his B.Sc. degree in 1932. Mr. Mitchell, one of the two Australians recently awarded a Carnegie Fellowship to study education administration and developments in England, will enter the Institute of Education at the University of London. He graduated here in 1927, and in 1930 obtained his M.A. degree. Mr. Schreiber is going to England on a travelling scholarship. In 1932 he obtained his M.A. degree.

Dental Lecture.—Dr. E. Wilfred Fish, a British dentist, who arrived here on Saturday, and will remain until the end of the week, when he will leave for Melbourne, delivered a lecture to Adelaide members of the dental profession at the Dental Hospital yesterday. His subject was "The Stabilisation of the Lower Denture." Further lectures and demonstrations will be given to dentists today, tomorrow, and on Thursday, and on Friday evening Dr. Fish will be entertained at a dinner at the South Australian Hotel.

Medical Students.—The 1935-36 session of the Adelaide University Medical School will open on Saturday. The students will be welcomed by the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Mitchell, and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Morris. The students will be divided into two classes, the first class will begin their studies on Saturday, and the second class on Sunday.

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