

ANOTHER HONOR FOR S.A. NAVAL OFFICER

Clasp Of Polar Medal For Commander Moyes

FREMANTLE, October 1.

News of further honors won by Instructor-Commander H. M. Moyes, of H.M.A.S. Australia, for his work in Polar regions was given on the flagship, H.M.A.S. Canberra, today. It was officially stated that on September 21, when the cruisers were at Shark Bay, Rear-Admiral W. T. R. Ford, at the request of the Governor-General (Sir Isaac Isaacs) presented to Commander Moyes the 1929-1930 Clasp of the Polar Medal. The award was made in respect of the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic expedition of 1929, which was led by Sir Douglas Mawson, and on which Commander Moyes was survey officer in the ship Discovery.

That was Commander Moyes's third expedition, as he took part in the 1926 expedition to the Ross Sea and the Australasian Antarctic expedition of 1911-1914. He is an old St. Peter's College boy, and is now senior educational officer of the Royal Australian Navy.

News 3-10-34

Premier Criticises Doctors' Act

IN the Assembly this afternoon the Premier (Mr. Butler) criticised the four house surgeons who yesterday tendered their resignations from the staff of the Adelaide Hospital. He said that the resignations were most regrettable at the present time, and that the surgeons concerned did not appear to realise their debt to the State.

Letters from the house surgeons demanding increased pay had been withdrawn, he said. This action would relieve an extremely delicate situation.

The Leader of the Opposition Mr. Lacey had drawn the attention of the Premier to the hospital's affairs, pointing out that the resident staff was now only at half-strength, and that there was a long waiting list of people who desired surgical and medical treatment at the hospital.

He asked what the plans of the Government were to secure a medical staff for the hospital and relieve the sufferings of so many people.

Those who tendered their resignations to the Hospital Board yesterday were Drs. Harvey Johnston, Wallace, Turner, and Hayes. The resignations will take effect in a fortnight's time.

Mr. Butler said he had anticipated the question, and had prepared a statement in collaboration with the Chief Secretary (Mr. Ritchie).

"Real Position"

"The statement that four house surgeons resigned because of dissatisfaction, and what is described as overwork and low fees paid in the Adelaide Hospital, is hardly correct," said Mr. Butler.

"One of the requests of the resident medical officers was for a greater opportunity for experience in the practice of surgery at the hospital. The real position is that three of the medical officers concerned resigned to take up more remunerative positions, and one because of ill-health."

"The salaries paid at the Adelaide Hospital are actually more than those paid in the Melbourne and Sydney hospitals, which are also medical schools.

"It is true that the Perth Hospital pays £200 a year, as compared with £100 a year in Adelaide, but the conditions in Perth are entirely different, because the University there has not been established sufficiently long to give them a supply of students who have completed their medical course. Consequently, it is necessary to offer higher fees to attract men from the other States."

"The resignations, combined with the increasing number of patients at the Adelaide Hospital, is creating a somewhat difficult situation, but the Government is endeavoring to obtain young doctors from other States.

"This should relieve the position until the next batch of medical students complete their course in November, 1934.

"It is pleasing to know that leading members of the medical profession are assisting the Government in every way possible."

Speaking in the Assembly today on the resignations of the four house surgeons

at the Adelaide Hospital, the Premier (Mr. Butler) said that the demand for increased pay at a time when the accommodation at the Adelaide Hospital was so severely taxed, was most regrettable.

"The house surgeons concerned do not appear to realise that they owe something to a State which affords them the opportunity of such a high university training at fees which would be considerably higher were it not for the fact that the taxpayers of South Australia contribute £44,000 to the University every year," he said. "Further, it has always been recognised by the medical profession that the experience gained by the young doctors at the Adelaide Hospital is invaluable to them.

"There was a time when the house surgeons received no pay whatever, but later a payment of £50 a year was fixed, and this has since been raised to £100 a year with living quarters.

The Government's endeavors to obtain young doctors from other States were likely to prove fruitless, an Adelaide medical authority said this afternoon. He did not consider that there were any young doctors available in the Commonwealth to fill hospital resident positions in Adelaide.

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Ritchie), who is Ministerial head of State hospitals, said today that the hospital authorities would do everything in their power to see that the treatment of patients would be everything that could be desired in spite of the staff shortage.

Adv. 3-10-34

FOUR DOCTORS RESIGN FROM ADELAIDE HOSPITAL

Complaints Of Poor Pay And Overwork

STAFF REDUCED BY HALF

Difficulty In Filling Vacancies

Dissatisfaction with what is described as overwork and low pay at the Adelaide Hospital is reported to have been responsible for the resignations of four house surgeons which were placed before a meeting of the Hospital Board yesterday. It is stated that some of the doctors concerned will go to other States.

As three doctors left the Adelaide Hospital staff a few months ago to take positions at the Perth Public Hospital, which pays £200 a year, compared with £100 a year at the Adelaide Hospital, the house surgeons staff will be reduced from 16 at the beginning of this year to eight when the four who resigned yesterday leave.

Those who resigned yesterday are Drs. Harvey Johnston (son of Professor Harvey Johnston), Wallace, Turner, and Hayes. The three doctors, who left the staff a few months ago, were:—Drs. W. E. Gallagher (out-patients' registrar), W. F. Harris, and J. Colebatch, all of whom are now at the Perth Public Hospital. Other young Adelaide doctors who have been at the Perth Hospital for about a year are Drs. C. Anderson and E. Beech. Dr. R. Muecke, of Adelaide, after having served at Perth for some time, is now on his way to England.

Towards the end of last year when the house surgeons staff at the Adelaide Hospital became three short, a request was made to the Chief Secretary (Mr. Ritchie) that the salaries being saved by the Government should be divided among the remaining house surgeons. It was pointed out that they were doing the extra work. This request was refused by the Chief Secretary.

The Adelaide Public Hospital is one of the largest general hospitals in Australia. Its official capacity is about 465 beds, but, during the past winter, the number of patients accommodated has been above 550, the record number of 597 being reached a few weeks ago. The nursing staff totals about 240. During the recent influenza epidemic more than 20 nurses were ill at one time and, although extra nurses have been engaged, the strain on the nursing staff has also been severe.

Doctor's Comment

Commenting on the situation last

night, a doctor who is associated with the hospital said, "I don't think that the board will be able to obtain sufficient house surgeons from other States to fill the vacancies. The Adelaide Hospital has come to have a reputation for overwork and low pay. It seems that the board will have to pay more money to get men. It would be almost impossible for eight house surgeons to look after about 550 patients. Final year medical students at the Adelaide University are at present busily studying for their degree examination in November. The usual practice is for newly qualified doctors to become house surgeons at the Adelaide Hospital at the beginning of February each year, when those who have served a year leave. Junior house surgeons at the Perth Public Hospital receive £200 a year, and at Fremantle £250 a year. After twelve months' service at the Perth Hospital their salaries are raised to £300 a year. An attraction to young doctors is also said to be the greater surgical experience available for house surgeons at the Perth Public Hospital."

Request Not Granted

After the house surgeons staff had been reduced by resignations from 16 to 12 a few months ago, it is stated that a request was made that the house surgeons' salaries should be increased from £100 to £200, but this was not granted.

The three doctors who hold the position of registrars—medical, surgical and outpatients—at the Adelaide Hospital receive £240 a year. It is understood that Dr. Gallagher went to the Perth Hospital as a house surgeon, receiving an undertaking that he would be appointed a registrar in three months. Registrars at the Perth hospital receive about £350 a year. Registrars at Melbourne public hospitals receive about £400 a year.

Difficulty is also said to have been experienced recently in Melbourne in obtaining sufficient junior house surgeons at the public hospitals, where their rate is also £100 a year.

Chief Secretary's Statement

When asked last night the Chief Secretary (Mr. Ritchie), who is in charge of the administration of the hospitals, confirmed the fact that four doctors had given the necessary fortnight's notice. He said he understood they were leaving to improve their positions. One of the doctors had resigned owing to illness, but one of the others was going to the Fremantle Hospital, another to Perth, and the third to Broken Hill. Those doctors would receive salaries double, or more than double, the amount of £100 a year, which was all the Adelaide Hospital paid.

"We have been making efforts for some weeks to get more doctors for the Adelaide Hospital," said Mr. Ritchie, "and enquiries are still being made in the other States. So far, I regret to say, we have not been successful, but efforts are being continued. We have at present 12 house surgeons at the Adelaide Hospital, although normally the number should be about 16, but the shortage of doctors has persisted for some time. The hospital is now overcrowded with patients and, in addition to the shortage of doctors, we have been seriously handicapped by the absence of from 20 to 25 nurses, chiefly owing to illness. The whole of the staffs, including the honorary surgeons, have been working at high pressure for many weeks owing to the prevailing epidemics and other causes."

Mr. Ritchie said that at present 19 students were studying at the University for their final medical degrees. Taking the average, about 14 of these should be available for the Adelaide Hospital at the end of the year or at the beginning of next year.

Adv. 4-10-34

HOSPITAL DOCTORS' RESIGNATIONS

Minister's Statement In Parliament

"DEMAND FOR MORE PAY WITHDRAWN"

Assistance From Medical Profession

Replying in the Legislative Council yesterday to Mr. Condon (A.L.P.), who asked what was the Government's policy in regard to the shortage of

Chief Secretary (Mr. Ritchie) said that leading members of the medical profession were assisting the Government in every way possible because of the shortage of resident medical officers due to resignations. The letters from house surgeons demanding increased pay had now been withdrawn, thus relieving a delicate situation.

Mr. Ritchie said that it was hardly correct to say that the four house surgeons had retired because of dissatisfaction through overwork and low pay. One of the requests of the resident house surgeons was for greater opportunity for experience in the practice of surgery at the Adelaide Hospital. Three of the medical officers had resigned to take up positions in the other States, and one because of ill health. The fees paid to resident medical officers at the Adelaide Hospital were more than those received in New South Wales and Victoria, where the hospitals were semi-public institutions. After completing a six-year course at the University many of the medical students went to the Adelaide Hospital for a year to gain experience before taking up a private practice, and some of them remained there for an extra year.

Mr. Ritchie said that it was true that the Perth hospital paid its resident medical officers £200 a year, but the position was different there, because the medical course at the Perth University had not been established sufficiently long to provide the hospital with the required number of young doctors, and it was necessary to offer higher fees to attract men from the other States.

"Action Most Regrettable"

The resignation of the four house surgeons at the Adelaide Hospital and the demand for increased pay at a time when the Adelaide Hospital was severely taxed because of additional sickness and the absence of from 20 to 25 nurses through illness were most regrettable.

"The house surgeons do not seem to realise," added Mr. Ritchie, "that they owe something to the State which gives them the opportunity of a University training on fees which would be considerably higher if it were not for the fact that the taxpayers provided a grant of £44,000 a year for all courses at the University, and, in addition, about £13,000 for the Waite Institute at Urrbrae."

Mr. Whitford (Ind. Lab.)—How do those contributions compare with those given to other hospitals?

The Chief Secretary said that there were no other hospitals on a similar basis. The semi-public institution in Melbourne was controlled by a board, to which the Government made a big contribution. The Government had advertised for resident medical officers in this State, and had made enquiries in the other States, but no replies had been received.

Mr. Mowbray (L.C.L.)—Not at £2 a week?

The Chief Secretary said that in addition to £100 a year the house surgeons received board and lodging. In Victoria, he believed, men in similar positions received £90, and in New South Wales £80, and a bonus of £10 provided they complied with certain conditions. The practical experience was invaluable to the young doctors. There was a time when they received no payment. It was then fixed at £50, and later increased to £100.

Mr. Condon—Can the public be assured that there will be no delay in attention owing to the unfortunate position that has arisen?

The Chief Secretary said that by the resignation of four resident medical officers, in addition to the four who had already resigned, the resident staff would be reduced to eight. That would entail more work on the present staff.

Questions In Assembly

A similar statement to that made by the Chief Secretary was made in the Assembly by the Premier (Mr. Butler), in reply to a question by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Lacey).

The Premier told Mr. Anthony (L.C.L.) that medical graduates who joined the staff of the Adelaide Hospital were not obliged to sign a document to remain for any particular period. At one time University graduates had been required to sign a bond that they would serve at the hospital for a year. The Premier added that he was not sure in view of the present position, that it would not be a good move to adopt a similar policy.