

shirk his duty in this matter; he wished to do justice to the medical officers, and to himself as a governor. He thought, seeing the feeling of the profession at large, seeing also the length of time which their medical officers had served the hospital faithfully and diligently, they might make the disputed alteration prospective instead of retrospective, viz., that the officers who had been appointed when no such rule existed, and who objected to conform thereto, might be excused, and that it might have effect only with their successors. [*Hear, hear.*]

Mr. W. MOODY said that the rule was made to protect the committee as well as the medical officers. Complaints were constantly carried from hospitals by patients that they had not been properly attended to. The committee asked the medical men to enter their attendances, so that the imputations of neglect could be at once disproved by reference to the book.

Dr. WOODFORDE observed that the letters he had brought forward contained the opinions, not only of the profession, but also of the boards of governors of all the hospitals who made the rules thereof. It was not a fair statement to say it was only the opinion of the profession. As Mr. Jones had very ably pointed out, the signature in the book did not at all protect them from the insinuations thrown out against them. How could the committee say when he had signed his name in the book that he had seen the patients? Whenever a complaint against the medical officers was made, let there be strict investigation. It was surely not a more invidious thing to investigate the truth of a complaint than to impose a law upon them, which might expel from their hospital officers, the junior of whom had served the institution faithfully for twelve years. He should be satisfied with the adoption of the suggestion Mr. Badcock had thrown out.

Dr. BURRIDGE thought Mr. Badcock's suggestion was the best. The governors had created a penal enactment, and had constituted themselves legislators, judge, jury, and witnesses, and to-day they had come to inflict the punishment. For what? For nothing at all! If he had transgressed in any way in the performance of his duty towards the poor people committed to his charge, he was ready to meet anything in the shape of a sensible charge, anything that could be brought to bear upon his conduct with regard to the hospital during twenty-two years. Let them make a charge substantially, and not subject him to a penal enactment before proving anything. Was that English? He was at a loss how to characterise such proceedings.

Mr. CORNISH said if the rule were derogatory to them it would be equally derogatory to their successors.

Mr. R. BADCOCK proposed as an amendment—

"That the clause appended to Rule 6 at the last annual meeting of the governors, requiring the medical staff to record their visits to the hospital, be not enforced on those medical officers whose appointments date anterior to the adoption of the clause."

Mr. H. TRENCHARD seconded the amendment.

Mr. ALFORD would have seconded the amendment if Mr. Trenchard had not. He had inserted a letter in the papers recommending the same course, believing that that was the right manner to settle the matter without injury to the charity. His own practice shewed that he did not think the rule derogatory to the profession. [*Hear, hear.*]

Mr. C. A. MOODY would vote for the amendment. He hoped that by such a resolution the medical men who had refused to sign their names on compulsion would be induced to do so voluntarily.

The mover and seconder of the original resolution withdrew it in favour of Mr. Badcock's amendment.

After a discussion in which Messrs. Dickenson, W. Moody, Sandford, J. Wood, and Badcock, and Drs. Woodforde and Burridge took part,

The CHAIRMAN then put Mr. Badcock's motion to the meeting, 22 hands being held up for it, and 25 against it. The motion was declared to be lost.

Mr. W. MOODY suggested an adjournment; but this being objected to, he moved—

"That the offices of physician and surgeon to this hospital, now held by Dr. Woodforde, Dr. Burridge, and Mr. Welch, on each and all of them having refused to comply with one of the standing regulations of this hospital relating to their offices, be declared vacant, and that the committee be authorised to take the requisite steps for filling up the said offices respectively, and for providing for the medical care of the patients in the meantime."

Mr. J. R. ALLEN seconded the motion.

The Rev. Mr. LAWSON observed that many governors felt strongly that if the law could be made prospective in its operation it would meet with the approval of the profession and meet the wish of the governors. It would also smooth the way exceedingly, and take away all cause of difficulty, if the gentlemen who objected would resign their offices and offer themselves for re-election according to the new terms.

Mr. DICKINSON did not think it fair, on a matter of etiquette like this, to ask gentlemen to place themselves in such a situation. He moved that the question be adjourned.

Capt. PATTON seconded Mr. Dickinson's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN put Mr. Dickinson's amendment, when nineteen voted for it, and nineteen against it. Mr. King asked that his vote might be taken as two, as representing the Taunton Union, and on the show of hands being retaken, the amendment was lost, eighteen voting for it, and twenty-two against it.

On a division being taken on the original resolution, 23 hands were held up for it, and 6 against it. It was therefore carried. The medical officers at once left the room.

Mr. R. K. M. KING proposed—

"That the Chairman be requested to communicate the resolution just passed to Dr. Burridge, Dr. Woodforde, and Mr. Welch, accompanied by an expression of sincere regret that the alteration of the rule in question—having for its object the advancement of the general benefits of the hospital, and without, as they believe, imposing any new duty which may be considered irksome on the medical or surgical officers, or derogatory to their professional status—has resulted in the loss of their services, to whom, nevertheless, the warmest thanks of the governors and the public generally are due for the zealous, assiduous, and able manner in which they have discharged their duties since their connection with the hospital."

Mr. SANFORD seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr. DICKINSON a vote of thanks was accorded the Chairman for his impartial conduct in the chair on that trying occasion.

The meeting then separated, having lasted two hours and a half.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been received from:—Dr. WOODFORDE; Dr. MO WILLIAM; Mr. T. T. BLEASE; Dr. W. H. COLBORNE; Mr. C. S. JONES; Mr. J. KNAGGS; Mr. S. SMITH; Mr. C. ANDERTON; Dr. RANKING; Mr. J. JARMAN; Mr. S. BARTON; Mr. J. H. GRAMSHAW; Dr. HENRY HARE; Mr. C. C. WALLIS; Dr. HERAPATH; Dr. D. KNOX; Dr. F. HAWKINS; Mr. H. W. T. ELLIS; Dr. J. G. DAVEY; Mr. WILLIAM MARTIN; Dr. W. B. MUSSETT; Mr. T. HOLMES; Dr. MACKINDER; Dr. J. BULLAR; Mr. E. CROSSMAN; Mr. GRIFFIN; Dr. JOHN HUGHES; Mr. R. S. STEDMAN; and Mr. STONE.

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