

6596. Something was said while I was absent about a smell arising from dead rats. What was that?—It was very difficult to locate that bad smell.

6597. *The Chairman.*] How long had you trouble with that bad smell?—I think about four or five months at the outside. I reported the matter to the House Committee, who authorised me to take measures to find out what it was due to.

6598. What was it due to?—At first we thought that it was something like the smell of sewer-gas. On this point I may say that the doctors differed as to the cause of this particular smell. One medical gentleman considered it to be due to sewer-gas, but when he found out that it probably arose from burnt sulphur he said he thought it might be a good disinfectant. It was also thought at the time to arise from the grease-trap.

6599. You afterwards found that it was a leakage in the flue?—Yes; from the safety-valve of the boiler going into the kitchen-flue. The smell seemed to come right from the flue, and was apparent at any point of the flue.

6600. *Mr. Chapman.*] What coal do you use?—Walton Park.

6601. Which contains sulphur?—Yes. However, the nuisance has been abated by taking a special escape-pipe to the kitchen-drain.

6602. *The Chairman.*] The smell is hardly felt now?—It does not smell at all now: at all events, I have not detected it.

6603. *Mr. Chapman.*] This [document handed to witness] is a copy of a memorandum in reference to the alterations that have been made since the Trustees took office in 1886?—I think it commenced in 1884.

6604. What have been the drainage operations so far as the ground is concerned?—They have not been very extensive. Some subsoil drains were put in in one place where the ground appeared to be very damp, and there was a cross-drain run from the King Street side across to catch the brick culvert.

6605. *The Chairman.*] Has anything been done to the kitchen department during this period?—No.

6606. When was the kitchen put in the basement?—That alteration was effected in 1878. I think that Dr. Grabham stated in his report that the removal of the drains outside was a most important improvement.

6607. That was taking the drains from underneath the building?—Yes. I quite agree with him in that respect, because before that the drains got choked occasionally, and we had to open them up, when the whole of the Hospital was filled with the effluvium which arose from these drains.

6608. Are the drains often cleaned out now, or do you just depend on the flushing?—We depended until quite lately on flushing, but I never saw any signs of obstruction in the traps.

6609. Why do you say “until lately”?—We unsealed all the traps.

6610. When did you do so?—Mostly last week or during the present week.

6611. What did you find?—That there was nothing to obstruct the flow.

6612. You mean that you opened all the traps on the outside of the building?—Yes. None were altogether free from sediment.

6613. Was it offensive at all?—The one from the operating-theatre was offensive; but there was very little sign of sewer-gas in any of the drains except one.

6614. Except which one?—The one from wards Nos. 2 and 7.

6615. Is that the one in the corner?—There was no obstruction there that I could see. There is a ventilating-pipe running up from there.

6616. From which side?—From the same side as all the other traps.

6617. Is that on the Hospital side?—Yes.

6618. All the drains are ventilated?—Yes.

6619. *Mr. Chapman.*] Do you know the course of the other pipe to the sewer?—Yes.

6620. Do you know anything about where the final outfall is?—It goes into the main sewer either in Frederick Street or St. Andrew Street.

6621. What is the present position of the matter of the nurses' home?—The position now is that the Trustees have got from the Government a subsidy on the amount handed in by the representatives of the subscribers to the fund.

6622. *The Chairman.*] How much were the subscriptions?—£1,033.

6623. And the subsidy is what?—Twenty-four shillings in the pound, amounting to £1,200 odd—about £2,300 altogether.

6624. Has any plan or any action been taken to carry out the home?—Not up to the present. The money was recently placed on deposit-receipt for six months. A committee has been appointed to take the matter of building a nurses' home into consideration, such committee to consist of two or three Trustees and two or three medical gentlemen who are supposed to guide the Trustees in matters relating to sanitation.

6625. Members of the staff?—Yes; together with Mr. Scott, who is outside of the staff.

6626. *Mr. Chapman.*] Is the matter now ripe for the expenditure of this money?—Yes. It is only within the last month that the Controller-General agreed to hand over the subsidy for the nurses' home.

6627. *The Chairman.*] Has the money to be devoted strictly to a nurses' home, or can it be used along with other moneys for some general scheme which may provide accommodation for nurses?—I do not know, but I understand that this money was handed over on the express condition that a nurses' home should be built in the Hospital grounds.

6628. *Mr. Carew.*] It was offered on certain conditions which came before the Trustees?—Yes. [Report of meeting handed in.]

6629. *The Chairman.*] And these conditions were adopted by the Trustees?—Yes.