

From the Register Sept 23rd 1887

the Institute, and the University forward a brief abstract of their proceedings to the papers, sufficient frequently to excite curiosity, but quite insufficient to inform the public accurately about what is being done. At the meetings of some of the country Hospitals and Institutes the Press are admitted, and those interested in these particular institutions have the opportunity of seeing from time to time how the business is conducted. But in the more important metropolitan institutions there seems to be a conspiracy of silence. We do not mean to assert that there is mismanagement, but we are confident that there would be less ground for dissatisfaction if the business of these institutions were not conducted virtually with closed doors. The notice of each meeting and a list of the agenda might at any rate be furnished to the Press, so that if any subject were coming on for consideration of interest to the general public it might be reported.

As an instance of the mischief of the secrecy with which the affairs of the Destitute Board are conducted, we may refer to the dispute which has recently arisen in reference to the site for the new Destitute Asylum. In the House of Assembly on Thursday the Chief Secretary stated, in reply to questions asked by Mr. Tomkinson, that land had been purchased at Magill, west of the Industrial School, at £145 an acre, by the Chairman of the Destitute Board, by order of the majority of the Board, and with the approval of the Chief Secretary. Mr. Bray further stated that the purchase was made by the authority of the Government. We have already published two letters from Mr. M. H. Davis, a member of the Board, on this question, and we print another communication from the same gentleman to-day. It is evident that, quite apart from the suitability and cost of the site which has been bought, there has been some serious misunderstanding. The Chief Secretary, in replying to Mr. Tomkinson on Thursday, no doubt stated the case as it had been represented to him, but it is now alleged that the majority of the Board did not approve of the purchase, which was made without their consent and apparently without their knowledge. It would have been impossible for such a blunder to occur if full publicity had been given to the proceedings of the Board. We may cite in illustration of our contention the case of the City Baths. That subject has been before the Adelaide City Council for years, and it has become a good deal complicated; but from time to time the citizens have been advised of what has been done, and

there is no fear of the Mayor binding the city to a definite line of action in opposition to the views of the majority of the Council. We do not now propose to enter into a discussion of the most suitable site for the Destitute Asylum Buildings; but we do claim on behalf of the taxpayers that the merits of the dispute which has arisen shall be thoroughly enquired into. Possibly the bargain made is a good one; but whether it is so or not, it certainly ought not to have been concluded without the sanction of the Board whose business it is to advise the Government in the matter. We trust that Mr. Tomkinson will ask some further questions with the view of eliciting the real facts. If the case is as stated by the Chief Secretary it will be an easy matter to produce the resolution of the Board recommending the purchase of the site at Magill.

As we have already stated, brief reports of the meetings of the Board of Management of the Adelaide Hospital are supplied to us, but we are sure that many of our readers would be glad to know what some of the items mean. We may take by way of example the following extracts from the report of the last meeting but one:—"A requisition for instruments and appliances which had been referred to the House Staff was postponed for consideration until the next meeting, and it was resolved that application be made for the return of instruments, &c., borrowed from the institution. The proposed rules for the Resident Medical Staff were further considered, and it was resolved that printed copies of the same, as amended, be obtained and forwarded to the members of the Board. The consideration of the desirability of appointing a Medical Committee was adjourned until the next meeting." There may be some very interesting information concealed in these sentences, and common sense suggests that the object of a report is to supply information, and not to bury it as these paragraphs do. Again, we may take the following extracts from the report of the last meeting:—"A letter which had been forwarded to a member of the Board relative to the parents of a patient who had been admitted in a critical condition having been refused permission to visit him, was ordered to be referred to the Senior House Surgeon for report. Letter from Dr. Gardner was read relative to a resolution of the Board 'approving the separation of the medical from the surgical work of the Hospital by placing medical cases under the care of physicians and surgical cases under the care of surgeons,' and suggesting that the