

Cecil Chambers,

86 Strand, London, W.C.

H. A. Bruce to W.O.

October 19th, 1916.

(typewritten)

Dear Sir William,

In reply to your letter of the 15th October, I may state that the situation at the Duchess of Connaught Hospital at Taplow was placed in the hands of the Committee of Officers consisting of Colonel F. A. Reid, Colonel A. D. McRae, Major M. Alexander the Deputy Judge-Advocate-General, and myself. The officers at the hospital were examined under oath and after a very exhaustive enquiry, certain recommendations were made. As there was sufficient evidence to make it apparent that it was desirable in the interests of harmony and efficiency at the hospital that the matron should be changed, this matter, instead of appearing in the report was taken up directly by the President of the Board with General Jones and the situation explained to him. It was by the latter's authority that Miss Campbell was removed. I quite agree with her removal so nearly co-incident with that of the O.C. was unfortunate. However, this detail was not in our hands. You will see, from what I have stated that the Committee who assisted me in the general investigation of the Medical Service had nothing to do with the Taplow affair. Miss Campbell, I understand, has been given another position as matron, and I am quite sure that there will be no stain upon her character.

In regard to your seeing the findings of the Committee. I am sorry to say that I have not a copy, and therefore cannot comply with your request. I presume the findings, together with the report of the Committee are confidential were sent to the Sub-Militia Council. I really do not think that this report should be published, but there is no objection to your writing to Colonel A. D. McRae, the Deputy Minister of Militia & Defence, Cecil Hotel, London, if you wish to ask for it.

I further note what you say about cabling a protest to Sir Robert Borden, and it is very good of you to state that you are sorry for me. I undertook a certain duty for the Canadian Government at a considerable sacrifice, but only after careful thought.

I fully realized that to make an inspection of a critical character into the Canadian Medical Service, if it was to result in any betterment of that service, would necessitate my disregarding entirely the personal element and searching in an unbiased way for the real conditions. It was quite apparent to me at the outset that in doing this I would incur the enmity of many interested persons, but as the good of the whole medical service, and the welfare of Canadian soldiers was of much more importance than personal considerations I undertook this difficult task. That there was reason for much of the criticism that had been made of the service to Ottawa was abundantly apparent to me, and I stated the facts in my report in a careful and impersonal way.

In addition to this, certain recommendations were made which, in my opinion, will greatly improve the Canadian Medical Service. This report, and a reply to it, by General Jones, have been carefully considered, and my recommendations have been approved and adopted by the Sub-Militia Council. I have been authorized to reorganize the Medical Service according to the recommendations made, and continue to act as Special Inspector General, Medical Services. General Jones has been asked to proceed to Canada to reorganize the service there, so as to make it co-ordinate more closely with the service here and in France.

For the work I have done, and the position I have assumed, I have no apology to make, nor do I wish any expression of sympathy. I think, moreover, we will all be judged by our work and what we accomplish, and after a few months time I have no fear of the verdict. I may say in conclusion, that I regret very much that you felt called upon to take the attitude which you did from the beginning, and which I consider, under the circumstances, entirely uncalled for and improper. I had only got nicely started in my work when I received a letter from you threatening me with certain consequences if it was continued in a certain way. I am exceedingly sorry to have to write you thus, but I do it with the kindest feeling and a very warm personal regard.

Yours faithfully,

H. A. Bruce.