

CHARITY SICK IMPERILED?

Dr. B. H. Breakstone Scores
Hospitals' Care of Poor.

USED AS EXPERIMENTS.

Physician Asserts Trained Surgeons
Do Not Do Free Work.

Dr. Benjamin H. Breakstone last night read before the executive council of the Chicago Medical society the report of a committee of physicians, who for the last two years have been investigating the abuse of medical charity in Chicago.

Dr. Breakstone made the statement that in all Chicago hospitals there are no doctors who are performing charitable medical or surgical service. He said that the so-called charity work being done in the so-called charitable hospitals is nothing more than experimental work.

"Within the radius of two blocks out on the west side," Dr. Breakstone said, "there are some half dozen institutions, each competing for the greatest number of free patients, not because of any actual good they wish to do these patients, but merely to make a record as to how many cases they have."

Inexperienced Surgeons.

"These cases are 'handled' by men who, in the main, have had little or no experience and are merely getting their experience on these so-called 'charity patients.' In accordance with our code of ethics of the American Medical association, we dare to call this charity."

"The student or the interne has no responsibility whatever and neither is the institution that sent him responsible, for it is not liable under the law. Does the public know this?"

"The charity patient should have the right to get prompt attention and choice of physicians, just as though he had paid for it, and what is more, he should have legal redress in case of accident or mistreatment. As it is now, a premium is put on carelessness and inhumanity in our charity institutions because those in charge are not legally liable."

"Deadbeats" Increase.

"The alarming increase in the number of 'dead beats' who owe doctor bills is the direct result of medical charity abuse. It will not surprise you, either, when the statement is made that among the most flagrant 'dead beats' are the corporations who will tell you in case of accident, 'Now, doctor, you take care of this case until he is well and we will take care of you.' No physician other than a millionaire can afford to do charity work."

Dr. Breakstone submitted a list of thirty hospitals which have agreed to send the names of all charity patients to the medical society for publication weekly in the society organization. By this means physicians can recognize patients that are capable of paying for treatment.

Plans for supporting candidates favorable to the appointment of physicians as advisers to the board of county commissioners of Cook county were discussed at a meeting of the council of administration of the Chicago Medical society which was held at the Hotel Sherman.