

unnecessary labour. The equipment of the German Red Cross Society, which arrived in Greece with a perfectly organised medical and nursing service, and were thus able to plant themselves down near the front, was a lesson not to be lost.

DISCUSSION.

Miss Margaret Breay (London) said that she should like to supplement Mrs. Fenwick's remarks—she had taken part in the organization of the Greek Nursing Fund—and the enormous amount of labour entailed in arranging such a service at a few days' notice was surely unnecessary. Letters offering services, skilled and unskilled, came from hundreds of persons—many required answering—and doctors, students, nurses, and workers of all sorts called from morning till night. She would certainly plead for some permanent organization of a National Corps of Nurses, apart from that of the regular Army Sisters and Reserve, which were only available for service with our own Army.

Miss Mollett (Southampton) asked if it was proposed to store the equipment of an Ambulance Corps, as well as select and organize the Nursing Corps, and if so, would not the materials deteriorate. Would it not be better to make such arrangements as to equipment and stores, that they could be obtained at a few days' notice, from appointed sources, she thought this would be a feasible plan.

A Lady: Have we a Red Cross to-day in England? if so, why should it not do its duty like that of other nations, notably the German Red Cross Society? Mrs. Fenwick replied that there was an English Red Cross Society, but she believed that it was not affiliated to the International Red Cross Society—it took no part in providing either ambulance or nursing help in the Græco-Turkish war—but she believed it sent a donation of £1,000 both to Greece and Turkey at the end of the war.

A Lady: Would it not be possible to bring the question before the Red Cross Society in the form of a resolution.

Mrs. Fenwick then proposed the following resolution which was carried unanimously:—"That this meeting suggests that the Matrons' Council should take steps to draw the attention of the Red Cross Society to the advisability of organizing a corps of nurses for active service in foreign wars.

II.—DO INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTED ON CHARITY UNDERSELL THE PRIVATE NURSE?

This question was brought forward by Sister Julia Hurlston, of the Registered Nurses' Society, in the unavoidable absence of Sister Beatrix Farnsworth, who had given notice of it. Miss Hurlston said she desired to point out that the ordinary fees charged by private nurses working upon co-operative principles were £2 2s. a week. Some institutions supported by charitable subscription were in the habit of sending out nurses at 30s. a week. She would like to know whether, in the opinion of the Matrons' Council, it was justifiable (1) to apply part of the money subscribed as charity in support of a private nursing home, and (2) were the institutions who received such charitable assistance justified in

underselling the private nurse by sending out nurses at fees for which those who had no such assistance could not afford to work?

DISCUSSION.

Miss Mollett (Southampton) enquired whether it was the custom of private nursing institutions to undersell private nurses. She was inclined to think that a hard and fast rule as to what should be charged could not be laid down. She thought we must not deny flexibility in this matter. She believed that medical men, to some extent, charged their patients fees arranged in accordance with their means, and she thought that nurses might in some measure do the same.

Miss Isla Stewart (London) said that she must defend the private nursing institution of St. Bartholomew's Hospital from this charge. The nurses belonging to it were paid a salary beginning at £30 a year. In addition to this, they received 15 to 30 per cent. on their earnings, as well as uniform, board, lodging and washing, when not at cases. This left very little money to the good, and this she believed would ultimately be used to benefit the nurses. Their institution also charged £2 2s. a week for nurses, which was the usual fee.

Miss Mareydd Harrison (Southport) said that in the country the hospitals did undersell the private nurse, being able to do so on account of their charitable basis. Nursing institutions could not compete with these hospitals, on account of this unfair advantage.

Miss Pell-Smith (Leicester) thought that Committees should be educated to understand their whole duty in this respect.

Miss Poole (Blackburn) said that she did not think the hospitals started their Nursing Institutions intending to undersell the private nurses, but doctors wanted nurses that they knew and could trust. What more natural than that they should apply to the Matron of their own hospital for them. The Matrons of hospitals had the selection of their nurses in their own hands, they knew them as no one else could know them, and they would not be likely to keep on their private staff nurses who would not be a credit to them. In the case of institutions run for the benefit of private individuals, or of co-operations of nurses, sometimes indifferent nurses were accepted for lack of better. In the country it was impossible to get £2 2s. a week for the services of private nurses. £1 5s. was, as a rule, the fee charged, and if the nurses received a salary of £30 a year as they did at Blackburn, and besides were boarded and lodged when not at cases, had their uniform supplied them, and were nursed if ill, she thought they received a very fair equivalent for their services.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (London) said the question at issue was whether hospitals which were supported by charity took an unfair advantage of certificated private nurses, associated for professional purposes, by charging a less fee for the nurses they supplied to the public than that which trained nurses usually charged—£2 2s. a week—which was by no means an exorbitant fee for the services rendered. She would answer that question in the affirmative and say further that hospitals were only able to charge a lower fee because their nursing homes were not organised on a sound financial basis. The expenses of these nurses were often included in the general expenses of the hospital, an inclusive salary was paid to the nurses, and some hospitals still made very large profits out of the labour of

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