

Was it seemly that a sanitary non-medical inspector should inspect the whole of the sick wards of infirmaries, including the lying-in wards, accompanied only by the master of the workhouse, and was it likely that his attention could be directed to matters connected with nursing the sick which needed reform?

Another important point which she had urged forty-two years ago was the amalgamation of small workhouse infirmaries. This was still desirable.

Thirdly, there should be a Nursing Department at the Local Government Board office, similar to that inaugurated by the War Office in connection with military nursing, with trained nurses upon it. Nursing was women's work, not men's.

Fourthly, the position of the Matron in separated infirmaries should be revised. At present the Medical Superintendent was supreme, not only in relation to the treatment of the sick, but also in the domestic department and the personal control of the nursing staff.

Miss C. J. Wood emphasised the danger of the qualified nurse to the public. Nursing questions should be approached from the point of view of the whole profession. There were many different departments, but the nurses in each could not work in water-tight compartments, and what affected one affected all. There were many difficulties, and now to add to them we were face to face with the qualified nurse, who was to be armed with a certificate that she was capable of undertaking the ordinary duties of a nurse. What were these ordinary duties? Such a nurse would be found subsequently in private nursing homes where the wealthy paid £12 12s. a week for skilled nursing, or as private nurses taking the full fees of a thoroughly qualified woman. In her opinion the Local Government Board was not justified in launching this "qualified nurse" on the public, armed with a certificate bearing the seal of a Government Department.

Miss Amy Hughes, who said her knowledge of the Poor Law was short but strenuous, described the extreme difficulty of working with untrained workhouse officials, even when they were well disposed, and also, where the most rudimentary nursing appliances were wanting, of training probationers efficiently. One great difficulty was that neither the Medical Officer nor the Superintendent Nurse had representation on the Board; and the master's view was all-powerful. Tact and good humour were valuable qualities, but what the Superintendent Nurse needed was authority to get what was right for the sick.

Miss Baker, P.L.G., said that the question was acute, as already the Local Government Board were sanctioning retrograde measures. At the St. Luke's Workhouse the Guardians had been allowed to appoint probationers instead of trained nurses, and had taken power away from the Superintendent Nurse, who was not now allowed to go round with the Medical Officer. The danger was more imminent than many people realised.

In her experience as a member of the Metropolitan Asylums Board she had been much struck by the varied value of certificates. She thought a central authority should award certificates. Semi-trained nurses were a danger to the public, and those who appreciated this fact should stand shoulder to shoulder and work for the formation of a Central Board.

It was sometimes said that too much exception was

taken to the term "qualified nurse," and that there was nothing in a name. She knew of a case in which six nurses left a hospital in order to be called Sister.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick pointed out that what was necessary for the medical profession was necessary for nurses—namely, State Registration. There would then be a Central Board, which would define a standard of education and be responsible for a central examination. She did not think it possible to deal satisfactorily with the nursing question in any other way. If Registration had been in force, it would have been unnecessary to discuss the anomalous suggestion of the Local Government Board in respect to the qualified nurse.

Mrs. Richmond, speaking as a trained nurse and as Matron of the Luton Workhouse, was emphatic that the Matrons of small workhouses should be trained as nurses. Only so could they efficiently supervise all the departments under their control.

Finally, the following resolution, proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Mr. Bonham Carter, was carried unanimously:—

"That this Conference desires to lay before the President of the Local Government Board its judgment on some of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee on Nursing of the Sick Poor in Workhouses, and would ask that a deputation be received by the Board."

The moral of the "qualified nurse" is that trained nurses should insist upon an adequate standard of professional education being laid down by a legally constituted authority. Until they have the force to do this they cannot complain if Government Departments or bodies having insufficient knowledge of nursing questions lay down inadequate standards.

Central Midwives' Board.

A meeting of the Central Midwives' Board was held at the Privy Council Office, Whitehall, on Thursday, June 25th, Dr. Champneys in the chair, when the following business was transacted:—

1. A letter was read from Dr. Kaye, County Medical Officer for the West Riding, on behalf of a Conference of County Medical Officers lately held, suggesting that the Board should receive a deputation from the Conference to hear the suggestions of the latter with regard to the administration of the Act in county areas.

The proposal was favourably received by the Board, and the Secretary was instructed to arrange a meeting in London at an early date.

2. The Chairman reported on the question of office accommodation, and further instructions were given to the Secretary on the subject.

3. The draft form of the Midwives' Roll as submitted by the Secretary was considered, approved, and adopted.

4. Alternative draft forms of the certificate required by the Act having been submitted by the Secretary, the Board decided that the certificate should in each case show on the face of it the qualification in respect of which it was granted. The appropriate forms were approved and adopted.

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