

## Progress of State Registration.

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To the Cape Colony belongs the distinction of having pioneered the principle of State Registration of Trained Nurses. So far back as 1891, State Registration was established under the Cape Colony Medical Council. The details of their scheme were, and are, far from perfect, but great credit is due to the Council for establishing the principle, and we have no doubt that, as time goes on, the system will be perfected. The first step to improvement is, of course, the inclusion of trained nurses on the governing body of their own profession—or Registration Board. No really satisfactory results can be attained without this bed-rock right.

From the *South African Medical Record* the following interesting proceedings of a meeting of the Cape Colony Medical Council are reported:—

### REGULATIONS FOR TRAINED NURSES.

Dr. Wood, pursuant to notice, moved that the regulations for trained nurses be amended by deleting from Regulation 2 the words, "or two years in such an institution and one year under the supervision of a licensed medical practitioner." He pointed out that at present nursing probationers had the alternative of either taking the whole of their three years' study at a hospital, or two years at a hospital and one year under a private practitioner. He proposed to abolish the latter alternative. He said that it was evident that a year under a private practitioner could only be considered as "nursing," and in no sense as "training," neither lectures nor systematic instruction being practicable. It could not, therefore, be regarded as a substitute for a year in hospital. Moreover, the practical result was that such partly-trained nurses were encouraged during their last year to consider themselves as *nurses*, and to undertake cases in the usual way, thereby competing unfairly with nurses who had gone through a proper course. There was another amendment which he was strongly in favour of, but upon which he should like to have an expression of opinion before he made it the subject of an actual motion. That was the advisability of insisting that the whole of the three years' training should be taken at one hospital. At present a probationer could change her hospital as she liked, and he very much doubted whether training spread about in various little portions could be regarded as a satisfactory and regular curriculum. Hospitals differed largely in their methods, and there could be no uniformity of training if a probationer moved about. Further, the advent to one hospital of a nurse partly trained elsewhere in different methods, grievously interfered with discipline and caused friction. The liberty to move elsewhere, on the slightest pretext was fatal to discipline. It was at present attempted to be met at many hospitals by binding probationers on entry to remain three years, but there was no means of enforcing this except by legal process, and probationers relied on the hospital authorities not caring to face the odium of legal proceedings, and broke this contract with impunity. They had had an instance of this recently at the New Somerset, where a number of

nurses broke this contract, but the Board did not care to bring legal proceedings to bear. But there would be no need for this contract if they amended the regulation, as a probationer would not face the sacrifice of the whole of her training if she was dissatisfied with her hospital. Provisions might be made for exceptions to the rule, the Council to be the judge of each individual case. If a nurse, for health reasons, desired to move, or if she could produce a certificate from the medical head or matron of her hospital that she had a good and sufficient reason for transferring elsewhere, she might be allowed to do so. A circular letter had been sent to the Matrons of the Colonial Hospitals, and replies had been received from all the larger ones. The circular had not had time to go round the others. Of the replies received from Matrons and Sisters, all with one exception, were in favour of the proposed change, and that exception, Sister Henrietta, seemed to be adverse only because she did not appear to know that he proposed making such exceptions, in case of really good reason, as he had suggested.

Dr. Darley-Hartley said that he was prepared to second Dr. Wood's proposition to eliminate the year with a medical practitioner. He entirely agreed with all that he had said on that point, and he thought, moreover, that the getting into half-qualified nursing in the last year might, not infrequently, be a temptation to a probationer never to go on to qualification at all. But he was not as yet prepared to support Dr. Wood on the second point, although he admitted that there was a good deal in what he said. He would be guided very much by the opinions of Matrons and Sisters, but he should like to hear what those of the smaller hospitals said on the matter, as it seemed to him possible that the suggested reform might operate prejudicially to their getting probationers. Apart from health reasons, there were very many good excuses for moving. Girls taking up nursing often entered at a small hospital because it was their local one, and only found out quite late in the day, how necessary it was for them to get further experience at a large institution, and it would be detrimental to their efficient training to prevent this. There would be so many good reasons for exception, that the Council would have little else to do but consider them. And although he admitted that reasons for dissatisfaction on the part of nurses were often essentially feminine ones, he rather feared that they were so strong that a nurse desirous of a change would make herself so objectionable that the house surgeon and Matron would be only too glad to give her any sort of certificate to get rid of her. He feared the suggested change might lead to a good deal of hardship, and would like it to be further considered.

Dr. Wood's proposition *re* the elimination of the year with a medical practitioner was carried *nem. con.*

Dr. Gregory rather thought that the regulation as it stood required the training to take place at one hospital. The words used were "an institution," not "institutions."

The President stated that they had always interpreted it to mean that training could be divided between two or more hospitals, so long as they all fulfilled the requirements.

Dr. Wood repeated that it was impossible to get a continuous course of lectures or a sufficient grasp of hospital routine, unless the whole training was taken at one place. The only difficulty was to meet the case

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