

that any other authority would be competent to so act. Let us therefore assume that the State is meant. What then follows? Before institutions can be licensed, must there not be a standard set—a minimum standard? Must not the nursing homes be told what minimum standard of training they will be required to exact? And, if this is granted, then the whole case for Registration is granted. Then, it cannot be denied that there must be a defined standard, no matter how low, and no matter whether institutions or individuals are in question. There must be inquiry (examination), there must be supervision, there must be records, there must be penalties for infringement—there must be, in short, all that the advocates of registration are asking for. With this sole difference, that they go to the logical conclusion and ask for what, in fact, is now being successfully demonstrated in New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States as useful and effective in influencing nursing education—they ask that the responsibility be carried directly back to the place where the nurse is trained—where it belongs, and that the recognition of attainment and merit be given directly to the nurse who has earned it.

The examination of the nurse by the State need not be an abstruse booky examination requiring prolonged cramming. It may be a simple and definite inquiry into what she has actually learned and what experience she has actually had. In New Zealand the examination consists partly of papers written upon anatomy, physiology, and nursing, and partly of a practical demonstration conducted in hospital wards or operating theatre. The Matron, who knows the nurse, is responsible for her fitness and character, as is right and sensible.

The title conferred on the nurse by the State is not an admission to an employment bureau, but an educational degree, as honourable as Ph.D. or D.D. and betokening a grade of attainment just as definite. The principle upon which this is based, that reward is more potent than punishment, and encouragement more effective than repression. The inferior training-school is stimulated to give a better training. This, the first result of Registration noticed in the United States, has been demonstrated in a gratifying manner in that country, as well as in New Zealand.

It is a mistake to suppose that the best hospitals are shorn of their prestige. They remain where they were, far in advance of the humble "minimum standard." The poorer ones are brought up higher, and little by little, as we learn from New Zealand, the public learns to discriminate, and the untrained woman is obliged to take a full hospital course.

The question has actually passed out of the realm of speculation, and has become a matter of experience and experiment.

After all, why need we fear the State? The State is only the inhabitants of the State; in other

words, ourselves; and "State regulation" is nothing more than an agreement of the majority to do certain things in an orderly way.

The fact remains that a State degree is honourable, and constitutes an incentive to higher strivings, and that the countries where it has been adopted already show signs of a wholesome stimulus for the better training of nurses.

Under a thorough-going orderly system of nurse training the nurse schools must, of course, be registered as maintaining the necessary standards. The private nursing homes might also with excellent practical results be registered, periodically inspected, and so be brought under the healthful influence of public opinion and moral suasion. The most recent utterance of the opposition, containing as it does the only constructive and definite proposition for betterment which has been put forth by any one of the opposition party, shows plainly that if all sides were to "stop talking and begin to saw wood," as the homely saying has it, it would probably be found that the only difference between them were those of abstract ideas and not of practical methods.

### The Central Midwives' Board.

At an adjourned meeting of the Central Midwives' Board, held on Thursday, Feb. 16th, at the offices of the Board, 6 Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, the following Resolutions were carried:—

1. That no Poor Law institution be approved as a Training-School for Midwives unless the average number of deliveries per annum is sufficient to insure the training of at least three midwives.

Proposed by Dr. Cullingworth and seconded by Miss Wilson.

2. That no application on the part of a Poor Law institution to be approved as a Training-School for midwives be accepted unless it is in the form of an official application signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Miss Paget and seconded by Mr. Parker Young.

There is not likely to be any dissension from the first Resolution, for an institution which cannot afford sufficient material to train one pupil every four months cannot claim to be in any sense a training-school. There seems to be no object, therefore, in restricting the application of this resolution to Poor Law institutions, for it might with advantage be applied to all schools desiring recognition by the Central Midwives' Board.

The twenty-third Central Poor Law Conference, at which nearly 500 Guardians, representing 222 unions in England and Wales, were present, was held in the Council Chamber of the Guildhall, London, on Tuesday and Wednesday in this week. At the opening session Sir Francis Powell, M.P., presided, and the delegates were welcomed by the Lord Mayor.

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