

Board concerning "this proposal to improve the training of nurses for Poor House Hospital work."

The witness was of opinion that, in the interests of all concerned—the public, nurses, and the medical profession—that nurses should be registered by the State. Taking as an illustration the case of a nurse who had been discharged for "tippling" or other offences, and removed from the Register of the L.G.B., he said she could not get employment under the Local Government Board, but she could, and did, set up as a private nurse or start a private nursing home.

In reply to questions, the witness said that the examinations for nurses under his Council were both oral and written, but there was no general standard, one medical man might be strict and another easy-going. Registration would have the effect of defining a standard. There was plenty of room in hospitals and infirmaries to train enough nurses to meet the necessities of the public.

He considered that a registered nurse should be supplied with a parchment as evidence of her registration and career. The removal of a nurse from the Register would not be a difficult matter; it would be quite possible to arrange the details.

The Parish Council did not specially include a guarantee of character in their certificate, but they would not send on for examination a nurse who had not given evidence of satisfactory moral qualities.

The Parish Council contributed £50 annually to two district nursing associations in Glasgow in order to provide for the nursing of their outdoor sick. Questioned if these nurses would clean cottages, &c., the witness said that cleaning cottages was not nursing; if his Council thought they were paying £50 a year for that kind of thing there would be something said. The associations were paid to provide skilled nursing for the sick.

In reference to Registration, the point of view of his Council was that they would like the institution of a nursing certificate which had a recognised standing; they wanted to know that they were paying for value.

If this involved compulsory registration, the necessity was so great that he would go the whole hog; if it could be done without compulsion, so much the better. What he desired was efficiency. In regard to examinations in local centres, the local men should not examine the nurses in those centres.

The nursing of the poor was carried out through institutions, and also in their own homes through the agency of the churches; nearly every self-respecting church maintained a properly qualified nurse. The services rendered by kindly neighbours were not nursing as such, he did not admit that a woman who performed these services was practising nursing professionally.

#### MISS SHANNON'S EVIDENCE.

Miss E. C. Shannon, Matron of the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, was the next witness. There were, she said, 430 beds and a staff of 150 nurses in that institution. She decidedly agreed with Mr. Motion that Registration would be advantageous to the nurses, medical men, and the public alike.

Asked her opinion as to the apprehensions which had been expressed in some quarters that if all nurses were required to be registered the supply would not meet the demand, the witness thought there were no grounds

for fears of this kind. There was quite a sufficient number of candidates desirous to train as nurses. At the Western Infirmary there were from forty to fifty vacancies annually and 600 applications. The witness was of opinion that applicants for registration would be willing, if necessary, to pay £2 2s. for registration and £3 3s. for examination, if this were found necessary, in consideration of the benefits received.

The witness considered there would be no difficulty in keeping off, or removing from the Register, undesirable women.

In regard to voluntary and compulsory Registration she thought that if a woman practised nursing for gain she should be required to register. The nurses supplied to poor as such ought to be properly trained; the homely woman who rendered useful service in time of sickness was not a trained nurse. She was not in favour of recognising two classes of nurses. Such a system would not, in her view, be workable, nor would it protect the public. What was needed was the definition of a minimum standard to be attained by all nurses. A voluntary system of Registration would not be much use.

In reply to Mr. Douglas, the witness said, what she desired was the registration of nurses under the control of the State and by Act of Parliament. She would not object to a voluntary measure under these circumstances. There was no shortage of candidates as probationers.

Her objection to the recognition of two classes was that nursing by the lower grade would not be proper nursing. She had seen something of the rural nursing system in Lincolnshire, in her judgment it was not satisfactory. She considered that women who undertook nursing should be properly trained as nurses, or their work was worth nothing.

#### MR. G. W. DUNCAN'S EVIDENCE.

Mr. Duncan, Secretary to the Central Midwives Board, was the next witness. He said that the Board had been anxious that the fee charged to midwives should be one guinea for examination and one for certification. The Privy Council had, however, cut down the total amount to £1 1s. He was certain that this would not be sufficient to cover expenses. Any deficiencies would have to be recovered from the County Councils and County Borough Councils, as provided for under the Act.

The Board had experienced no difficulty in relation to their refusal to enrol women of unsatisfactory character. Their decision had not been questioned.

The Midwives' Act was compulsory in relation to all women describing themselves as midwives, but up till 1910, provided a woman did not call herself a midwife, she might practise midwifery. Parliament had been very tender to vested interests. Since the institution of the Central Midwives' Board, six cases of misconduct or malpractice had been investigated. Of these three had been removed from the Roll, and three censured.

The number of women returned as midwives at the last census was 3,155. The number now actually enrolled was 22,300. Many of these were nurses who had no intention of practising midwifery.

In regard to the revision of the Roll, a woman once a midwife was always a midwife, unless removed for misconduct, negligence, or malpractice.

The Committee then adjourned until Tuesday, June 6th.

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