

State of Registration in Holland.

We have had to suspend our efforts in regard to the attainment of State Examination, the present Ministry having sent in their resignation, and I think the time I should otherwise have devoted to this scheme may not inaptly be employed in giving you the history of our progress during the last few months.

A PETITION TO THE GOVERNMENT.

On the 24th of September we sent the following Petition to his Excellency the Minister for Home Affairs:—

The Board of Officers of *Nosokomos*, the Dutch Association for the promotion of the interests of Nurses, begs to point out respectfully:

That in the absence of State training, the present situation is such that anybody can term herself a trained nurse and obtain work in that capacity, to the great disadvantage and risk of the sick, entrusted to their care in all good faith.

That the duties at present entrusted to nurses are so responsible, and the knowledge and skill required of them so great, by reason of the high degree of perfection nursing as a science has obtained nowadays, that it is of the utmost importance that they, who are entrusted with nursing, should be duly trained.

That for many years the instruction and examinations of doctors, dentists, midwives, and chemists, all of them persons directly or indirectly caring for the sick, have been regulated by the State; that it is evidently becoming more and more desirable that nurses should give proof of their capacity before a State Commission, and that the certificate, awarded in virtue of such an examination, should be a sure warrant for the public of the nurses' knowledge and ability, while the non-possession of a State certificate should prevent untrained persons from calling themselves nurses.

That in view of these facts your petitioners once more respectfully plead, that your Excellency will undertake to introduce a Bill, submitting the nurses' training to State control and State examination.

EXTRACT OF THE EXPLANATORY MEMORIAL ATTACHED TO THE PETITION.

Whereas the State has deemed it necessary that doctors, dentists, midwives, and chemists have first to give proof of their capability before a State Commission in order to be allowed to exercise their profession, all persons exercising one of these professions without having passed the required examination, being subject to penalty, the sick being thereby protected against the harm which unqualified persons could do them, it is really astonishing that nurses should escape scot-free, and that everyone, trained or untrained, can obtain work as a nurse.

Times out of number it has been argued by those in the profession how necessary it is that nurses, who have the entire charge of the sick by day and by night, should have a thorough education.

While a fully trained nurse can effect so much towards the recovery or the relief of a patient, the imperfectly trained nurse can do an infinite amount of harm; often the patient's life depends wholly on the nursing received.

In 1892 Dr. Ruysch, General Health Inspector of the Netherlands, in his speech, entitled "What is wanted of Probationers," stated that it would be desirable to fix these requirements by law. He said that where the State regulated the education of midwives it was absurd that they did not introduce a Nursing Bill. Why protect the lying-in women against untrained persons, and not the mental or physically ill persons?

Since that time the staff of the two State asylums for the insane have had to submit to a State examination, but, if anything, that examination is still more needed for the staff of the many other asylums and hospitals. Then only will a uniform test of the nurses' capabilities be obtainable. Further, it is absolutely imperative that the nurses' certificate and the nurses' badge should have legal protection.

Under the present conditions any group of persons, even private doctors, have the right to examine and to give a certificate to persons, who are improperly trained. It is hardly necessary to point out what an immense amount of harm can be done in private nursing by untrained persons.

In addition, we wish to draw attention to the fact, that at present in nearly all the hospitals and asylums, the care of the patients, more particularly during the night, is left to probationers, whereas such responsible work should be under the constant supervision of capable, fully-trained nurses.

In conclusion, we want to point out, that whereas the nursing profession is not, as the medical profession, under State control, many persons, especially in the large towns, often use the nurses' uniform for immoral purposes. They are alternately nurse and prostitute, hence the terrible risk of infecting their patients with their own infectious disease, to say nothing of the damage done to the good name of the profession.

At the general meeting of our Association of June, 1907, the resolution to petition for State Examination was unanimously carried. The Women's Council declared in favour of State examination.

At the International Congress for Psychiatry, Neurology, Physiology, and Mental Nursing, in September, 1907, a vote for State intervention was passed.

Our Petition was transmitted to the Board of Health by the Minister for the Interior for his guidance.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE "BOND."

Meanwhile the *Bond voor Ziekenverpleging* (Union for promoting the interests of Nursing), having seen our Petition in *Nosokomos*, decided to send to all the Ministers and Members of the second Chamber a copy of the Bond's examination regulations.

The Bond is a union, of which anybody who

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)