

By a little more co-operation they might get more definite regulations established in private nursing practice generally. Of course, well managed private nursing staffs had definite regulations which were communicated to the patient, but her experience was that there was much too great a tendency to regard these as quite elastic.

She thought certain aspects in the present position of affairs in the nursing world affected the economic position of the private nurse very seriously indeed. (Applause.)

#### COMPETITION FROM THE V.A.D.s.

First there was possible competition from the V.A.D.s. She alluded to this in no spirit of criticism, but asserted that professionally, the V.A.D. could not claim to be on a footing with those who had undergone years of strenuous training to qualify themselves for all branches of general nursing work. We had already heard of cases where she had come into the field to undersell the fully trained and qualified nurse. She had no wish to appear "dog in the mangerish" in raising this point, but it was a very serious menace to the private nurse, and must be recognised and discussed. To her it always appeared the strangest thing that, though nurses seemed to be alive to the competition they might look for from the V.A.D.s, many of them were ready to turn to the V.A.D. chairman when he offered to organize them. By what strange logic they made their selection of a leader she was unable to explain, but she had never yet met a nurse who had read the Memorandum and Articles of Association or the Registration Bill promoted by the College of Nursing, Ltd. The leader they had chosen might be quite an amiable gentleman, but he was neither a doctor nor a trained nurse, and did not understand the position of the working nurses, neither did his advisers. The only means by which trained nurses could protect themselves from the partially qualified was through a *one portal* system of State Registration.

Another development which she regarded as serious for private nurses was the establishment of the so-called Nation's Fund for Nurses. It was *not* a National Fund, but a Fund to develop one particular organization, and that the newest and most untried of all—a Limited Liability Company representative of the employers of nurses and their officials.

She would not deal with the appeal, as it affected our honourable and independent position in the community, to see the streets lined with posters begging for us. Would the medical profession ever submit to have their benevolent funds financed by such methods. They were bound to undermine our status. Moreover, wherever you got a body of workers provided for by any national charity on a large scale you were bound to have depreciation in the scale of salaries of the workers. Already she knew of two cases in which the public said they approved of a national appeal for the nurses because they would require smaller fees in the future.

#### NATION'S FUND A DOUBLE APPEAL.

This aspect was the more dangerous because the appeal of the Nation's Fund was a double one, and there was no indication as to what proportion of the money collected was to be used for benevolence, and what for equipment, buildings, and travelling expenses for the College of Nursing, Ltd. She was not against benevolent funds for nurses, but she considered when any appeal for benevolence was launched its precise purposes should be clearly stated, it should be strictly limited to the probable needs of the profession, and it should be promoted with some degree of dignified reserve; otherwise it was bound to have an effect upon the economic position and status of the independent working nurses.

#### PRIVATE NURSING AND THE HOSPITAL SCHOOLS.

Another difficulty nurses must be alive to was the growing tendency of hospitals to organize private nursing staffs of their own—a more serious thing than many people realized. There was not the slightest doubt that a very large proportion of private nursing practice would become more and more the monopoly of the hospital schools, and the sooner the nurses woke up to these dangers and came together to protect their own professional interests the better it would be for them. Unless private nurses took a very active interest in their own professional affairs there were serious times before them. She would like to see some informal conferences between private nurses arranged by the Association, and some scheme evolved whereby their interests and independent practice might be more protected. They should combine and use their Charter, use their organized societies, use their *professional* press, and use their own brains to protect their own interests. (Applause.)

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN then invited discussion, when Miss BEATRICE KENT inquired why the nurses were so full of fear. The rank-and-file were afraid of the Matrons, and the majority of the Matrons afraid of their committees.

Nurses had been coerced into joining the College by Matrons, who handed them their certificates with one hand and an application form for membership of the College with the other, and the nurses were afraid of losing posts if they did not accede. Why this lack of courage? The President, Princess Christian, had told them, in her letter read by the Chairman, that there was nothing within reason which nurses could not attain to, for themselves and their great profession.

#### AN EPIDEMIC OF FEAR.

The epidemic of fear was spreading at a most alarming rate. It vitiated character and stultified ideals. They must stand for higher educational standards and a higher appreciation of corporate responsibility. She appealed to those who were not members of the Association to join it forthwith. Was it right to let a small group of their colleagues

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