

## Royal British Nurses' Association and State Registration.

Princess Christian presided on Saturday last at the annual meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, held at the Imperial Institute. The whole business of the Association was, as usual, conducted by the Medical Hon. Officers.

### THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. John Langton, the honorary treasurer, presented the financial statement, which showed a considerable deficit on the general account. The Association owed no less than £323, and this position caused the Council much anxiety. The honorary treasurer said that the finances of the Association were not satisfactory, and he announced that he would make a free gift of the loan of £70 which he had made to the Association last year. He appealed for more help for the Association, and urged that the nurses themselves should give it more support. He proposed the adoption of the financial report and accounts.

Sir James Crichton-Browne, in supporting the motion, regretted the pessimistic attitude adopted by Mr. Langton.

The motion was unanimously adopted.

Dr. Comyns-Berkeley, the medical honorary secretary, presented the annual report, which expressed the Association's gratitude to Princess Christian, the president, for her continued support. During the year, ending last month, 118 nurses had applied for registration, of whom ninety-three were accepted by the board; 105 new members had been elected during the same period; 17 members had withdrawn from membership.

### STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

Miss James brought forward the following motion:—"That it is desirable that the subject of State Registration shall be discussed by the Royal British Nurses' Association." She said that sham nurses were going about dragging an honourable profession down. State Registration would be a great advantage, and would enable the public to recognise easily the fully-qualified nurse from the nurse who had had little or no training and was unqualified.

Miss C. J. Wood seconded the motion, and said that the hospitals did not see beyond their own four walls in this matter. The authorities of hospitals knew nothing of independent nurses who had "my own doctors," and were satisfied with the control of the nursing profession so far as it could be exercised in the institutions. It was not easy to bring about reform in this matter. She thought the best that could be done at present was for the profession to make up its mind as to what was to be done and how it was to be done.

Princess Christian expressed the opinion that the large hospitals and institutions should come together and decide what they thought it was right a trained nurse should be. Then they could approach the State; but they could not ask the State to register nurses until there was agreement among the hospitals. There were many good nurses who had not had a long training, and they must be fair to them. That was what she was anxious about.

The motion was adopted.

After the election of the General Council the meeting terminated.

Once more we must express the opinion that never in the history of the movement for the State Registration of Trained Nurses has the prospect been so hopeful as at the present time. The mere fact that after a silence of seven years the hon. officers of the Royal British Nurses' Association have allowed the subject to be mentioned at an annual meeting is a proof that even they at last realise that the question is a live one and cannot be ignored. We are glad that the resolution with regard to Registration was brought forward at the recent meeting of this Association by a private nurse, because it is private nurses who feel most keenly the disabilities from which all nurses suffer in varying degrees so long as they have no legal status. It is quite useless for anyone to tell the private nurse that Registration is inexpedient in principle and injurious to her best interests.

"The toad beneath the harrow knows  
Exactly where each tooth-print goes;  
The butterfly upon the road  
Preaches contentment to that toad."

The private nurse knows well enough that the large army of incapable and unfit women who at present find lucrative employment, when they don the uniform and assume the name of the trained nurse, would have to turn their attention to other means of livelihood if once the standard of nursing education were defined by law.

Miss C. J. Wood was right in asserting that the authorities of hospitals know very little of nurses beyond their own four walls. Indeed, there is much sound sense in the attitude of those committees who contend that their obligation is to provide efficient nursing for the sick for whom they are responsible, and who regard their stake in the question of nursing education from this standpoint only, holding that when once the trained nurse has passed out of their jurisdiction—that is to say, for the most part, as soon as she has obtained her certificate—they have no further concern with her. So long, however, as hospitals act as training-schools for nurses—and it is apparent that training in nursing can only be given at the bedside of the sick—so long are the authorities of these institutions entitled to all courtesy from those who are

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)