

reform. We are informed that the twelve Matrons are unanimous in their approval of Registration by a central authority, and all signed the letter, which came before the Board at its meeting last Saturday, and which was referred by it to the Hospitals Committee for consideration.

We heartily congratulate the Matrons upon their united action, expressing, as it does, the opinion of trained women of wide experience upon a matter of vital importance to the welfare of the sick, and to the nursing staffs of the various hospitals in which they hold positions of responsibility. When it is realised that the hospitals referred to contain upwards of 7,000 beds, the claim of these ladies to form an opinion is indisputable.

A Registered Nurse in New Zealand writes:—

"State Registration puts backbone into the nursing profession, and makes it feel less like a tail wagging behind the medical profession. It stiffens up trained nurses to feel they have a separate entity, and can move as a body, and are not merely obliged to wag at the bidding of those who would make use of them in their own interests."

We have received the current issue of the official organ of the Royal British Nurses' Association, which contains some criticisms of the Bill of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, by Dr. Comyns Berkeley, and also explains why he has considered it desirable and permissible to override the decisions of the members at the Special General Meetings with regard to their own Bill. We propose to deal with the matter at greater length next week.

REGISTRATION ON ITS MERITS.

To the Editor of the "*British Journal of Nursing*."

DEAR MADAM,—Would it not be better all round if both sides in this controversy about State Registration of Nurses were to try not to attack each other personally? The long dispute which has dragged on between the R.B.N.A. and those who have left it has not raised the tone of our nursing world. I write as an outsider in that dispute, having been imported into the hospital world since the foundation of the R.B.N.A. But I now find myself in strong opposition to the views of yourself and those who follow you on this question of Registration.

Because I happen to be opposed to your views, there is no reason why you should attack our system of Private Nursing at the London, any more than I should write about the conditions of service and surroundings of the nurses at Bart's, which I could easily do. But let me tell those of your readers who care to know it what the system is which I support, and which you say "is deprecated by every liberal-minded person in the nursing world at home and abroad"—a pretty wide assumption of knowledge; but let that pass.

Every hospital ought to select between two alternatives, it seems to me, either—

1. To charge a probationer for her training; and to set her free the moment she is trained as a necessary corollary; or,

2. To do as we do—not only make no charge, but actually pay the probationer during the whole time of her training, and make her pay for this, when she is trained, by entering into an agreement that, when trained, she will serve the hospital for one year or two years in return for the training, salary, food, lodging and washing she has received.

I cannot think that such a system can fairly be condemned or called "exploiting nurses' labours." It seems to me absolutely fair and enables many a young woman to become a nurse who could not afford to pay any premium.

I disapprove very strongly of the system of allowing some probationers to pay and others not, and giving the hospital appointments to the former, and I think our system is fair to paying and non-paying.

"If you pay," we say, "you need not serve after you are trained; but if we pay you, you must serve as your mode of repayment." Then, when the term of the agreement is up, our nurses are, of course, free to leave or not as they like... A very large number stay, and I do not wonder.

We pay members of our private staff £30, rising £5 a year to £45, with board, lodging, uniform, and washing.

In addition, all our nurses, whether on the private staff or not, get £5 per annum extra increase after six years, and a second increase of £5 after twelve years' service, and full-pay pension for life after eighteen years' work, *i.e.*, £55 per annum for the rest of their lives. Every nurse settles for herself whether she prefers these terms, or to nurse on her own account, with all its attendant risks of non-employment, sickness, expenses between cases, and so on, and no pension to look forward to.

There are many other advantages which our London Hospital nurses get which are not usual. It is really ridiculous, and puerile to those who know me, to write of me, because I happen honestly to differ with you about this State Registration of Nurses, as if I were a sort of nurse-slave driver, utterly oblivious to nurses' interests or wishes. You will find out that many of the leading Matrons differ from you.

But do let the matter be argued on its merits, and do let everyone try to argue it with good temper, and do not suggest that those who differ from oneself are a mass of iniquity.

Yours faithfully,

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Royston, Herts.

We must preface our remarks on Mr. Holland's letter by disclaiming any personal attack either upon him, or upon any other official at the London Hospital, in criticising the private nursing system at that institution. Moreover, we would gladly conduct the Registration campaign impersonally if that were possible, but persons stand for principles, and, in fighting for or against these, we must each be prepared to be made responsible for our policy on questions which involve the interests of every member of the community, as the organisation of nursing does.

As Mr. Holland was not a "nursing expert" in the days when the members of the R.B.N.A. found it necessary to protest against the high-handed and

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