

(c) To create certain machinery for carrying out the foregoing objects.

2. In respect of *machinery*, the Bills agree in that each seeks to create a body, partly nominated and partly representative, called in (A) a General Council and in (B) a Central Board, whose functions shall be to examine, certify, and register nurses; each Bill provides certain means of enforcing the judgment of the said Council or Board with respect to trained nurses, and each provides certain penalties against persons who may falsely claim to be registered.

3. Central Board or Council: Each Bill provides that the Central Board or Council shall contain representatives of the following persons or aggregates:—

(1) The general public, through nomination by the Crown.

(2) The medical profession.

(3) Nurses in general, through direct representatives.

(4) The following special class of nurses:—

(a) Matrons of general hospitals; (b) the Poor Law nurses; (c) the asylum nurses.

It will be observed that in order to provide adequate representation of all the various interests stated it would be necessary to provide a very large board or council, and the administration must be, consequently, expensive.

The duties and powers of the Council or Central Board are practically identical in the two Bills, namely:—

(a) To frame rules to regulate the training of nurses.

(b) To examine and register nurses.

(c) To carry out, when necessary, certain penal procedures for the suspension of registered nurses.

(d) To protect registered nurses by taking proceedings against unregistered persons who may claim to be registered.

The cost of administration is to be met under (A) by a registration fee not exceeding two guineas; under (B) the expenses are to be met by such charges as the Central Board may find necessary. (A) provides that a nurse may be registered at the age of twenty-one; (B) prescribes the age twenty-four.

II.—COMMENTS BY THE COMMITTEE.

(a) As to the constitution and composition of the Central Board or Council, the Committee would suggest that under either Bill the Board proposed is unduly large, and that, in the interests of nurses themselves, the attempt to give separate representation to so many bodies and institutions should be abandoned.

In particular, the Committee would suggest that the medical profession would be adequately represented by three registered medical practitioners, of whom one should be nominated by the Crown, one by the General Medical Council, and one by the British Medical Association, as representative of the general body of the medical profession.

(b) The provisions as to the examination, certification, and registration of nurses, and as to the disciplinary powers of the Council or Central Board for registered nurses, do not appear to call for detailed notice from the Association, except that the Committee is strongly of opinion that twenty-four should be suggested by the Association as the earliest age at which nurses should be registered, and that training should usually be commenced at the age of twenty-one.

(c) Under the penal clauses of both Bills, it is observed that it is only proposed to protect the work of registered nurses, a fine of £10 being proposed in each case as the penalty for infringement by unregistered persons.

In the opinion of the Committee it is also desirable that a special clause should be inserted in order clearly to provide that such penalties would not apply (1) to a nurse who acts gratuitously, (2) to a nurse who nurses for hire but does not claim to be registered.

Royal British Nurses' Association.

The annual meeting of this Association was held at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, on Monday, the 6th inst. The chair was taken by Dr. Thorne. The Treasurer read the financial report, which showed a loss of £52 on the nine months ending December 31st, 1903, the balance-sheet and accounts being now made up to that date, at Mr. Langton's wish. Of course the result is that by the time the members receive the accounts at the June meeting they are ancient history, and can give the members no possible idea of their financial position up to date.

The Hon. Secretary read the executive report, which dealt at length with the Bill drafted by the Association. In reply to a question, he stated that a few Members of Parliament had been approached, but with no success. It is common knowledge, in fact, that the Association has no influence, has been able to do little to forward the Registration movement, and that its Bill, in short, has been stillborn.

Miss Beaty proposed the vote of censure on the officers of the Association who retained office but were working against the Registration Bill of the Association.

Dr. Bedford Fenwick seconded the motion in order that the members might clearly understand the position in which the Bill of the Association was being placed by the action of the hon. officers. The Hon. Secretary had confessed that the Association could do nothing to forward its Bill. A house divided against itself could not stand. If the members desired its Bill to have the slightest chance they must close up their ranks and call upon those who were dividing their forces to retire, so that the Association could speak with one voice on the question of Registration. He read extracts from the circular signed by officers of the Association denouncing Registration showing the opinion in which the members were held by those officers, and informed the meeting that an hour previously the Prime Minister in the House of Commons had promised that a Select Committee should be appointed to inquire into the whole nursing question. It therefore became a matter of vital importance for the question to be settled whether the Bill nominally promoted by the Association was actually so, or whether it only emanated from a section of the members in opposition to the officers and recognised leaders of the Association. On the resolution being put to the vote, only two supported it, seventy-two voting against it.

The general meeting, therefore, almost unanimously decided that the Honorary Officers were justified in opposing the Bill and their own wishes concerning it. Such futile folly does not only bring contempt on the R.B.N.A., but upon the whole profession of nursing. However, the Association has long ceased to be taken seriously in nursing circles.

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