

In order that the Midwives' Act, 1902, may be efficiently administered in London, the Public Health Committee intends to recommend the London County Council to appoint in the Public Health Department a woman inspector, either a medical practitioner or a properly qualified midwife, at a salary of £150 per annum rising to £250.

The application of the governing body of the Westminster Hospital that the trusts of the funds and property of the Westminster Training-School and Home for Nurses, founded in 1873, might be declared, and that a scheme for the regulation and management of the charity, which had been settled by the Attorney-General, might be sanctioned by the Court, was heard in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice before Mr. Justice Kekewich last week.

After hearing the case the learned judge said that the main question he had to decide was whether in the constitution of the Home the controlling voice or preponderating control should be given to the hospital.

There was no doubt about the principles on which the charity was founded. Everybody was agreed as to the objects, the primary object being that of training nurses for service in the hospital, and the other ancillary and subordinate objects being the provision of trained nurses for private patients and for the poor of Westminster. Therefore what his Lordship had to consider was how could the main object be best secured—by giving the hospital the preponderating control or by dividing the control and having an equality of co-opted members on the Committee of the Home with an independent chairman? The latter alternative had not been very successful. Dual government was seldom a success, and this was as true of nursing as of other institutions. To his Lordship's mind the primary object would be best obtained by the nurses being as much as possible under the control of the hospital. He accordingly approved the general character of the scheme put forward by the hospital and settled by the Attorney-General; certain detailed provisions—*e.g.*, with regard to the election and position of the Lady Superintendent of the Home and the mode of securing the pension fund for the nurses—would be resettled by the Attorney-General and submitted for the approval of the Court.

The Countess of Radnor took the chair on Monday at an interesting meeting at Folkestone at the Congress convened by the Royal Institute of Public Health, where the burning question of State Registration of Trained Nurses was discussed. Three papers were read, by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, by Miss Plum, the Matron of the Victoria Hospital, and by Miss C. A. Barling, Matron of the Borough Sanatorium. Mrs. Fenwick gave a general survey, and noted the satisfactory reports of the practical

working of Registration Acts in Cape Colony, New Zealand, and New York State.

Miss Plum presented the question as it affects hospital nurses, and showed the injustice of the present lack of standard. She also demolished the unreasonable statements made by those who preferred the present chaotic condition of affairs.

Miss Barling quoted some cases in which, with little training in special hospitals, women undertook as private nurses the care of serious cases of which they had no practical experience, and proved how beneficial Registration by the State would be to the thoroughly-trained, conscientious woman who had qualified herself for her responsible work.

An interesting discussion followed, in which Mrs. Fenwick claimed that the really efficient nurse is the doctor's finest and most valuable instrument; that she made it possible for him to treat cases, especially major operations, with safety and success, which would not be possible without her highly-skilled, constant, and vigilant care; and that, this being so, these valuable workers deserved all the protection which the law can afford them, and a systematised curriculum of education to fit them for the performance of work which was constantly exacted from them.

Dr. Marsden said nurses should have an eminently practical training—so many trained nurses lacked common sense—but agreed with the principle of Registration.

It was pointed out that it was probable examination by a central authority would incorporate a thoroughly practical test by trained nurses, whereas at present the examination of nurses was usually conducted by medical men on purely theoretical lines.

At a meeting of the Southern Branch of the British Medical Association, held recently at Southampton, the President, Dr. J. F. Bullar, made some wise remarks on the subject of nursing:—"There are nurses who are properly trained," he said, "and there are a large number who are not trained at all, but merely decorated with caps, aprons, scissors, and other more dangerous weapons, and foisted upon a credulous and simple public accustomed from their youth to judge by the outward appearance only. It is our business to protect the public, and to distinguish between trained and merely ornamental nurses, and not to be parties to that quackery in nursing which is the chief hindrance to its improvement. It is hard and unfair, that a fully-trained nurse should be competed with and paid at no higher rate than an upstart who has merely been six months at a lying-in hospital, but that is what happens now."

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