

discipline of nurses very similar to the General Medical Council. The proposal that the registration fee should be one guinea—not a guinea annually—would leave that body very short of funds for carrying on its work.”

#### EVIDENCE.

Amongst the witnesses who tendered evidence to the Committee there were very few who had given much consideration to the question of fees. Those who had, placed the fee they considered necessary much higher than those who, for the first time, formed and hazarded an opinion when questioned by the Committee.

The only witness who handed in a definite financial estimate with the reasons which had led to its preparation was Dr. Bedford Fenwick, who estimated that a fee of two guineas from each Registered nurse should cover the expenses connected with Registration, as apart from those of examination which he estimated at £3 3s. The paper containing his explanation of this financial estimate appears as Appendix No. 3 in the first report of the Committee.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Isla Stewart, Miss Amy Hughes, Miss Huxley, Mr. Walshe, Miss Hobbs, Sir James Crichton Browne all considered that nurses would be willing to pay a fee of three, four, or five guineas for the advantages received under a system of State Registration. Lady Helen Munro Ferguson also gave her grounds for the conclusion that a fee of two or three guineas would be readily paid.

The Society for State Registration considers that the fees to be paid by nurses should be arranged on a scale which will give the Central Body a sufficient income to carry on the work of the Board in relation to examination, registration, and general supervision. Nurses are able to pay the expenses connected with their own government, and it is quite certain that this cannot be defrayed by a fee of one guinea. This is the fee required of midwives, and it is already quite evident, as the Secretary of the Central Midwives' Board, Mr. G. W. Duncan, told the Committee, that this will not suffice to cover expenses, the accumulated fees which have been received from the Registration of over 22,000 midwives during the two years after the Act came into force will, he explained, “keep us (the Board) going for two or three years, perhaps. After that we shall have to come on the County Councils for the annual deficiencies.” There is no reason why these Councils should have to bear a similar burden in the case of nurses.

Sir Victor Horsley expressed the opinion that nurses should pay a registration fee of £2 2s. 0d., but that they should not pay for examination. He said:—“If the State is demanding of an individual that he or she shall spend a certain amount of time and money in obtaining information for the sake of the public, I think the State ought to pay for the statutory examination.” But what nurses would be paying for, and would be willing to pay for, is admission to the recognized ranks of a profession by which they can maintain themselves, and we think they may legitimately be asked to do so.

#### ESTIMATE OF EXPENSE UNOBTAINABLE.

In the majority of cases in which the Registration of Nurses has already been enforced it is true the fees payable by nurses are placed at from £1 10s. to £2 2s., but it must be remembered that the Government is responsible for the deficiency, and that much of the clerical work is done in Government offices by Govern-

ment officials. Thus in the State of New York the clerical work is done in and by the Regents' Office. The actual cost of maintaining a self-supporting system of Registration is at present incalculable, as no clear statistics are obtainable as to precedent.

There is really no need in this country to cut down the income of the Nursing Council to the lowest possible figure. We have only to consider that in eighteen years nurses have contributed £925,000 to the National Pension Fund; that every certificated nurse on the staff of Guy's Hospital is required to pay 15s. annually to the funds of its Nurses' League, while the Sisters have to pay £1 1s. annually; that many nurses pay for their training, which is an uncertain quantity, sums varying from £10 to 50 guineas; and that many a nurse will unhesitatingly spend the greater part of a sovereign on an evening's amusement; to be assured that £2 2s. for Registration and £3 3s. for examination is a very moderate fee to ask them to pay for their professional status. Sir Henry Burdett told the Committee that he failed to see why nurses should pay £5 5s., while medical practitioners only paid £5 for registration. This statement was, of course, entirely misleading, because medical fees, before a candidate can be registered, amount to no less than £30, and in the case of nurses the £5 5s. would represent the total amount to be paid. Again, as the majority of nurses get their training free, are maintained during their period of probation and receive a small salary, a system unknown in preparation for any other profession, and few industrial occupations, they can well afford to save £5 5s. in the course of three years, even if their parents are so poor that they cannot give this sum in order to qualify their daughters for earning a competent livelihood. There are few who are well acquainted with nurses, who have any doubt as to a £5 5s. fee being easily procured if required. This would make them an entirely self-supporting class, which they would certainly prefer to being rate-aided and pauperised. Existing nurses would, of course, merely pay the £2 2s. registration fee.

#### THE REGISTER.

The cost of issuing and maintaining a correct Register will not be small. The difficulty will be far greater than in the case of the Medical Register, for the reason that a medical practitioner settles down in a place to make a practice, and, not infrequently, stays there for the whole of his professional life. Nurses, on the other hand, are a peripatetic class, and the work of keeping in touch with them and of the necessary correction of the Register will certainly be arduous.

Dr. Bezly Thorne informed the Select Committee, “I do not think there is the slightest practical difficulty about the revision of a register. We do that sort of thing in the Royal British Nurses' Association constantly. It does not involve any very great trouble, and would involve very much less trouble with a State body, because people would pay more attention to inquiries and notes asking for renewal of addresses and so on, if they came from a State authority, than from a body like the Royal British Nurses' Association. In fact, the work of registration would be enormously facilitated, and of revision, too.”

This would, of course, be the case. At the same time the facts are that the R.B.N.A. has ceased to publish a Register, and now only issues a Roll of Members. That from this Roll the addresses have since

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