

Do not let us be led away by narrow and selfish views, and thus place ourselves without the pale of good citizenship. Let us remember that our moral and physical condition largely depends upon the realisation of communistic duty, and that unless our neighbour conforms to the laws of health he becomes a *nidus* for the suffering of others.

#### THE REGISTRATION FEE.

We notice in several publications that the question of the amount required to be paid as a registration fee is one which is being widely criticised, and by those who understand nothing about the cost of organising the thousands of units working as nurses into a profession legalised by the State, granting to these thousands honourable legal and professional status, every effort is being made to misinform and misdirect them on this question.

The Bill for the State Registration of Nurses provides that when it becomes law, and for a three years' term of grace from that date, nurses may be registered *without further examination* for the small fee of £2 2s. *Two guineas* inclusive! And that each year following they shall communicate their address to the Registrar, and pay an annual fee of 2s. 6d., so that the very considerable cost of altering addresses, keeping them correct, and annually publishing the Register of Trained Nurses shall not fall upon the rates, and thus pauperise trained nurses—an unfortunate arrangement provided for certified midwives in the Midwives' Act. Now mark! every nurse registered at the passing of the Bill, and every nurse in training for three years after such an Act becomes law, will only be required to pay £2 2s. and 2s. 6d. annually.

After the three years' term of grace, the benefit of legislation for Nurses and the public will begin, and the great scientific Profession of Nursing must be built up, step by step, by improved conditions of education. All education worth having is expensive, and if a future generation of nurses earnestly desires the best facilities for training and examination, and that a high moral tone shall be maintained in their profession, they must pay a little for it. This is just. The registration fee will continue to be £2 2s., but without the lever of a central examination, that is a single portal to the Nurses' Register, no co-ordination, or co-operation of training institutions, no evolution in system, no minimum standard, no guarantee of technical efficiency can be effected.

#### THE EXAMINATION FEE.

Let us take a peep into the future. We will presume the Nurses' Registration Act comes into force in this year of grace 1909, as it

ought to do. Until 1912 nurses will, we have no doubt, avail themselves in their thousands of the privilege of registration, cheerfully paying two guineas for a most valuable professional asset. During those three years, the General Council of Registration, if composed of the right people, will work with earnest goodwill, placing itself in direct communication with nurse training schools, and individuals who may be affected by the Act. The practical well-being of all concerned must be considered. Imagine the thought, time, and clerical labour which must be devoted to this stupendous bit of national work.

Amongst the various duties of the Registration Council it is required (1) to regulate the course of training and the conduct of examinations, and the remuneration of the examiners. (2) To decide upon the places where, and the times when, the examinations shall be held.

The Bill provides that a fee not to exceed £3 3s. shall be paid by nurses who *voluntarily* submit themselves to the central examination, which, if passed, will qualify for registration, and it is over this fee of £3 3s. that the ignorant are attempting to mislead trained nurses. What is to be done with this large sum (cooks and typewriters, to say nothing of dress-makers and milliners, pay six times this sum for education without legal status) we are asked. We will enumerate a few items.

First of all, examinations will have to be held at least every six months, and they will have to be held at a great number of places in the three Kingdoms, at convenient centres—north, south, east, and west—probably at 12 centres in England, and four each in Scotland and Ireland. That means that at least 40 examinations must be arranged annually, and some thousands of nurses must be tested. Who is to do this very expert educational work? Persons of the highest technical and practical knowledge and ability, medical practitioners who have made a special study of theoretical nursing, and are teachers of it, and highly qualified trained nurses, who are also specially trained as teachers and examiners, men and women who must give up a large amount of time to qualify themselves for the work, who must keep in touch both in theory and practice with the evolution of medicine and nursing in all its branches, so far as the treatment of the sick is concerned.

These experts must be well paid, or it will not be worth their while either to teach or to examine. Indeed, we foresee as far as the

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