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Editorial.

THE STANDARD OF NURSING IN NEW ZEALAND.

A very interesting report on State Registration in New Zealand, where a Nurses' Registration Act has been in force since 1901, was furnished to the International Council of Nurses by Miss Hester Maclean, R.N. Deputy-Registrar of Nurses and Midwives, and Assistant-Inspector of Hospitals in the Dominion. One point is of special importance to nurses in this country. So far, nurses from Great Britain, on producing a certificate of training for three years from a recognised training school, and of having passed an examination at the end of that time, have been admitted to the Register.

Miss Maclean points out that the State of New Zealand is more generous to nurses from abroad than the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association, which obliges those from any country which has not a central examination to pass the examination of its Central Board before being admitted as members of the Association. This is a matter which has appeared to need amendment in the Nurses' Registration Act of New Zealand, as it is scarcely fair to oblige the nurses of the Dominion to pass a central examination and to admit others to the Register who have not done the same.

"However," adds Miss Maclean, "we hope alterations will be unnecessary if the Nurses' Registration Bill in Great Britain becomes law."

In countries where standards of nursing education are maintained, and where nurses have to prove their competence to a Central Authority before they can receive professional recognition, that standard is undermined if nurses trained in other countries can be admitted to the benefits conferred by registration without giving an equivalent guarantee.

This point is recognised in the Nurses' Registration Bill promoted in this country, which provides that a nurse trained and registered in any British possession in which a Nurses' Registration Act is in force, and which admits to its Register British Nurses on reciprocal terms, may be registered under the Act, provided that the standard of training and examination in such British possession is equivalent to the standard adopted by the Council.

It appears, therefore, that unless a Nurses' Registration Act, which provides for a State Examination conducted under the auspices of a Central Board, becomes law in the United Kingdom that nurses trained in the Mother Country will not be recognised in New Zealand, or eligible for appointments in hospitals in the Dominion, until they have passed the prescribed State Examination. The authorities will say in effect, "you may be competent but we require evidence before we recognise you and admit you to professional equality with those who have furnished it."

Another interesting point in Miss Maclean's report refers to the training schools. When the Act was passed "some hospital authorities dissuaded their nurses from registering, whether from a mistaken idea that it was merely a Government measure that would not last, or because they thought it would in any way render the nursing staff more independent it is difficult to say, but undoubtedly at first the attitude of many was either indifference or resentment. This feeling has, however, completely worn away. All hospitals of any importance make a point of training their nurses with a view to registration and in making appointments to their staffs make registration a necessary qualification." Lastly, we read that Registration has "tremendously raised the standard of nursing in New Zealand."

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