

two years since this decree came into force in Prussia, but already to-day there is a growing conviction everywhere that the period of only *one year* for the accomplishment of the very thorough plan of instruction means excessive work for both teacher and taught and superficial "cramming" for the examination. Now, as it is only a question of an optional decree, there could be no objection to the hospitals taking the initiative of dividing up the plan of instruction into 2—3 years, and of only having the examination after such a period of preparation.

However, if they do not take this step, Government will sooner or later make an alteration, when a sufficient survey has been gained. In any case, the hospitals must urgently advocate a change, for they need pupils for the work, and it is irrational to lose the same already at the end of one year, when they could and ought to be retained three years for the sake of mutual interests and advantage. An attempt is being made to do this by contract engagements, but unless the pupil is bound by interest in her own training very often an evasion is only too easily found. Just the most ambitious nurses are often impelled to change work as soon as possible, in order to improve their knowledge at some other place, as eventually, after the prescribed one year's training at the hospital, little opportunity is there offered for doing so.

The reluctance with which the greater part of the circles concerned met the examination regulations was also partly due to the short period appointed for training. No communication had been held with those circles before the decree was issued, but when active resistance took place on the part of the religious nursing institutions, the Board of Instruction, in March, 1907, held a conference of all circles concerned, in order to procure a definite statement of the standpoints, which they succeeded in doing. The religious institutions were represented by their spiritual directors and by a Lady Superintendent of each confession, and the former maintained that they did more for the training of their Sisters than the Government demanded, which statement met with contradiction.

What had most been feared was an intrusion of secular elements as a consequence of the order of instruction according to State regulations; however, no institution would be expected to put up with such an intrusion. The Red Cross representatives were of opinion that in the course of instruction, which only lasted one year, there lay the danger that after they had passed their examination the pupils would try, even oftener than at present, to break

their 3—5 years' engagement before the appointed time.

The Lady Superintendents of the Red Cross and of the Diakonie-Verein objected to the fact that no measures had been taken to utilise the Lady Superintendents' verdict in the examination. As the decree had already been passed by the Federal Council, none of the regulations could be altered. The regulation was then added to the by-laws that the Lady Superintendent of the training school or the Board of the training school was to give a verdict on the probationers.

The result, however, of this conference was that nearly all Red Cross Mother Houses, all the Prussian Deaconess Mother Houses, with the exception of one, and all Roman Catholic Order Institutions within a short time declared themselves ready to accept the examination regulations.

For the independent town hospitals, the Diakonie-Verein, and the G. N. A. the adoption of those regulations was, from the very beginning, a matter of course, as a low Government standard is better than none for every profession, and because such a standard, at any rate, forms a definite basis for its improvement, and until now there has been no such basis.

For the introduction of State Registration a year of grace had been provided, during which all persons who had been engaged five years in the nursing profession could acquire a diploma *without passing an examination*.

In the above conference the five years' work was reduced to two years. Within that time the diploma was acquired in Prussia by 18,000 Sisters of Catholic Orders and 6,000 Deaconesses. The G. N. A. presented a petition for the acquisition of a diploma for 1,499 of its Sisters, and it was granted to all but 10. Of the latter one was out of work in consequence of an illness of many years' duration; all the others belonged to the outside limit of the two years and were not particularly well grounded, so that their passing the examination seemed desirable in their own interest.

It would have corresponded better to our views if the limit had been fixed, not to two years, but to three years' service. Great indulgence in the granting of a diploma has certainly been shown to those already engaged in the nursing profession; however, the possibility of the withdrawal of the diploma makes future selection likely. So we may most certainly depend on the Government examination contributing greatly to the amelioration of our professional conditions. We often receive com-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)