

THE ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS.

The President then called on Miss M. Breay, Hon. Secretary, to present the Annual Report and Financial Statement.

The Report stated that the wisdom of the action taken by the Society in initiating negotiations with Societies supporting the principle of State Registration of Trained Nurses, which resulted in their uniting their influence in support of one Bill, through a Central Committee, had been abundantly justified.

One hundred and eighty new members had joined the Society during the last year, making a total of 3,027 since its foundation, an increase of 55 on the previous year, which was the more satisfactory since Scotland and Ireland had now their own societies, actively working to promote State Registration of Nurses. Reference was also made to the subject of reciprocal training in connection with infectious nursing, and it was pointed out that under Clause 12 of Mr. Munro Ferguson's Bill, which provides that the course of training prescribed by the Council may be passed through "in the wards of a hospital, or of hospitals, approved by the Council," the principle of reciprocal training was definitely and deliberately introduced into the Bill.

The Fever Nurses' Association, as notified in their Annual Report, nevertheless desired "to provide against the possibility that a Council set up by the Bill might refuse to let hospitals adopt reciprocal training if they desired to do so," and obtained counsel's opinion on this point, which was "to the effect that it was open to the Council instituted by the Bill to refuse to permit reciprocal training if it so desired." The Executive Committee of that Association were therefore desirous to obtain the insertion of a clause in the Bill dealing with the question of reciprocal training.

NEED FOR A DEFINITE STANDARD OF NURSING EDUCATION.

The need for the adoption of a definite standard of nursing education, and its protection by the State, had been forcibly brought home to nurses and the public, during the past year, by the action of the Governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who, for over a quarter of a century, had required their probationers to have three years' training in the wards of the hospital before certification, but who, ignoring their own standard, appointed to the vacant Matronship a candidate holding the inferior qualification of two years' training in the wards of the London Hospital. Such a disregard of accepted standards would have been impossible in making an appointment to the medical staff, as the General Medical Council enforces definite standards of medical education. It was essential in the public interest that an analogous method should be adopted in the case of the nursing profession.

VEXATIOUS LEGISLATION.

The attention of the members was drawn to the danger to nurses of the introduction of clauses vitally affecting their interests into the private Bills of Corporations (as exemplified in the "London County Council General Powers Act, 1910"), which might become law without their knowledge

that such legislation was contemplated, and without their possessing power to influence legislation affecting thousands of trained nurses personally and financially.

The Section of the L.C.C. Act "to provide for the licensing of Employment Agencies," which was inserted between sections dealing with the smoke nuisance and the acquisition of lands by the Camberwell Council, brought within its scope Associations of private nurses formed for their mutual benefit, and put these highly skilled professional workers under the supervision of unprofessional officials acting for the licensing authority, who had the right to enter the premises of persons holding licences "at all reasonable times," and to inspect their premises and books. While the professional "Agent" who strove to secure for nurses just remuneration for their work was liable to this supervision, employers, including the Committees of charitable institutions, were exempt. These might, and did, receive the fees earned by nurses, paying them salaries from which fifty per cent. of their earnings was a very usual deduction.

The effect of the Act had been to place a premium upon the sweating of nursing labour by making it impossible for the workers to co-operate.

The points with which the Society was specially concerned were (1) the lack of the enforcement of any standard of professional knowledge for those supplying persons purporting to be trained nurses to the public; (2) that they could carry on this business under the authority of the London County Council, without giving any guarantee that the nurses they supplied had received the training, and acquired the skill, necessary to make them safe attendants on the sick. This afforded one more proof of the necessity for a system of Registration of Trained Nurses under a professional body appointed by the State.

REGISTRATION OUTSIDE THE UNITED KINGDOM.

It was also stated that in New South Wales a Nurses' Registration Act would probably become law this year, and that during the last twelve months such Acts had become law in 5 more of the United States of America, bringing the number of States in which registration of nurses is now in force up to 29, and that all these Acts had been passed during the eight years in which the Nurses' Registration Bill had been before the House of Commons in this country, but had been persistently blocked at the instigation of a small clique of hospital authorities in London hospitals, who feared "State interference" with their present unrestricted powers.

The report concluded by expressing the opinion that there was no doubt the House of Commons was in favour of such legislation, and that if the Nurses' Registration Bill was accorded time for a second reading that it would have as favourable a reception as it had in the House of Lords in 1908.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee, with the addition of Miss Beatrice Cutler, were then re-elected to serve for the coming year.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

The following ladies were unanimously added to the list of Vice-Presidents:—Mrs. Walter Spencer,

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