

Then there were the rights of a nurse in connection with her matron. Thus a nurse wanted to go to a theatre; the matron objected. A matron's authority only extends to reasonable orders.

The speaker mentioned the case of a probationer who had spent two-thirds of her time in a certain hospital, and had won a reputation for doing her work well. She was informed by the matron that she could not recommend her for her certificate, as she did not consider that her moral character fitted her for the high vocation of a nurse.

It was necessary to keep an eye on legislation affecting nurses. The Workmen's Compensation Act had been a boon to them.

The question of a nurse's right to a salary when ill was sometimes raised. She is entitled to receive it as heretofore, until such time as her contract is terminated.

Again, there are local Associations of nurses all over the country in connection with which ladies think nothing of getting rid of nurses in a most mean way.

A Nurses' Defence Association could expedite legislation shortening nurses' hours of work. It is a terrible thing that in asylums nurses should work from 70-80 hours a week, at duties involving a highly responsible, physical, mental, and moral strain.

Questions put to Mr. Brice were:—

1. Has a committee a right to restrain a nurse from working in a certain area for a given time?

2. Is it a fact that a nurse engaged in consumptive work, who contracts the disease, has no redress?

3. Are nurses, when convalescing and on holiday, entitled to board money as well as salary?

4. In regard to the procedure of the Midwives' Board in dealing with penal cases. The Board sits in a judicial capacity, but it also employs a solicitor to conduct the prosecution. If it provides for the prosecution of midwives summoned before it, should it not also provide for the defence, or else let the Local Supervising Authorities who have found a *prima-facie* case conduct the prosecution? It sometimes even happens that the prosecuting solicitor has to admit that he cannot prove a charge brought against a midwife unless this is possible from her written defence.

Mr. Brice replied:—

In regard to a clause in an agreement restraining a nurse from practising, it is fair if the committee has spent money in training her. But if she was engaged to do general work only, there is no reason why she should not practise a specialty, such as massage, within the area.

The speaker pointed out the importance of the insertion of fair conditions of work in contracts, and said that it often happens that a nurse is so anxious to get work that she does not stand on terms of equality with her employer.

If a nurse contracts consumption she cannot claim compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act, as it is not one of the scheduled diseases; but taking into consideration that nurses will be increasingly exposed to its infection in connection with the Insurance Act, the speaker thought that by a little pressure it could be added to the scheduled diseases.

A nurse in receipt of a salary is entitled to her whole remuneration, and if away convalescing or on holiday is entitled to a reasonable sum for board, lodging, and washing.

In relation to the suggestion that it is hard that the Central Midwives' Board should finance the prosecution of midwives who have no means of defence, the speaker said he had long held—before the appointment of the Central Midwives' Board—that a public defender, as well as a public prosecutor, should be appointed. For ignorant, poor, baffled, dazzled midwives to be brought before the Board, and confronted with a prosecutor bent on proving his case, is not justice, but injustice.

---

### THE TRAINED WOMEN NURSES' FRIENDLY SOCIETY COMMITTEE.

---

The Provisional Committee of the Trained Women Nurses' Friendly Society Committee met at 431, Oxford Street, London, W., on Wednesday, April 17th, at 5 p.m. There were present Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (in the chair), Miss Mollett (Hon. Organizing Secretary), Miss Breay (Hon. Treasurer), and twelve members of the Committee.

The business before the meeting was to receive a report from the Hon. Organizing Secretary and to take such action as may be desirable.

Miss Mollett reported that Miss Macintyre, of Wigan, was willing to serve on the Committee; and also that the Matrons of Hospitals and Nursing Institutions in the United Kingdom had been circularized, and a copy of the Draft Constitution drawn up by the Committee at its last meeting, and on the table for inspection, had been sent to them. She made a lucid statement as to the responses received and the present position, and invited the Committee to consider the following questions:—

1. Does the response to the appeal warrant proceeding with the scheme?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)