

AN EXAMINING BOARD AND STANDARD EXAMINATION.

As examinations for nurses vary in the different training schools, certificates of training must necessarily vary in importance. He suggested that the various unions in the district should combine to form an examining board, consisting of medical superintendents, infirmary matrons, and other persons qualified in medicine and nursing, and that a probationer should be required to pass the examinations decided upon by the board. A standard examination would ensure an efficient course of training by acting as a stimulus to lecturers and pupils alike.

The question of staffing the smaller union hospitals was one that could be well considered if an examination board were organised. It would be quite possible for such a board to take into consideration the question of some interchange between the larger and smaller unions. A smaller union might have its probationers transferred to the larger unions to complete their training, and thus obtain their certificates. Well-equipped and well staffed union hospitals offered opportunities for training second to no other hospitals.

DEFRAUDING THE PUBLIC.

The public, the doctor said, knew a nurse only by her uniform, and were not sufficiently "in the know" to be able to distinguish between the trained and untrained. The public in a great measure were being defrauded, and the smaller unions, that appointed probationers without being in a position to give them a sufficient training, were aiding in the deception of the public by turning out untrained nurses.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. J. W. Coulson, Clerk to the South Shields Guardians, moved a resolution expressing general approval of Dr. Whillis's proposals, and inviting the Newcastle Board to convene a conference of representatives of those Boards in the district which are now training probationers, for the purpose of giving further consideration to the subject, and formulating a definite scheme.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Hoey, Chairman of the Sunderland Guardians.

In discussing the resolution, in which many took part, Mr. C. H. Leach, Darlington, said it was quite obvious that some probationer nurses had not had a sufficiently good elementary education to enter upon the work at all, and that in many cases the deciding factor was not educational fitness, but whether the applicant knew a Guardian or could bring influence to bear upon the Guardians.

If a higher quality of officer were required—and probably in no department was it needed more than in nursing—it would have to be paid for, and the expenditure would be justified. The sick poor could not be left in the hands of persons who were ill-equipped for the duties which they had undertaken.

He wished that the Local Government Board would absolutely prohibit certain unions from training nurses. Probationers should only be engaged in hospitals where there was a residential medical officer. He had a great deal to do, he said, with inducing the Darlington Guardians to abandon the training of probationers, on the ground that it was not fair either to the girls or to the public that training should be undertaken with the equipment at their disposal.

In some cases, after completing their probationary service nurses had had to go into a larger infirmary to qualify, and the superintendent nurse in their new place did not think any the better of them because of their training at Darlington.

Mr. J. Davidson, chairman, and Mr. Walker, clerk to the Newcastle Guardians, expressed willingness to assist the proposed conference; and Mr. Coulson's resolution was unanimously adopted.

Every effort made to secure a central standard examination is useful, but we have always deprecated the classification of Poor Law Nurses as calculated to depreciate their status in the nursing profession as a whole.

The real remedy for the present chaotic educational standards is the establishment by Act of Parliament of a Central Examining and Disciplinary Authority to organise the nursing profession as a whole. We want a minimum theoretical and practical standard of training for all nurses, a central examination, and one portal to the nursing profession. Above this standard many might add to their qualifications, but without giving evidence of this safe minimum of knowledge and skill no nurse should be granted the title of Registered Nurse.

KING'S NURSES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

In answer to questions and criticisms addressed to the Committee of the King Edward VII Memorial Scheme for the establishment of King's Nurses in South Africa, it has supplied the Press with the following particulars regarding the project. In passing, we repeat that it is much to be regretted that no trained nurse with expert experience has been given a seat on the Committee, especially as a medical man has been nominated by the committee of the Medical Congress to represent the medical faculty. It is stated that the committee is now engaged in working out details in consultation with available experts in the medical and nursing professions.

THE PROPOSALS.

The general proposals are threefold:—

(1) The establishment of nursing centres where most required in the four Provinces of the Union. By the end of the year the committee hope to start a centre of not less than three nurses in each Province. The nurses will work under the rules and regulations of the order as approved by the

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