

Sir Henry Burdett also attempts, by misrepresentation, to intimidate these "same spirits."

Sir Henry states inaccurately that the names of members of the Matrons' Council and of the State Registration Society, are not published. No one knows better than he does that the name and professional qualification of every member has been published in this journal, as no one scrutinises its pages more keenly. What Sir Henry really wants is an up-to-date list of their addresses, so that each one may be influenced, and, if needs be, shown the error of her ways by a species of economic and official pressure difficult for working women to resist.

What these "same spirits" would like made public is a detailed balance-sheet of receipts and expenditure of the Scientific Press Limited; and the Private Nursing Business carried on at the London Hospital, showing the huge profits made by the principal shareholder, Sir Henry Burdett, out of the nurses and the hospitals in the former business, and by the managers of the London Hospital by undertraining nurses and underselling the nursing profession by the other.

Big money! Rather!

A DOMESTIC MATTER.

In the House of Commons on the 8th inst., as reported in the *Times*, Dr. Chapple asked the Prime Minister if he intended to introduce legislation to prevent the London Hospital from sending out nurses one year before the expiry of the normal course of training required by every other great metropolitan hospital at the rate of 11s. 6d. per week, while they earned £2 2s. per week for their hospital.

Mr. H. Lawson: May I ask the right hon. gentleman if he is aware that Mr. Sydney Holland, chairman of the London Hospital, flatly contradicted the first part of the statement when it was first made, and whether he knows that the London Hospital trains its nurses free of charge or premium for two years and makes a large loss on the whole transaction; and whether, when they are properly equipped, they are able to earn a livelihood for themselves at the expense of the hospital?

Mr. Asquith: I have not heard that, and with all respect to my hon. friend, I rather deprecate a question of this kind. It relates to a great London hospital, to which the metropolitan community is under a deep debt of gratitude. I am not aware that there is any ground for legislation.

Dr. Chapple: Is the right hon. gentleman aware that Mr. Sydney Holland has admitted that nurses are sent out from the London Hospital one year before the expiry of the time ratified by other hospitals?

Mr. H. Lawson: He denies it absolutely.

Dr. Chapple: Is he not aware that Mr. Holland admitted as a fact that they are sent out at the end of two years, which is one year less than the curriculum of all the other London hospitals?

Mr. Asquith: I am not aware of that as a matter

of fact. The management of the hospital is a domestic matter. There is no ground whatsoever for the suggestion.

This is a most interesting exchange of parliamentary courtesies. Of course, Dr. Chapple is absolutely right in his contentions, and is apparently the only one of the trio who understands the drift of the question, and its great importance to the nursing profession and the public.

Mr. Harry Lawson, although a member of the House Committee of the London Hospital, is apparently absolutely ignorant of its nursing affairs, otherwise he purposely misled the House. As to training its nurses free of charge, such a statement is most erroneous. Is it not true that the probationers and nurses do a vast amount of domestic work in the wards, and the entire nursing of the 800 patients for infinitesimal salaries, such as Mr. Lawson's scullerymaids would sniff at? What would be the cost of nursing the patients at the London Hospital if the probationers did not take experience in part payment of their long hours of work for a seven days' week? To talk of making "a large loss on the whole transaction" is indefensible. The nurses with their four years' contract, for two years of which they may, through private nursing bring in nearly 30s. a week clear profit, not only give labour but pay at least £100 in hard cash. The real fact of the matter is that the nursing department at the London Hospital is largely self supporting, that the public owes an enormous financial debt to the generous (though in our opinion misguided) women who give of their health, strength, and fees to this charitable institution.

Mr. Asquith is evidently entirely ignorant of the truth of the case. In his opinion, however, "The management of the hospital is a domestic matter." In other words, the nursing staff are domestic servants, and should be treated as such. Under these circumstances the domestic laws should be applied for their protection and the Committee and Matron no longer permitted to compel probationers to sign contracts which deprive them of the protection of the common law.

Next time a probationer or staff nurse "is put upon the doorstep" at a moment's notice, let her demand a month's salary and board wages.

Also, when in the middle of her four years' contract labour she is "permitted" to take a month's holiday at her own expense, let her claim her month's salary which she has a legal right to, and which London Hospital nurses have been deprived of for years.

Under present conditions even London Hospital nurses will soon begin to realise how necessary it is to obtain legal status for the nursing profession, if it is not to sink lower and lower.

Any way they owe it to their colleagues to make a stand for just conditions of training. They cannot accept a two years' term without underselling the profession at large.

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