

Rowell, cert. Guy's Hospital; and Miss E. E. Fowler, cert. St. Mary's Hospital.

On the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. St. John Morrow, Mrs. Fenwick presented the following report.

THE REPORT.

SIR,—The Deputation of Members of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, which, as President, I have the honour to present to you, desires, in the first place, to thank the Parliamentary Committee of the London County Council for its courtesy in receiving us.

Trained Nurses have, for many years, felt the necessity for the inspection and registration of Nursing Homes, and it is in a spirit of co-operation, not of hostility, that we are here to-day, and with a desire to assist the London County Council to make the legislation it proposes to introduce in the next Session of Parliament as effective as possible. We venture to believe that, from our practical experience as Trained Nurses—of whom, many like myself, have had experience in management of Home Hospitals, which is what Nursing Homes really are—we may be able to present to your notice important points which may hitherto have escaped your attention.

Over nine years ago the Registration of Nursing Homes, was included in the provisions of a Bill for the Registration of Nurses introduced into the House of Commons, on behalf of the Royal British Nurses Association, and although that provision was wisely dropped subsequently, because it was felt that the duty of registering such Homes belongs to public authorities, and not to an educational and disciplinary body appointed to regulate the profession of nursing, yet none the less is its necessity apparent.

We beg to remind you that the establishment of Home Hospitals, known as Nursing Homes, is of quite recent origin. Practically they are the growth of the last quarter of a century, to meet the demands of medical and surgical science, and to provide for paying patients the same advantages as the poor receive gratuitously in hospitals, in serious operations and illness.

ADVANTAGES.

Such Home Hospitals should afford the following advantages:—

1. Skilled supervision by an experienced Trained Nurse.
2. Expert nursing day and night by certificated nurses.
3. The careful supervision of the culinary department by the Nursing Superintendent, who should be a practical dietitian, as the classification of diets and nourishment is part of the medical treatment of the sick.
4. The assurance that the sanitary conditions are above reproach. The work of the nursing staff in such Homes is of the most responsible character because there is no resident medical officer. Life

and death often hang in the balance on their faithful and skilled discharge of the doctor's orders, and in no branch of the Nursing Profession is a higher quality of service requisite.

DRAWBACKS AND ABUSES.

Some of the drawbacks and abuses in connection with such Homes, of which Lady Superintendents of thoroughly well-conducted Nursing Homes are well aware, are:—

1. That the capital—sometimes borrowed capital—on which they are started is insufficient to meet the cost of maintenance.

2. That they are frequently run as speculations by untrained persons, without knowledge of the needs of the sick, and consequently, the financial gain of the proprietors, rather than the needs of the patients, are the first consideration. In this type of Nursing Home patients are frequently charged exorbitantly for bad nursing, and food of indifferent quality is supplied.

3. An illegitimate method of increasing profits is to charge patients high fees for skilled nursing care, and to employ unskilled persons as nurses. Further, these persons may be charged a fee for receiving a training in nursing. There are no adequate facilities for giving a thorough training in small Nursing Homes, although in those which are well managed, valuable post-graduate experience for certificated nurses is afforded.

Other grave abuses, as is well-known to your Committee, have arisen, owing to the fact that the name Nursing Home is used to cover business of an illegitimate character, although we are of opinion that so-called massage establishments and Lying-in Homes afford greater facilities, and are much more used for vicious purposes, than medical and surgical Nursing Homes.

We are aware that the primary object of the London County Council in undertaking the registration of Nursing Homes, massage, manicure, and electrical establishments, is the prevention of immorality, and we are apprehensive lest professionally managed Homes, admirably conducted as many of them are, and constantly improving, should be adversely affected by association in the public mind with disorderly houses. This would be most disastrous as Nursing Homes have become a necessity of our modern social system.

We venture to think that the London County Council should differentiate between professionally managed Nursing Homes, and those which are at best only financial ventures for the exploitation of the public, and at worst disorderly houses masquerading as Homes for the reception of the sick.

Well managed Nursing Homes render too indispensable a service to the public for a boycott of this useful branch of work, on the part of competent nurses, to be contemplated with equanimity, and we hope that the Council will not only seek powers enabling it to deal with immorality, but that before registering a Home, maintained ostensibly in the interests of the sick, the Council

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