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EDITORIAL.

THE REGISTRATION OF NATIVE NURSES.

A question which has recently been under discussion in South Africa is the registration of native and coloured nurses, and, at a recent meeting of the Cape Province Medical Council the Hospital Sub-Committee presented the following report on the subject.

"The Committee reports that it has taken into consideration the effect of the provisions of section 25 (3) of the Cape Hospital Ordinance, and the question of the advisability in view of the requirements of the country, of instituting a lower grade nursing certificate for native and coloured persons, and that it is of opinion that it would be inadvisable to take any steps in this direction at present."

A full report of the discussion on this recommendation is published in the professional papers in South Africa, which is of considerable interest.

Dr. Gregory in a minority report dissented from that of the majority, being of opinion that the Council should make provision for the institution of a certificate for native and coloured nurses, obtainable on their undergoing a suitable training, and passing an examination. He proposed that the question be referred back to the Committee to collect information on the subject from hospitals, institutions and authorities throughout the Union.

Dr. Mitchell, who thought that the redeeming feature of the report was the inclusion of the words "at present," advocated that coloured and native persons should be trained and certificated as "sick attendants" considering it inadvisable to call them "nurses." He moved an amendment, stating that, "while the Council recognizes the need for training native and coloured persons in sick nursing, it considers that the advisability of instituting

a lower grade of nurses, certified after examination, and registered by the Council has not been established," the resolution went on to suggest that the system under which such persons are trained by hospital bodies, and furnished by them with certificates, showing the period and nature of such training and if necessary, the results as tested by examination, was adequate under present circumstances.

We await the result of the deliberations of the Council after the question has been fully discussed.

In the meantime we desire to emphasise its importance, and the far reaching character of the eventual decision, and to express our conviction that the carefully worded report of the Committee is drafted on the right lines. The crux of the question at issue is not the colour of the person in whose interest action has been suggested, but the proposal to institute a lower grade nursing certificate.

We are entirely sympathetic with the desire of the coloured and native races in South Africa for recognition, the point for consideration is the best method of according it.

In the first place the standard qualifying for admission to the nursing profession must be safeguarded. The needs of the sick all over the world are the same, and therefore the minimum standard required of those who nurse them should be the same also. In our view the statesmanlike course is not to institute a lower grade nursing certificate to meet the present needs of certain classes of persons, but to safeguard adequate standards, and to hold out the prestige secured by those who attain them, as the best incentive for earnest work on the part of those in training of every nationality, colour, and creed. We hope that the Cape Province Medical Council will adopt the report of its Hospital Sub-Committee.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)