

were too long; (3) Competition through other channels of work, where also better pay was given.

The fault, he averred, lay with the public and the governing bodies of hospitals that the evils had not been removed. The nursing profession must voice its own opinions on questions of its own reform. As a very practical point, the speaker conjectured that if the Government offered proper terms nurses would leave the hospitals and enter the National Service, and this would bring home to hospital committees that things were wrong. There were no statistics worth the name, he declared, on the subject of sickness. In his opinion salary and maintenance for nurses of the National Service should not be below £150. Three-quarters of a million might be produced for nursing service under the Insurance Act. The public would realise in course of time that it would be repaid to them in the value of restored services, and of unexpended funds. The public could not realize the saving to the community by sanitation. The Minister who did recognize this was Mr. Lloyd George who understood that the basal need of the people was Health. As a profession, Sir Victor considered that nurses had not sufficient solidarity, which, he said, was the same with the medical profession until they obtained State Registration. One reform helped another, and each meant progress and help to the nation. The Nursing Profession had done an immense amount of good work unrecognised by the State. It must take its right place in the National Services.

THE TRAINED NURSE AND MIDWIFERY.

Dr. Robertson, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Birmingham, spoke on "The Trained Nurse and Midwifery," and said that he felt keenly the great necessity for the better training of midwives. For many years he had felt very strongly on the question without being able to take any steps to better the conditions prevailing at the present time. In his opinion it was necessary to secure the services of thoroughly well-trained nurses to look after women in labour. Up to 1902 any woman could practise as a midwife, and it was only after a great deal of trouble that the Act for State Registration of Midwives was passed. The standard of training he considered quite insufficient for the work which had to be performed. General training, knowledge of asepsis, and nursing duties generally, were as necessary during the lying-in period as during any other time of sickness, although he did not regard a confinement as an illness if the patients were in the hands of a fully-trained nurse. Dr. Robertson considered the time was ripe for agitating for a better qualification. The position of things was, at the present day, that any untrained persons of good character, *i.e.*, one who had not committed a crime and was not a drunkard, could go to a training institution, and in three or four months they were turned out as trained midwives, with the approval of the State. Mid-

wifery lacked efficiency because many midwives had not received proper training. During their short training a great portion of the time of the pupil was devoted to getting up the subjects for examination. Almost all her attention was given to theory. It was quite impossible for a pupil midwife to grasp all the necessary nursing points important in every case of labour. Owing to the susceptibility of puerperal patients to the assaults of pathogenic germs, the habit and practice of asepsis was perhaps more necessary in midwifery than in any other branch of nursing work. There were institutions where only trained nurses were taken as midwifery pupils, which appealed to him as the right thing.

In referring to the National Insurance Act Dr. Robertson pointed out that maternity benefit was now available, and that part of the further grants which were coming, ought to be devoted to the endowment of the nursing side of midwifery so as to supply for every mother the best nurse midwife. In his duty as M.O.H. it was his duty, he said, to supervise the midwives of Birmingham, some of whom were splendid characters, but lacking knowledge, and he again urged that nothing less than a three years' course of general training was adequate for the nurse midwife. He hoped the Nursing Profession would do all in their power to bring about an improvement in existing conditions.

DISCUSSION.

Miss Herbert, Matron of the General Infirmary, Worcester, in opening the discussion, invited the expression of any views as to the special training required for insurance nurses. She thought it should be given after the nurse had left the hospital. In many rural districts the work was not of sufficient scope or interest for either the trained nurse or the midwife alone.

The difficulty of obtaining special training arose. She hoped that exhibitions would be available for nurses for special training after leaving their hospitals. County Councils did offer scholarships for midwives.

In regard to the training of midwives, it was impossible to acquire the A B C of asepsis in three or four months. The great want was those who had previously acquired this knowledge. It was astonishing what the previously untrained person achieved on her very limited training. She hoped aid would be given by the State to nursing education.

Miss Bartleet said that in Birmingham they agreed that when the Nursing Benefit was established it must be administered by thoroughly trained nurses. She referred to an advertisement which had recently appeared in a local paper in the following terms: "Lady Dispenser. Wanted for Leamington Friendly Societies' Medical Association, and to act as nurse when required, easy hours, salary £100 a year, with prospect of increase," &c.

Miss Bartleet said further that the Board of the two hospitals with which she was connected had met in the previous week, and each had

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