

nursing in hundreds of hospitals in which sick and wounded soldiers are compulsorily treated, and it is in many of these institutions that trained nurses have been placed under untrained authority and supervision.

This system is absolutely indefensible, and the danger to nursing efficiency and hospital discipline, which is inevitable through such a system, would have been recognized, and impossible, if State Registration had been in force.

The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, in a Resolution and Statement sent to the Secretary of State for War at the beginning of this year, has placed on record its protest against such conditions, and this protest, we are aware, has been the principal factor in effecting certain reforms.

But, both educational and economic disabilities still continue, and real, permanent reform can only be effected, and the position of trained nursing placed on a secure foundation, upon which it can build a solid superstructure, by the recognition by Parliament of nursing as a skilled profession. Trained nurses have a right, with every other class of person entrusted with personal responsibility in connection with the health of the Army, to the legal status which gives them a certain defined and recognized position, and enables them to assume responsibility for the standing and honour of the members of their profession.

The next business on the agenda was to consider the following resolution proposed by Miss Musson:—

#### RESOLUTION.

That the mobilization of the Nursing Profession, owing to the war, has demonstrated the absolute necessity for a standard of nursing proficiency, and the Registration of those who attain the same, in order that the Government may have accurate information as to the number, names, qualifications and addresses of the trained nurses available.

Moreover, a State Register is the only means through which the public can avail themselves of skilled or unskilled nursing, according to their requirements.

That as the State Registration of Trained Nurses is a non-party question, of national importance to our sick and wounded sailors and soldiers, the present moment is opportune for a non-party Government to deal with it.

This meeting therefore petitions His Majesty's Government to give facilities for the consideration of the Nurses' Registration Bill, in charge of Dr. Chapple, M.P.

In proposing the Resolution, Miss Musson said that the establishment of a standard of nursing proficiency would enable us to put our house in order, and would be a means of improving our profession.

Nothing, said Miss Musson, hurt so much as the faults within our ranks. She had recently been seeing nurses of all kinds, and it was sad to realise how much the lack of organization injured the members of our profession. The nation could always depend upon their willingness; that was never lacking, but very often their ability was. It was not the fault of the nurses, but of the lack of standards. Had there been a recognized standard of proficiency, there might not have been a larger body of nurses, but there would have been a more competent one, as the training schools would have had to train up to it.

In the best schools there would always be people who did not take the greatest advantage of their opportunities, and there would always be others who desired to excel, because ambition was inborn in human beings, and while raising the minimum you would not destroy ambition.

The war had demonstrated that we were nearing registration. Had it been in force a record of nurses' qualifications would have been accessible. As it was the Matrons of Training Schools were almost done to death. Almost all nurses were taking up new work, and the Matrons were inundated with inquiries as to their qualifications.

Again, the government of the nursing profession was far too much in the hands of lay people, who were very helpless when it came to dealing with nursing matters, especially in selecting nurses, and they frequently thought a short term of training sufficient. She had much pleasure in proposing the Resolution.

Miss E. B. Kingsford, who seconded the Resolution, said that the cause of Nurses' Registration was a just one, and they would be able to accomplish much more if they were properly organized than at the present time, and would be as efficient as it was possible to be. Cohesion and organization spelt success, and these were what we wished the Government to grant us.

Miss Mollett agreed with Miss Musson as to the lack of efficiency of some trained nurses. But it was not as a rule the nurses' fault. Some central body was needed to see that the hospitals fulfilled their obligations. At present they got cheap labour, and frequently gave little in exchange. The teaching given to probationers could often be put into a nutshell, and then it would not fill it. Nor were they taught discipline or the rules of their profession. The hospitals were very much to blame. It was useless to give probationers pretty bedrooms, if they did not give them knowledge. We had had an imperial lesson, and she hoped it would do us good.

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