

This scale of salary was hardly on a level with salaries ordinarily obtained by women after a short training of, at most, six months or a year, and then an examination which did not require the experience a nurse must have before going in for her examination if she were to gain her certificate.

The salaries paid by the London County Council to nurses were from £80 to £105. The sum was fixed by the law of supply and demand. Were nurses obtainable at that salary? If so, why pay more? A certain percentage of the salary was deducted for the Superannuation Fund. This was really deferred pay. It was obvious that nurses could not save a substantial amount out of their average pay.

Referring to the Nursing College Scheme, Miss Pearse said that representation of Hospital Committees on the Governing Body was provided for. In regard to the representation of the nurses (who should keep outside altogether unless they had proper voting power), it must be remembered that every matron had two sets of interests to guard, those of her Committee and those of her profession. She had been a Matron and she knew. It was certain that Matrons on the Governing Body would have to voice the interests of their Committees or they might be faced with the direction to "come out of it." They would certainly, if placed on the Governing Body, be expected to help to keep the expenses of training down, as the Schools would inevitably be involved in extra expense.

Miss Pearse suggested that nurses must look for the remedy for the evils from which their profession suffered in organisation. It would be difficult to improve things unless the nurses took the trouble to fight for professional interests. They should see to it that the government of the profession was placed in the right hands by their own votes.

DISCUSSION.

Miss Cancellor said she was sure some of those present would wish to discuss Miss Pearse's able paper.

Miss Eden asked whether the scale of payment for nurses had not gone up, and Miss Cancellor said that during the war the payment of nurses had certainly improved. In some instances war bonuses were given.

Mrs. Fenwick said that economics were concerned with the law of supply and demand. It was true that a probationer was an apprentice; but, if one considered the conditions of apprenticeship in former days, the apprentice often paid a fee during the period of his contract, on the understanding that he was taught a skilled trade. If probationers received a low salary they had the right to something else as the equivalent of their work. Otherwise this small remuneration would be regarded by many philanthropists as wages for work done.

Many of the Governors of hospitals to which nurse training schools were attached knew

very little of what nursing education should be, and many so-called schools were so only in name. Under a Nurses' Registration Act a curriculum of nursing education would be defined and presumably the hospitals would have to provide special teachers other than the overworked Sisters, to deal with the education of the nurses under their control. It was only recently that in some hospitals nursing tutors had been appointed. This system would undoubtedly have to be extended and either the training schools would have to incur increased expense or the pupils would have to pay for the instruction they received. They could not have it both ways. It was sometimes argued that hospital probationers could not afford this, but many nurses paid high fees for a few months' training in midwifery. With more thorough professional instruction trained nurses would possess higher practical skill and would command higher remuneration—as they could in Overseas Dominions and in the States. At present the rate of pay for the services of newly qualified medical men on military service was often £1 a day, and allowances, while highly skilled nurses with years of experience received £40 per annum, but the medical profession paid highly for their professional education and their skill was tested and registered. Mrs. Fenwick did not consider the Nursing Profession could be in a financially stable condition while it repudiated responsibility for the management of its own cash. The National Insurance Act was faulty in many ways but at least, for the first time under an Act of Parliament, nurses had power to manage their own finances. Yet where one nurse joined an insurance society that was professionally managed many put their money into one controlled entirely by men though the excellent results achieved by their own society showed what might be done by co-operation. Why should nurses hand over their money to be managed and expended by men? They would never be a free profession until their financial affairs were placed on a sound, self-managing basis.

Mrs. Shirley enquired whether it was true that some of the allowances originally given to Army nurses had been stopped, and was answered by Miss Eden in the affirmative, the reason advanced being that these allowances were intended to enable married officers to meet extra expenses which nurses did not incur.

Miss Pearse pointed out that extra qualifications acquired by trained but unregistered nurses, perhaps at considerable expense, had little financial value. In the appointment of sanitary inspectors, for instance, trained nurses were not even given the preference; nursing simply did not count.

Miss Thurstan caused amusement by relating the numerous qualifications which a nurse, for whom application had been made to the National Union of Trained Nurses that morning, had been expected to possess, the salary offered being £24 per annum.

Miss Eden enquired whether any organised

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