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EDITORIAL.

THE ENDOWMENT OF NURSE TRAINING SCHOOLS.

Both the unprofessional papers, which are edited and under the control of lay persons, appear exceedingly perturbed that the National Council of Women is taking up the question of "Trained Nurses' Hours of Work and Salaries," and have formed a Joint Committee, with representatives of Nurses' Organizations and medical men to enquire seriously into these matters, which are of such extreme interest to people of all classes.

These journals, run by publishing companies and controlled by hospital governors, appear to imagine that no one has any right to form, or express, an opinion on nursing matters—excepting the College of Nursing, Ltd. They apparently are oblivious of the fact that, as at present constituted, the College Council is just the type of body from which neither hospital committees, nor working nurses, are prepared to receive dictation; whereas the considered opinion of nurses, doctors, and members of the public—who are not themselves responsible for the financial control of hospitals—is much more likely to be unprejudiced, on the hours probationary nurses should work, and what would be just remuneration for their services.

The fact is that the men and women composing the College Council are those who are largely responsible for the present conditions—and they cannot be judge and jury too.

Also, is it presumable that, let us say, the Treasurer of St. Bartholomew's Hospital (Lord Sandhurst) and his fellow Almoners, who govern that historic Charity, and other masculine hospital Boards, will welcome suggestions made by the Matron, as the mouth-piece of an outside body, largely composed of the Matrons of kindred institutions? We do not think so; but all hospital committees will sooner or later be compelled to consider public opinion, and public opinion which expresses sound conclusions, after due consideration of expert advice, offered in a harmonious spirit, is bound to be taken into consideration by

those dependent upon public subscriptions for the upkeep of the institutions they control. If the voluntary hospitals are to continue their good work for the public, they have "got to get a move on," and we all know how difficult that is, generation after generation, without the stimulus of public opinion. Hospital Committees can invite their Matrons to offer suggestions, on which they may or may not act. But when *vox populi* exclaims, in no uncertain tone: "Hi! good gentlemen, trustees of public monies, wherefore do the damsels under your management work 80 hours a week—for a halfpenny an hour? We like it not; to us it is unseemly that such conditions pertain in so-called charitable institutions, and if you cannot find means to alter these things, we intend to close our purses very tight"—then such "good gentlemen" will ponder on these things, and they will cease to be.

In these meanwhiles, however, other things may come to pass, and our hospital managers may well answer the *vox populi* in some such strain as this:—

"We also have sympathy with these our damsels; their hours of labour are too long, and we like not that their poor feet become flat; neither do we think that they can have a good time on a halfpenny an hour; but evolution is costly, and if these same damsels are to be efficiently educated for their highly skilled profession, if they are to be well housed, well fed, well clothed, and laundried, and their labour is not to pay the toll, then let *vox populi* announce with no uncertain sound that our Nursing Schools must be endowed, not with charity doles, but by the State, so that nursing skill may be available for all, in the maintenance of National Health. We have done our best, and with the means at our disposal we have not done so badly. We agree that these our damsels are eminently worthy of generous consideration. We therefore beg to refer the consideration of the whole question of just nursing conditions to the coming Ministry of Health."

That appears a practical solution of the difficulty.

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