

## STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES AT THE NURSING AND MIDWIFERY CONFERENCE.

At the first Session of the Nursing and Midwifery Conference at Mortimer Hall, Mortimer Street, W., on Monday last, Mr. J. F. Powell, M.R.C.S., Hon. Secretary, Asylum Workers' Association, read a paper on "Mental Nursing and State Registration" to which we hope to refer in a future issue.

### THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, LTD.

At the evening session, also held at the Mortimer Hall, the room at eight o'clock was half empty, and the meeting possessed its soul in patience waiting for the chairman, who did not arrive for another quarter of an hour, when Miss A. C. Gibson took the chair and Miss M. E. Sparshott, Matron of the Royal Infirmary, Manchester, spoke on "The College of Nursing: What it has done, and what it hopes to do." She said that the College of Nursing was a voluntary body, out for the betterment of nurses in all directions. Their register was now in print, but it would take till August to get it published, and it would cost £1,000. She mentioned the Societies on which the College has representatives, and letters that its Council has written on various subjects.

The College had had a Bill for the Registration of Nurses drafted on the broadest and most democratic lines. The Bill of the Central Committee had been fortunate in the ballot, and with the help of the College of Nursing this Bill had got through its second reading in the House of Commons. (Cries of "No.")

It had awarded three scholarships for Sister Tutors, and had opened an Appointment Bureau, and was out to help nurses to get appointments and Matrons to secure nurses. It had also various Local Centres, which had a social side, in connection with which there were whist drives, concerts and country rambles, which taught history in a very nice way, and were very important. It also arranged an Annual Conference, and the next would be held at Manchester on June 18th and 19th. It intended to go forward, and if it was not included in the Bill before Parliament it would take its place as the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and something more. There was tremendous work in front of it. Nurses were accustomed to the Matrons doing the work for them, but the College would be only too glad for the nurses to come forward and help them. She implored nurses to come forward and be nominated for the College Council, but said it was very difficult to get them elected when they were nominated, because the matrons were so much better known. The Chairman (Miss Sordy) here arrived.

### STATE REGISTRATION: ITS EFFECT ON THE NURSING PROFESSION.

Miss Gibson then spoke on the above subject, and began by frankly owning that she was not an

authority upon it, and came unwillingly. She felt also she must make another apology. For many years she had sat on the fence in regard to this question. That was a contemptible attitude. Her only excuse was that she was awfully busy and much occupied and worried, and it was an immense subject, to which she felt she should give her whole attention.

During the war she had interviewed candidates from various schools and had realized the lack of uniformity in standards. There must be a fixed standard and if there was such a standard there must be registration of those who attained it.

It was much harder honestly to confess one had changed one's views than to stick to views which were old-fashioned.

Miss Gibson then spoke on the effects of State Registration, and expressed the view that it did not matter very much where a nurse got her training provided that the training material was adequate, and the probationer worked under proper supervision and was properly taught. She thought that where two or three institutions were affiliated that they might give a very excellent training.

Registration would show that a nurse was qualified to do her job, and that she had proved this by passing an examination which was partly theoretical, but she hoped would be much more largely practical.

One of the great benefits of registration would, she hoped, be to bring the nurses of the various schools into touch with one another and get them to appreciate one another.

Miss Gibson thought that nurses should be intensely grateful to those persons who had worked for so many years to obtain State Registration. They did not always see eye to eye with them, but she hoped that eventually all would work together for the general good.

### SHOULD NURSING BE A PROFESSION?

Dr. H. C. Crouch said that since he had been announced to speak on this subject, he had received many letters, and he had been told that there was no sense in asking such a silly question as nursing was a profession already. Sometimes he doubted it. What of the flag day which he understood was to be held shortly? He hoped that in a few years the holding of a flag day for the benefit of nurses would be unthinkable.

The training of nurses at present was based on two underlying principles—that the physical health of nurses might be impaired in the interest of the sick, and that if work was done in the name of charity it was legitimate to overwork and underpay the worker.

They had heard from a previous speaker what the College of Nursing had done and what it hoped to do. He did not gather that it had done very much. The Council included a hospital treasurer, Matrons and members of hospital staffs. They were the people who had the power. If they wanted these reforms why did they not get them?

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