

THE HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT BILL. "STEALS ON THE EAR THE DISTANT TRIUMPH SONG."

On the invitation of Sir David J. Shackleton, K.C.B., delegates from some of the Nurses' Organisations attended at the Ministry of Labour to discuss the position of nurses under the Hours of Employment Bill, on which there does not appear to be any well considered opinion throughout the profession. Nearly every nurse supports a decrease in the hours of work and a weekly 48 hours is approved, especially for nurses in training who have to devote time daily to study. The question of private nurses' hours is a very difficult one. We understand the N.U.T.N. and the P.U.T.N. both approve of an eight hours' day for private nurses, but how it is to be carried out is the difficulty. One proposal is that hours in excess of the eight should be considered and paid for as overtime, at the end of the case.

We are bound to confess with extensive experience of the management of a Private Nurses' Co-operation, that to enforce this demand would mean a greatly decreased field of work for private nurses; that the public would engage a private nurse who now costs £5 5s. a week in fees and emoluments, and be compelled to attend to the patient for 16 out of a 24 hours' spell is very improbable, and at the present high cost of living the public cannot afford to pay overtime fees. Private nurses are private practitioners, as medical practitioners are, and a give-and-take system appears inevitable between them and their patients. Institution nursing is on a different footing.

We should value expressions of opinion on this difficult question, especially of a constructive character.

THE NURSES CO-OPERATION.

PERSECUTION OF NURSES TO STOP.

The monthly meeting of the Nurses' Co-operation was held at 22, Langham Street, W., on March 16th and those members of the nursing staff who recently suffered dismissal for their convictions may take courage from the fact that their sacrifice has apparently not been in vain.

The proposal to remove two more of the so called "agitators" from the staff was evidently thought inexpedient by the Chairman, Mr. Harold Low, who, on finding the voting on this question equal is reported to have said, "We can have no further removals. This thing must stop." He added that he was sick of all the publicity given to the affairs of the Co-operation by the nurses, but was reminded that it was not the nurses, but Sir Henry Burdett, who first made public the business of the Committee, by expressing his personal opinion on it in his nursing journals.

It was elicited that in the case of one of the impeached nurses, her accuser was Miss Geraldine Bremner (a member of the Committee of the Co-operation, and of the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd.).

The great Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, which the late Sir Robert Laurie Morant, with his family, attended in his life time was filled in every corner on March 17th, for his funeral service.

The principal mourners were Lady Morant, his son and daughter and other members of his family; and Government Departments under which he had held honourable office, and which he had served with heart and soul with so great ability and eager intensity, and others which desired to do him honour, were represented. The Right Hon. Christopher Addison, M.P., Minister of Health, was present; and the Board of Education, the Ministry of Labour, the Medical Research Committee, the Ministry of Munitions, the National Insurance Commission, the National Institute for the Blind, and Toynbee Hall, also sent representatives.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick attended for the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses; Mr. H. J. Paterson, C.B.E., and Miss Isabel Macdonald, for the Royal British Nurses' Association; and the Matrons' Council, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and the National Union of Trained Nurses all sent representatives.

The service was fully choral, and was conducted by the vicar, the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, assisted by the Rev. H. J. Matthews, who, at the beginning, gave the dominant note:—

"Let us pray:—

"That he may rest in peace, and in the consciousness of a great work accomplished.

"That his wisdom, public spirit, and tireless energy may not fail those who are to continue his work.

"That those whom he loved may be comforted in their hour of distress."

There, in the presence of his mortal remains, under a pall of purple velvet and lovely white and red flowers, the prayers of those who loved and honoured him were uplifted, and who shall doubt that, in his place in Paradise, his spirit was encompassed and comforted by the great wave of intercession and affection which ascended on his behalf to the Throne of God, or that its reflex surrounded and sustained those dear to him on earth, as the glorious lesson of the burial service, and the beautiful music, with their steady, tranquilising influence, sounded through the church.

The hymns selected were "Forward, be our Watchword"—and, indeed, the word must often have been on the lips of so strenuous a worker—and "For all the Saints who from their labours rest."

"And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong,
Alleluia."

Cremation took place afterwards at Golder's Green, and the ashes were interred at Hendon Old Church on March 18th.

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