

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

## REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

In reply to three letters asking why the lay-edited nursing press are pushing charity for nurses through the Shilling Dole Fund and the Nation's Fund for Nurses, the reply is simple. These newspapers are merely commercial speculations run by laymen for profit. They neither understand nor care for nursing ethics; their object is money, as is that of their lay editors. They support the employers against the interests of the professional workers because they receive financial support and patronage from them. The matter is quite simple. Every penny and item of news given by anti-charity nurses to the enemy Press is providing it with power to crush the workers down and out. Moral: Support the Professional Press.

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

## SHOULD PRIVATE NURSES BE INCLUDED IN THE HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT BILL?

We have received a large number of post-cards in reply to the above question, and so far not one in favour of Private Nurses being included in the Bill. Under these circumstances, we advise nurses engaged in private practice to write to the Minister of Labour, Montague House, Whitehall, S.W., and to their own M.P.s at the House of Commons, and state their reasons for wishing to be excluded from the Bill.

*Miss Elizabeth Thompson, Registered Nurses' Society.*—"Thank you very much for allowing us to voice our opinions on the Hours of Employment Bill (No. 2), I, for one, am not in favour of eight hours' daily work for private nurses. I believe that a patient would run very serious and often fatal risks if left sixteen hours without proper nursing, as in many cases there is not the means or sufficient room for two, or it might be three, nurses. In some illnesses where the nervous system is involved the change certainly of three nurses in twenty-four hours would appear to be very undesirable."

*Miss L. F. Macaulay, Society of Chartered Nurses.*—"Personally, I don't think an eight-hour day for the 'private' nurse will work. At the same time I think we should have a time limit. I for one, should be quite happy with a twelve-hour day, and, of course, the usual two hours off duty as well."

*Mrs. C. M. Collett, Royal British Nurses' Association.*—"I am sure it would be a very serious matter and most injurious to our Profession, if Private Nurses are included in the Hours of Employment Bill."

"The patients would suffer, and we ourselves would never feel we could do justice to them, with 'one eye on the clock,' so to speak."

*Miss L. F. Bolton, National Union Trained Nurses.*—"I am absolutely against the inclusion of Private Nurses in the Hours of Employment Bill, because it is as impossible to regulate the work of a private nurse as the manifold duties of a young mother with two or three children. Is the sick and anxious mother who can barely afford the fees for one nurse to be further harassed by watching the clock to see if her next dose of medicine or other attendance comes under 'overtime'?"

"How is one to arrange for three shifts of nurses under existing difficulties and opposition of servants?"

"Would the nurses get the overtime money, or would it go into the pockets of Nurses' Organisations?"

"I feel very strongly on this matter, and fear that nursing, as it is understood only by the English, will be entirely destroyed if any such regulation comes into force, and I, for one, will never nurse under such rules."

"What private nurses want is not shorter hours and more pay, but an adequate pension when past work. How willingly one would spend oneself then, if one knew one would not be a drag on one's people afterwards. May I congratulate you in always keeping THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING so full of interest?"

*Miss H. T. Inglis, Scottish Nurses' Club.*—"To lessen the hours of the Private Nurse would mean that her duties could not be carried out satisfactorily, as everything depends upon the condition of the patient. A nurse should be quite willing to agree to two hours off daily, having time to enjoy pleasure between her cases, which is not possible in institution life. I strongly endorse that it is impracticable to do otherwise on private duty."

*Miss M. Sharrott, London.*—"I do not think that private nurses should be included in the eight hours' Bill: 1st, Because only the very wealthy could be efficiently nursed; 2nd, Hard-and-fast rules cannot be worked by private nurses—they must be adapted to circumstances; 3rd, If only one nurse could be afforded she would not care to leave a bad case in the hands of amateurs for sixteen hours; 4th, We should lose work because many people would be terrified of engaging us."

*Miss V. D. Hedges.*—"As nurses have a seven-day working week, I suggest a new rule—three hours off duty a day. This makes a nine-hours' day and could only be managed if two nurses were present. The three hours off to be relieved by relations. Of course, at a critical stage one would not dream of leaving patient to friends, but in convalescence this would be possible. Why not four hours twice a week? These rules must be for the inconsiderate."

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