

ARE NURSES TO BE LEGISLATED FOR IN THE HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT BILL OR NOT?

We think the Council of the College of Nursing Ltd. made a serious mistake in drafting a scheme to include nurses in the Hours of Employment Bill, under a special order to work 56 hours a week instead of 48, as provided in the Bill. This scheme has been circulated by the College Council and brought before meetings of nurse members in various centres, who we are informed have expressed themselves in favour of working eight hours a week more than other classes. We cannot believe that if these gatherings had been addressed by other than College members, there would have been such unanimity on the question, especially as the scheme includes private nurses who so far as our experience goes do not wish to be included in the Bill at all, realising as many of them do, that unless they are free to make their own terms with their patients—on a give and take basis—they will cease to be employed.

The nursing staffs at the Metropolitan Asylum Board's Hospitals, and in many other hospitals, are now working a 50-hour week with a month's holiday; and we hear the arrangement is satisfactory. We do not think the Board is likely to alter this arrangement and add another six hours, to agree to the College scheme, especially as the Royal British Nurses' Association, the National Union of Trained Nurses, the Professional Union of Trained Nurses, and the Irish Nurses Union have all approved the 48 hours for institution nurses realising that in future, under the Registration Acts, pupil nurses will have a more strenuous time in preparing for a State Examination.

The question now is, Shall nurses remain in the Bill or not? That is the clear issue for the profession to decide.

The College demand does not commend itself to nurses who are not under its jurisdiction.

At the first National Conference of the Irish Nurses' Union, recently held at Larch Hill, Dublin, a resolution on the forty-eight hour week for nurses, adoption of which by the Irish Trade Union Congress in Cork, last August, has already been secured, was emphatically reaffirmed.

At the Quarterly Meeting of the Irish Board of the College of Nursing, Ltd., recently held in Dublin, it was reported that on a referendum taken by the Board on the question of whether nurses would wish to be included in the Hours of Employment Bill under a special order, as suggested by the College of Nursing, 95 per cent. of the members voting were in favour of inclusion. The College scheme provides for a fifty-six hour week for nurses, with adaptations. The result of the referendum was reported to have been communicated to the Minister of Labour.

NURSES' MISSIONARY LEAGUE.

At the Valedictory Meetings of the Nurses' Missionary League on September 29th, Nurses were present among the audience from many a distant station, as well as the three on the platform who briefly described the work to which they hoped soon to return—Miss Guyton from Bhiwani, India, Miss Ensor from Uganda, and Miss Hope from Hingwa, China. A large number of the twenty-four members who are sailing for the mission field for the first time had already started, and for this reason only one was able to be present, Miss Margerison, trained at the Royal Infirmary, Bradford. She spoke of the work at Iyi-enu, Nigeria, in which she hopes soon to take her part; and letters were read from other members who were unable to be present. Miss Richardson gave a brief account of the work of the League during the past six months, showing most encouraging advance, especially in the Provinces.

Harold Balme, Esq., F.R.C.S., Director of the Medical Section of the Shantung Christian University, Tsinanfu, China, then spoke about the wonderful movement which is going on in China in the birth of a new Nursing Profession. When he first went to China, he worked in a hospital in a provincial capital where no nursing whatever was being done. Even when the medical school was started at Tsinanfu the entire nursing was done by the patients' friends. Then, at last, seven years ago, a member of the N.M.L. joined the staff, and undertook one of the hardest tasks a nurse ever tackled. To begin with, the patients did not want her; it was much more homelike to be dirty and to do as they liked! To go on with, the students despised her; they knew about servants and about teachers, but this new being seemed to be a cross between, who actually bathed the patients, and even scrubbed the floor! Gradually she made her way, but they all realised that unless they could train Chinese nurses they would make no progress. When the new modern up-to-date hospital was built, the Chinese doctor believed that the time had come when the Chinese would undertake nursing work. With many doubts and little hope of success, Mr. Balme sent round notices that nurses would be taken for training. He put the conditions as high as in any English hospital, and to his amazement he received fifty applications. Twelve were selected and were given the very hardest possible probation for a month. Only one withdrew, and from then till now there had been more applications than they could take, from both men and women. The training had been uphill work, for they had absolutely no tradition behind them, and no slightest knowledge of what to observe. In the five years, however, the result had been splendid. Mr. Balme continued: "It is a tremendous fact that the entire moulding of this new Nursing Profession in China is in the hands of Christian women. There hardly exists a single Government or non-mission hospital which is training nurses.

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