

the employment of thousands of nurses, and it should not regulate the economic conditions of trained nurses. It was much better that they should come under the present Bill, which was definitely framed in the interest of the workers, and under Clause 2, gave the Minister of Labour the necessary powers for making any desirable modifications to meet the needs of any class of workers, nurses included.

All nurses who had an intermediary between them and the public should be included in the Bill, and so be protected from long hours, whether imposed for the benefit of Government Departments, County Councils, Poor Law Guardians, Hospital Boards, County Nursing Associations, and last, but not least, the proprietors of Nursing Homes.

Independent nurses made their own contracts.

The Bill said 48 hours per week, which could be spread over a longer period. They all knew the old adage about "a bird in the hand." When you had a very nice bird in your hand, why wait for the very problematic two in the bush? It would certainly be a long time before they came out, and then there was a grave danger that they might not be caught. Those who knew what the fight for the Nurses' Registration Acts had been knew quite well that the birds might fly away. Let them, therefore, press for inclusion in the Hours of Employment Bill in charge of the Minister of Labour, and emphatically refuse any proposals for deferred action.

The resolution was seconded by Dr. Crouch, who spoke of the effect of the physical work, and emotional strain, undergone by hospital probationers for three years, at a time when most girls were playing tennis and flirting. The probationer lived in an atmosphere of suspicion, and if she looked at a student with one eye, it was such a sin, and she got into such a state of nervous tension, that the result was terrible.

He had had some experience recently in seeing workmen at work on a rebuilding job—excellent men, but he had come to the conclusion that no honest, self-respecting working man worked hard for more than four hours a day, and they had to let off their superfluous energy by playing football. He had never known nurses anxious to play football at the conclusion of their day's work.

He had been invited by *The Woman's Leader* to contribute an article on the conditions of nurses' work, and, being curious to know whether the report of the National Council of Women on Nurses' conditions of work had had any effect, he wrote to a large hospital to ask whether the nurses' hours on duty had been improved. He was informed that the hours were being investigated, but that Badminton and Tennis clubs had been instituted. So far as he could judge from the information he received, if the nurses were to enjoy these recreations they must play Tennis and Badminton either in the dinner hour or the middle of the night.

He warned nurses against being apathetic as to their own affairs and trusting to Mahomet or

someone else to better their conditions. People really in earnest did things. In the Minister of Labour's Hours of Employment Bill, nurses would gain a lever to compel their employers to deal justly with them. They should secure it.

In regard to the proposition of the General Nursing Council, mentioned by Miss Rimmer, he did not think it had entered into the consciousness of Dr. Addison that he would be asked to introduce another Bill dealing with nurses so soon. Hospital Governors were at present helping him to unload the Ministry of Health omnibus Bill.

He concluded by seconding the resolution.

DISCUSSION.

A nurse asked: "What right the General Nursing Council had to interfere with nurses' hours of work and economic questions?"

The Chairman replied that the Minister of Health had invited the opinion of the Council on the provisions of the Bill, including the College scheme, and special classes of nurses.

The Chairman said she saw many private nurses in the room, and she specially invited them to express an opinion, as there were reported to be differences of opinion as to whether they wished to come under the present conditions of the Bill or not.

Miss Sadlier said, from long experience of private nursing she thought a forty-eight hours' week in private houses quite impracticable. Nurses could not leave their patients, and patients could not afford two or three nurses.

Miss Sheldon said, many private nurses approved a 56-hours' week spread over two weeks (College of Nursing scheme).

Miss Cattell and others expressed the opinion that, in the interest of the patients, it was not desirable to include private nurses in a 48-hours' Bill, and Dr. Crouch wound up the discussion with the opinion that whether they were included or not, the provision would be a dead letter, because the people who would oppose it in private houses would be the nurses themselves. He was constantly asking nurses in charge of private patients to go off duty, and, he concluded, "they won't go. They may be illogical people, but they will not leave patients who are acutely ill and who need them."

The resolution was carried unanimously, and it was agreed to ask the Minister of Labour to receive a deputation on the Bill as it affected nurses.

(To be concluded.)

TRAINED NURSES' ANNUITY FUND.

A considerable number of nurses have written expressing regret that, owing to professional engagements, they were unable to attend the Sale of Work in aid of the above fund on Wednesday last. In case there are any who still have Christmas presents to buy we are arranging that any articles remaining over from the Sale may be seen at 10, Orchard Street, on any day up to 23rd inst. during office hours.

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