

NURSING ECHOES.

It is a calamity that the Committee of the Birmingham District Nursing Society have announced that they are unable longer to carry on its work owing to lack of financial support, nor is it creditable to a wealthy city like Birmingham that this work, of primary importance to the health of the city, should only be supported to the extent of £750 by 350 subscribers when its inhabitants number nearly a million.

The expenses are increasing so rapidly that the Committee do not feel justified in piling up a debt which they have no prospect of paying off, and so have resolved to take the drastic step of reducing the staff of nurses by 50 per cent. and of nursing in only a few districts.

The work of Queen's Nurses is magnificent, and is a model for similar work throughout the world. But it can only be extended so far as charity permits, and the day of charity in relation to nursing is passing. (1) It has been largely supported by the middle classes of moderate means, who are not now in a position to help. (2) Then the working classes, many of whom are earning good wages, do not desire charity, and (3), now that we have a Ministry of Health skilled nursing should be available on a well considered plan applicable to all. This, no doubt is what will happen in the future, but in the immediate present the poor and the community will suffer unless existing charities are maintained.

A project is under discussion for the establishment of a residence and club for nurses in Aberdeen and the North of Scotland. It is felt by those moving in the matter that there is need of some social centre for nurses in this part of Scotland. The idea is to secure a house large enough to provide clubrooms and a certain number of bedrooms, which would be open to all nurses, both those engaged in hospital and public institutions and those engaged in private nursing. At present there is no common meeting place for nurses. They have to remain in the rooms provided by the hospital in which they are engaged, and if they go out for a walk there is no resort for them in the city, unless it be some public tearoom or picture house. The club which it is proposed to start would provide a lounge and a tearoom where meals could be provided. There would be facilities for reading, and bedrooms would be available where nurses off duty for a few

days, or visiting the city, could obtain accommodation.

We hope, if this project materialises, that the liberal policy of the Scottish Nurses Club at Glasgow will be followed, so that membership will be open to all the city's nurses, and that they will not be compelled to belong to the College of Nursing, Ltd., or any other organisation, before they can become members. As Lady Cowdray is busying herself in the scheme of the Aberdeen Club the warning is not unnecessary. Cliques in a small centre like Aberdeen would be most undesirable.

The *Irish Citizen* states:—"The College of Nursing and the Irish Nursing Board have accepted fees from Nurses for placing their names on their "Registers," but the State Register, which is to be compiled under the Nurses' Registration Act renders these unofficial "Registers" useless—if they were ever anything else. Obviously the College and the Board ought to refund to the Nurses the guineas they have wasted. Instead, it is rumoured, they are trying to make some arrangement to secure special registration terms for these Nurses, perhaps with the idea that by so doing they may secure a lasting control of the Nursing Council. As Parliament deliberately refused to give special consideration in the way of Registration to any organisation of Nurses, this rumoured manoeuvre ought not to succeed.

"The College of Nursing is considering the desirability of instituting a regular annual subscription. If it is not careful the College may develop into a real, live, democratic Trade Union, and that would be a horrible shock to some of its leading members."

The Irish Nursing Board made no pledge that those nurses who placed their names on its voluntary Register should, *ipso facto*, be placed on the State Register, as the College of Nursing, Ltd., did. All the same, we agree with the *Irish Citizen* that preferential treatment for the members of any Nurses' Organisation, so far as State Registration goes, is entirely wrong in principle. The General Nursing Councils, especially as they are judicial bodies, should maintain strict neutrality in this connection. What the Nursing Profession demands is equality of opportunity, so far as the Acts provide, for all nurses. Fix a fee for existing nurses—it cannot be more than the infinitesimal guinea—and let all who value legal status pay it.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)