

profession that such a resolution should be moved from an English platform, for Scotland, as a rule, claimed to set the pace for high educational standards. If the General Nursing Council for Scotland were to open a door which would admit to their Register all sorts of *bona-fide* nurses, and if the English Council were to agree to the claim of the Scottish Council that nurses on their Register should have the right to automatic registration in England, then a very grave injustice would be done to the English nurses. Having established a minimum standard of qualification in England it behoved English nurses to maintain that standard, to maintain their right to guard the purity of the English Register, by insisting that the English Council should be entitled to examine the qualifications of every nurse who applied for admission to it.

Moreover, the suggestion that Scottish nurses should be registered, whether or not they met the demands of the English Council in the matter of training was contrary to the feeling of the Act, for that provided for conference between the different Councils, with a view to securing a "uniform" standard. It was up to English nurses to secure this standard, not by climbing down to the standards adopted by other Councils, but by demanding that these should climb up.

Then there was the economic aspect of the question. To lower the standard of training which should admit a nurse to the State Register simply meant that the nurses who had little or no training would be encouraged to practise, and to undersell the fully qualified, thereby causing grave danger to the public, and particularly to the poor.

As to the matter of the fee. If Scottish and Irish nurses wished to practise in England, there was no reason whatever why they should not pay the same amount as English nurses did for the privileges which the English Act would confer upon them while they worked in England. The work of Registration, as had been proved by the Royal British Nurses' Association, was exceedingly expensive, and it was preposterous to ask the English Council to register the Scottish nurses for 7s. 6d., or, as has been suggested by the Nursing Council for Scotland, for 2s. 6d. Further, why should some nurses have the right to vote for the election of Members of the Council for a payment such as this, while English and Welsh nurses were required to pay a guinea? Personally, she did not think that the rank and file of either the Scottish or Irish nurses would ask it. One of the R.B.N.A. members told her that when she raised the point with one Irish nurse, the latter was quite furious, and said: "My qualification is every bit as good as yours. If I choose to come and practise in England I want no concessions because I am Irish. If I work in England I will pay my way like the rest of you when I register in England."

Mrs. PAUL, Chairman of the Professional Union of Trained Nurses, in seconding the Resolution, said she thought all were agreed that there should be equivalent standards of registration between the three countries, and that there should be only one

fee in each country, whoever might register. Probably nurses more than any other class of workers had suffered from being subsidised. They must pay a fee which would make their Register self-supporting, and though they valued the economies of the Scots they were out for fair conditions and fair dealing. In whatever country a nurse registered she should pay the fee imposed by the General Nursing Council of that country.

THE CHAIRMAN, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, referred to the general disappointment felt by the nurses of the United Kingdom in not being registered under one Act, but when the Minister of Health brought in a Government measure his jurisdiction only extended to England and Wales, and therefore he could not initiate legislation in Scotland and Ireland.

We had heard far too much about that wretched guinea from outsiders, not from the nurses themselves. In the opinion of those who had studied the financial question most closely, it was calculated before the war that the registration fee should be £2 2s. When there was the competition of two Bills before Parliament the compromise of a guinea fee was made, and the Government Bill, when introduced, provided that the Registration fee should not exceed one guinea, that was to say, about 10s. at the present value of money.

Apart from the suggestion emanating from Scotland, she deprecated the proposal that the great privilege conferred by the Registration Acts should be valued at 2s. 6d.: it depreciated legal status in the estimation of nurses and the public.

With regard to equivalent standards, and automatic registration, if responsibility were conferred on people by Act of Parliament they must have authority to carry out their responsibilities. The English Council would stand firmly for that principle. With responsibility must be given power. With State Registration nurses received their professional enfranchisement. Registration carried with it the right to vote for the professional members of the General Nursing Council—in this instance the Governing Body of English and Welsh nurses. To claim that Scottish and Irish nurses ought to be entitled to exercise that privilege for 2s. 6d. was a dangerous proposition. Equal privileges, equal fee, must be their determination.

After further support, on being put to the vote, the Resolution was carried unanimously, and it was decided to forward it to the Minister of Health and the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

The Conference then terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chair, proposed by Mrs. CAMPBELL THOMSON.

#### CHRISTMAS AT THE NURSES' SETTLEMENT.

Miss Giffen, on behalf of the members, took down the usual Christmas gifts to the nurses at the Settlement Home, for which we are asked to return sincere thanks.

ISABEL MACDONALD,  
Secretary to the Corporation.

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