

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS.

## LETTER FROM HOLLAND.

## II.

## NURSING REGISTRATION LAW IN HOLLAND.

For 20 years Nosokomos, the Dutch Association for promoting the interests of Nurses, has been endeavouring to acquire a legal standing in regard to both education and examination.

Nosokomos, in 1907 having presented an address to the Government, the Central Board of Health, after making inquiries of various institutions, published an official Government Report in 1911.

The Central Board of Health's conclusions pointed to the necessity of Government intervention. This report dealt with:—(1) Examination requirements; (2) Regulations and adjustment of rights (regarding appointments, salaries, promotion, release, and, if practicable, also regarding the hours of working and the numbers of nurses); (3) General rules for education, practical and theoretical; State delegates to be appointed for the examinations. This report of the Central Board of Health had not the smallest result.

In 1913 Nosokomos addressed the Minister of Home Affairs, urging again the necessity for State interference. At the same time the report of the Board of Health was criticised for not requiring (for admission to the Profession of Nursing) higher claims than mere elementary instruction. Nosokomos was of opinion that the education itself must be definitely settled. It was considered that merely general claims for the hospitals were insufficient.

The same year Nosokomos insisted, not only on a general education for hospital nursing, but on a special education suitable also for head nurse, matron, district nursing, private nursing, public health nursing, &c

*Nosokomos insisted on nursing being an obligatory branch of teaching under the Department of Instruction.*

Nosokomos has always advocated this principle.

Eleven different diplomas were given in little Holland for general nursing, and five different diplomas for mental nursing. All these different diplomas perplexed the Dutch public.

Nosokomos, meanwhile, demonstrated the need of legal protection for the profession, and for the Registration of Nurses. The Association of Male Nurses asked at the same time for protection and Registration.

The Dutch League of Nursing corresponds with the College of Nursing in England. The majority of Nurses belong to this League, which, however, is absolutely in the hands of the hospital authorities, the voice of the Nurse very seldom being heard there. The Nurses working and fighting for nursing reforms are members of Nosokomos.

The League was absolutely opposed to the Address, and was vehemently fighting against it, saying that Nursing in Holland was on a sufficiently high level, and that the State's interference would be unwise.

Nosokomos pursued the matter further, and appointed a Sub-Committee specially to agitate for legal recognition and regulation.

In 1914 the Minister of Home Affairs, speaking in the Dutch Parliament about the chaotic position of Nursing, made the statement that improvement is only possible by the legal regulation of education, and special schools of instruction.

In 1916 the sub-committee already mentioned published a detailed Report embodying a practical and practicable scheme of education.

In 1919 the Central Board of Health also produced an educational scheme. The League of Nursing, realising that State Regulation was inevitable, decided to adopt the fol-

lowing demands:—(1) State provision of education; (2) State supervision of hospitals; (3) State representatives to supervise examinations; (4) State badges and diplomas; (5) State protection of the Profession. At last, in 1921, some sort of legislative enactment was carried.

Before and during the Parliamentary discussion, as well as since, Nosokomos was constantly agitating for the improvement of the Act, because, in our opinion, the provision for regulation was quite inadequate. The Act does not satisfy us. Practically only the views of the hospital authorities were considered, and, as regards education, things remain almost as they were. Nevertheless, the Act is a fact. There really is some legal regulation. We regard it as a step in the right direction, and we shall continue our agitation until Nursing education is regulated in the manner desired by the women of the profession.

The Act does not prescribe for:—(1) Preliminary Education; (2) Entrance Qualifications; (3) Education of Sister-Tutor, Head Nurse, Matron, and Public Health Nurse. These are not even mentioned. No stipulations are made about the installation of equipment in general and mental hospitals where instruction is given.

There are some examination stipulations, but there is no provision for similarity of instruction, nor in the Committee of Examination is even the smallest place for the Trained Nurse herself.

In January, 1924, the Act came into effect. In November, 1923, the Dutch Red Cross addressed itself to Nosokomos and other organisations in regard to certain aspects of education calling for a Conference in order to arrive at a common scheme, the Red Cross considering it its duty to take part in the agitation for education. There were many organisations and groups, each occupied with some special branch of education, but not, as Nosokomos, prepared with a scheme of all-round education.

As the Red Cross proposed to institute its own First School of Nursing, Nosokomos thought wise to take part in the Conference and endeavour to get a good and common scheme of education. This Conference took place in February. Our President, Miss Verwey Mejan, and Miss Heleen Melk, Sister-Tutor in the Municipal Hospital at the Hague, were delegated by Nosokomos. The result of the Conference was the appointment of a study committee of seven persons.

On the recommendation of our President, Miss Verwey Mejan, Miss Meyboom, member of Nosokomos, and Matron of the Municipal Hospital, Bergweg, Rotterdam, was appointed on this committee with Miss Heleen Melk as her deputy. Both Nurses are diligent, capable and intelligent promoters of the education claimed by Nosokomos. Other organisations appointed the remaining six members and their deputies on the committee of seven. Not a single Nurse was appointed by these organisations. In Holland it is a matter of course to decide Nursing matters without considering Nurses themselves in the least.

We know at least that our voice will be heard in this committee by two of our best and most intelligent members, one of our two delegates being always present. We eagerly hope something may be gained from the deliberations of this committee.

We hope that our colleagues will have enough interest in the work of our little group of 800 Nurses, who in Holland are maintaining the high ideals of our International Council of Nurses, and to whom the interest of the Council is a great encouragement and help.

Nosokomos has in different towns offices where the addresses of private nurses are registered. The Association has organised lectures and has begun the introduction of debating evenings where one of the members gives a brief outline of a subject connected with nursing, an opportunity being afterwards given for an ample exchange of thoughts.

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