

who feel strongly on the matter will be satisfied that at least the Association has made its protest.

The Member whose letter was before the Committee had a good object lesson, just at the time of writing, of what the actual position is into which the periodical reappearance of widespread appeals for public charity has placed the nurses in the eyes of the public. She holds the Certificate of one of the largest London hospitals and has her own private practice. She is at present with a patient whose son organised a "pound day" for the poor of a particular district in the East End, and she and her colleague, as an act of courtesy and good will, each gave to him a pound of tea for his "good cause"; later his wife thanked them exuberantly—"How perfectly wonderful of you. How terribly kind. How good you all are to one another!" A sense of humour is a saving grace, and we enjoyed the mimicry with which the remarks were repeated, but the episode has its serious side too. We agree with the view of a professional man who said, "Well the nurses will find it very difficult to persuade the man in the street that they stand on a professional platform if they ask for charity at the same time." That such a point of view is not realised is well evidenced by the fact that, in a contemporary, we find one matron elated because each of her maids has given a penny in the pound out of her wages for the nurses. The cumulative effect of such episodes cannot but prove derogatory to the nurses' status, and a large and intelligent minority realise this, and no doubt their convictions will in time prevail in the profession.

But apart altogether from the point of view of professional status and to come to what some will probably regard as a much more practical aspect of the matter, we are face to face with the inevitable fact, well recognised by all authorities on organisation, that wherever any profession or section of the world's workers is made dependent, to any considerable extent, on public charity, there is invariably underpayment of the workers. Force or encourage a profession or a class of workers to be economically dependent and it is, thereon, controlled from outside instead of possessing that self-government and self-determination which alone can bring about healthy development and satisfactory standards of remuneration and conditions of work.

Another matter for serious consideration which must be faced is whether or no it is *necessary* for the profession to assume, or be made to assume, once more a position of mendicancy. The various benevolent funds now in existence for nurses must reach to, at least, between one hundred and fifty thousand and two hundred thousand pounds, and, in addition, the British College of Nurses has announced that it will set aside annually at least two thousand pounds for benevolent purposes. These funds, provided they are administered with due economy, must produce a considerable income for their purposes. But, in addition to this, surely there are few nurses who would not be willing to contribute some small amount to the benevolent activities of their profession. Roughly, there are some sixty thousand nurses in the United Kingdom, and if all, or nearly all, would, each one, give half-a-crown annually (the same amount that she pays to maintain her own legal and professional status as a trained nurse) this would bring in about seven thousand pounds each year, a far more healthy and dignified method, surely, *from a professional point of view*, than that of going to the public with broadcast appeals. Indeed the question is whether, taking all these points into consideration, the nurses have any real ethical right to place themselves in competition with other "good causes" of the British Broadcasting Corporation, or rather, we should say, to be placed there by the Corporation against the wishes of the self-governing and self-supporting nurses' organisations. Charity may flow out to the "Nurses" Fund for

Nurses, but either pity or contempt must also be felt for the nurses, according to the particular mentality of "the listener-in."

RECOGNITION OF THE LEGAL STATUS OF NURSES.

The attention of the Executive Committee was recently drawn to the fact that, in the Report of the Medical Officer of Health for a County in the Midlands, not one of the Registered Nurses whose names appear in the Report had the titular letters S.R.N. placed after her name. It is noted that all the medical men, mentioned in the Report, have their professional qualifications indicated by the titular letters which these qualifications entitle them to use, and the Executive Committee have written a letter to the Minister of Health urging that he will impress upon his Medical Officers the advisability of according to nurses similar recognition of professional attainment, by the insertion after their names of the letters to which they are entitled by the Statutory Rules, framed under the Nursing Acts of 1919.

The Committee have also given instructions that a letter be sent to the Medical Officers of Health urging that this recognition of the status and qualifications of the nurses should appear when their names are mentioned in the Reports, and expressing the view that such recognition is not only due to them but that it is likely to add to the confidence of the public in the provisions made to promote efficiency in public health work.

In older professions such methods of recognition of professional qualification and scientific knowledge have been adopted as a matter of course, and it is the business of the nurses' organisations to give attention to such matters upon the observance of which the professional recognition and development of a new profession is just as dependent as is any other.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Secretary, R.B.N.A.

MY DEAR MISS MACDONALD,—Thank you very much for your kind telegram and letter. It was a great added pleasure to have the congratulations of yourself and my friends at 194. I have received none which I esteem or value more, and only pressure of work has prevented me from saying so sooner. I intended indeed to call and express my thanks in person, but could not do so for want of opportunity.

I am, yours very sincerely,

ALFRED RICE-OXLEY.

INVITATIONS.

Miss Cattell will be "At Home" at 194, Queen's Gate, on Monday, July 11th, from 4 to 6 p.m. She asks us to say that she will be pleased to meet as many friends among the readers of the Journal as are able to attend, and she will be glad if they will take this notice as an invitation. Miss Cattell's "party" has, for several years now, been the closing function at the Club before the holidays, and these gatherings have given so much pleasure that we may expect to welcome all the usual guests, and others also, for one more pleasant afternoon before we each go our several ways during the summer recess.

Mrs. Marmaduke Lawther will be at home to the Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association on Tuesday, July 19th, from 3 to 6. She will be very pleased to see all who are able to come at 68, Finchley Road, London, N.W.8.

ISABEL MACDONALD,
Secretary to the Corporation.

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