

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

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No. 1996. Vol. 82.

NOVEMBER, 1934.

Price Sevenpence.

EDITORIAL.

PUBLICITY FOR THE STATUS OF THE REGISTERED NURSE.

In our last issue in the report of the September Council Meeting of the British College of Nurses we notified the adoption of the following Resolution placed on the Agenda in the name of Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., and, in her absence, proposed by Miss Isabel Macdonald:—

“That the General Nursing Council for England and Wales be requested to publish in the general Press the names of successful candidates in the Final State Examinations, as is the custom of other Statutory and Professional Bodies.”

In our report of the Meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales held on October 26th, published on page 302, we notify how the Resolution was dealt with, and the various points in this connection are so important that we draw attention to them in our leading article.

The Chairman of the Council in presenting the Resolution informed the Council of the steps she had taken (1) in ascertaining the practice (a) of the Central Midwives Board in relation to successful candidates in their examination, and (b) of the University of London (presumably in relation to its Diploma in Nursing) and (2) in ascertaining the cost of the publication requested, which, for a year, in one paper would be £300. On the proposal of Dr. M. A. Collins, Medical Superintendent of the Kent County Mental Hospital, Chartham Down, a nominee on the Council of the Minister of Health, seconded by Miss M. E. Sparshott, one of the Nurses' Direct Representatives, it was then agreed that the letter should be laid on the table. The customary routine when such action is taken was, however, not observed, as the British College of Nurses subsequently received a courteous, if inadequate, explanatory letter from the Registrar.

In the first place we desire to point out that the cases of State Registered Nurses, and State Certified Midwives are not comparable. The fees paid by Certified Midwives towards the upkeep of their Governing Body do not suffice for its maintenance, and the deficit is, under the Midwives' Act, apportioned by the Board between the Local Supervising Authorities, that is to say, it is a charge upon the rates. The whole of the income of the General Nursing Council, whether from fees or invested funds, is derived from money supplied by the Nurses.

The fees paid by Nurses for the year ending March 31st, 1934, amounted to £44,863 6s., leaving a balance

in hand, from this source, after all expenses for the year were paid of £4,693 15s. 4d. Income received from rent and sundry sales amounted to another £1,916 8s., making a total balance of £6,610 3s. 4d. at the end of the financial year.

Regarded from this standpoint most persons will, we believe, agree that the reasonable request of an important body of Registered Nurses that publicity should be given in the general Press to the names of those who successfully pass the examinations which they themselves finance, should receive sympathetic treatment, and not be laid on the table on the proposal of a nominated medical member, even if the cost of the publicity requested amounts to the modest sum of £300. The amazing thing is that this discourteous proposal was not turned down with one accord by the Nurses' Direct Representatives.

Compare, moreover, the following items of expenditure: £9,269 8s. 1d. on the liberal salaries of Officers and Clerical Staff, of whom there are upwards of fifty; £20,625 9s. 4d. on the remuneration of Medical and Nursing Examiners, and expenditure on advertisements £14 7s. Even were £300 added to this last amount the proportion would be negligible.

What are the principles involved in the request of the British College of Nurses?

It is now fifteen years since the Nurses' Act was passed constituting Nursing a legalised profession, and giving to its members legal status, and still the average citizen, and even some members of the medical profession, are unaware either of the existence of the Act or of what it implies. Registered and unregistered nurses compete in the open market with little knowledge on the part of the public as to where their safety lies, and with little protection for the nurses of their registered qualification.

And when a body of Registered Nurses prefer to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales the reasonable request that publicity shall be given in a dignified manner to the fact that the names of nurses who have recently successfully passed the statutory examination, which constitutes them members of a recognised profession, the expense of such publicity being met out of funds which the Registered Nurses have themselves provided, it is treated with contempt by a medical member of their Governing Body with the assent of the Council as a whole.

Constantly in the daily Press are to be noticed long lists of men and women who have qualified for membership of established professions, and it is particularly essential that publicity should be given to the status of the new profession of Nursing, and of its individual members.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)