

## PROFESSIONAL OPINION ON THE NURSING OF THE CHRONIC SICK.

We had neither time nor space in our last issue to grasp the considered opinion of instructed representatives of the Nurses' Organisations who attended the meeting summoned by Miss Musson, Chairman of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, at 20, Portland Place, W., on November 26th. They voted solid for Miss Cochrane's, Resolution against the depreciation of the standards of nursing as prescribed by the General Nursing Council for inclusion on the Register, although some of the opinions advanced were of an indeterminate nature. We propose, therefore, to quote them in full as reported in the official Report circulated by Miss Musson, so that we may realise where the chain of argument is weak.

Delegates having been invited to speak, expressed the views of their Associations as follows:—

### ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITAL MATRONS.

MISS LITTLEBOY: The Association of Hospital Matrons are opposed to the setting up of a Register for Nurses for the Chronic Sick because they are of opinion that such a Register would be chiefly composed of nurses who had failed to pass the State Examination. The Association are much in sympathy with the difficulty of nursing the chronic sick but do not think a solution would be achieved by setting up another Register.

### ASSOCIATION OF QUEEN'S SUPERINTENDENTS.

MISS WATT stated that the question had been carefully considered by members of the Association throughout the country, and their views were as follows:—

The Association consider that the question of the nursing of the chronic sick is a problem to the solution of which the Nursing Profession should be able to offer a practical contribution, with due regard to our own professional and economic standards and to the needs of the infirm sick. Failure to offer a practical solution would brand the Nursing Profession as incompetent and indifferent. The Association dealt with the domiciliary care of the sick and there was no foundation for the suggestion that the Chronic Sick cannot be adequately nursed in their own homes. The present discussion, however, was in regard to the institutional care. There was an increasing tendency to segregate the Chronic Sick in institutions and the Association deplored the growing tendency to regard the nursing of the Chronic Sick as being outside the trained Nurses' province, if not beneath their dignity. The evidence of the Essex County Council and others on these facts must be accepted, and it is felt, therefore, that another class of worker is a necessity. The main points concerning such a class from the point of view of the Nursing Profession were those of recruitment, qualifications and professional status. It had been suggested in some quarters that a three years' training would be necessary; others spoke of a modified training sufficient for passing of the Preliminary State Examination. The association were opposed to both suggestions, but felt that the Essex Scheme might be used as a basis for building up a simple training of two years' duration under fully qualified and, if possible, senior Ward Sisters. Recognition should be given in the form of enrolment or certification, but not of State Registration. The Association felt very strongly that the enrolment and control of these workers should be in the hands of the Nursing Profession, and suggested that a title such as that of "Invalid Attendant" should be given in order to enable the public to discriminate between the special worker and the fully trained nurse. Possibly the principal source of recruitment would be in the large institutions from among those persons not suitable for nurses, yet not wanting domestic service. The training might be carried on

in these institutions. In the populous centres recruits might also be drawn from partly trained nurses and others who were compelled to reside at home and who would be glad to take up this work as a means of supplementing income.

Miss Watt, in conclusion, stressed the necessity of counteracting the idea that the nursing of the chronic sick is beneath the work of the trained nurse. She stated that while there was adequate chronic work in the Municipal Hospitals, this was not the case in the Voluntary Hospitals, and suggested at least two wards (one male and one female) in each Voluntary Hospital should be set aside for chronic patients, and that any time after completion of the first year of training, every probationer should spend six months in these wards, being taught to regard this part of her work as equally necessary and important as any other part of her training.

Miss Musson pointed out in regard to the last speaker's reference to Municipal Hospitals, that these were practically all training schools, and that Hospitals referred to were really those under the Public Assistance Authorities, and possibly the separate wards (for the Chronic Sick) attached to the Municipal Hospitals, but which were not part of the Hospital proper.

### BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

MISS BREAY thanked Miss Musson for the opportunity given to nurses to express an opinion on their own affairs. She then read the Resolution passed by the British College of Nurses read at the beginning of the proceedings, and stated that all the Registered Nurses present at the General Meeting were unanimously in favour of the resolution. The solution of the problem of the Nursing of the Chronic Sick would not be found by the lowering of the standard which had been fought for for 30 years before the Nurses' Registration Act was placed upon the Statute Book. As the Chairman had said, it had been necessary to keep the standard low. In the view of the College it was wrong that there should be any attempt to establish another Supplementary Register. The Register now proposed would not be a Register of Nurses expert in one class of work. If such a register were instituted, it would be the breaking down of the one portal entrance to the Profession, and might be the breaking down of the Register and of the work of the past 30 years. It was necessary that very clear thinking should be brought to bear upon the matter before them.

MISS COCHRANE referred to the conditions under which the chronic sick are at present nursed, and expressed the opinion that these conditions were largely responsible for the reluctance of the fully trained nurse to undertake this work.

### COLLEGE OF NURSING.

MISS COODE stated that the question had been very fully discussed by the Council of the College, and they were definitely not in favour of the establishment of a Supplementary Register for Nurses for the Chronic Sick. It was realised that to obtain the numbers which were required for this work any examination which could be held would, of necessity, be of such low standard that it would bring down the whole standard of the Register. College members all over the Country were very strongly in favour of a Roll of Trained Attendants. They were also agreed that the training and qualification of these attendants should be under the aegis of the Nursing Profession, and that the General Nursing Council should be the responsible Authority.

### COUNTY AND COUNTY BOROUGH HOSPITAL MATRONS' ASSOCIATION.

MISS ALSOP said that the Association were not in favour of another Register. It was realised that in rural areas

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