

PROFESSIONAL OPINION ON THE NURSING OF THE CHRONIC SICK.

(Concluded from page 18.)

NATIONAL UNION OF COUNTY OFFICERS.

(1) MRS. BROOK expressed the opinion that no practical solution of the problem had been offered by any of the speakers. The Chronic Sick should be nursed by trained nurses. At present, Councils and Local Authorities exploited to a large extent the untrained women. If a better scale of salary were paid to the trained women, there would not be a shortage. She did not agree that the nursing of the Chronic Sick could be undertaken by elderly nurses as had been suggested; these patients were helpless and needed lifting. Chronic nursing was as important as acute nursing. Mrs. Brook said she thought the voluntary hospitals could do more towards the care of the Chronic Sick. She was of opinion that all hospitals would eventually be State controlled, when possibly systems would be altered—the standard of nursing would be higher and all nurses would be expert in one branch or another. The special hospitals and the hospitals for the Chronic Sick should be staffed by trained nurses. Many of the hospitals, especially in the London area, were up to date; others, especially in rural areas, were deplorable. The solution of the problem would not be found by the creation of another Supplementary Part of the Register. After completing their training, there would be nothing to prevent these nurses going out as trained nurses. If conditions of employment were altered, there would be no difficulty in getting nurses for the chronic sick.

(2) MR. McHUGH said that the Nursing Executive of the National Union of County Officers were unanimously of opinion that nursing of the Chronic Sick should be done by fully trained nurses. If employing authorities could be persuaded to give more reasonable rates of pay, shorter working hours, and improved conditions, it would go a long way towards removing the difficulty in obtaining the general trained nurse.

ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

MISS MACDONALD expressed thanks on behalf of her Association for the invitation to express an opinion. The Association were strongly opposed to the idea of any Supplementary Register for Nurses for the Chronic Sick. They considered it would destroy the whole purpose for which the Act was achieved, and that for the General Nursing Council to lend its support to the establishing of a class of half-trained people would be an exceedingly dangerous precedent—dangerous to the nurses whose qualifications are to be protected by the Council, and exceedingly dangerous to the sick. Shortly, the view of the Association is that the provision of nursing services for the sick is not the affair of the nurses at all but the affair of the State, and that the State should find means to supply capital to finance arrangements which will meet the employment of thoroughly qualified and very efficient nursing for those whose cases are so hopeless and for whom so much patience and skill and high qualification is required.

MISS MUSSON said that the meeting was representative of the whole Nursing Profession of England and Wales. In listening to the very interesting speeches it had been made very clear to her that there was absolutely no dissenting voice on one point, viz., the question of a Supplementary Register, and that the opinion of the Nurse Members of the Council, that there should be no further Supplementary Register, was upheld.

MISS COCHRANE proposed the following resolution:—

"That no Supplementary Part of the Register should be set up for Nurses for the Chronic Sick."

This was seconded by Mrs. Berens-Dowdeswell, and carried unanimously by all the delegates.

MISS MUSSON said Members of Council would feel much helped by that very definite resolution. She then asked whether the meeting was of opinion that the ideal to be aimed at was that the Chronic Sick in institutions should be cared for by fully trained Registered Nurses? This also was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

MISS MUSSON then asked whether any one had any solution to offer for the present time. She asked for an expression of opinion as to whether it was an advantage for the nurses to live out, as under the system in force at Crumpsall. She agreed with Mr. McHugh that Public Authorities must improve conditions. With one dissident (Miss Mackie), it was agreed that some of the nurses might be allowed to live out.

MRS. BROOK asked that the General Nursing Council should bring pressure to bear on the authorities against the employment of unskilled persons.

MISS MUSSON stated that this would be outside the scope of the General Nursing Council. Recognition could be refused to any hospital in which conditions were not as they should be, but the Council did not touch economic problems.

MISS COODE asked whether some guidance from the General Nursing Council might be looked for, as at present there were some thousands of assistant nurses.

MRS. BERENS-DOWDESWELL asked why the authorities were segregating the Chronic Sick, and would not the problem be solved if the General Nursing Council insisted that these cases be nursed in the General Wards?

MISS MUSSON said this would not be feasible. She referred to modern conditions of living, which made it impossible for many of these cases to be nursed at home. She would like to see the old people cared for in institutions more like almshouses. The County Councils Association and Association of Municipal Corporations had suggested that there should be a recognised "Service." If the local authorities require a "Service" for the nursing of the Chronic Sick, it is up to them to create that service by making the terms such that suitable people will be willing to go into it and to stay in it until they get a pension.

MISS WENDEN (College of Nursing) said that the ideal was to have the fully trained nurse, but this was not always possible, and there was a need for persons with some training who would be prepared to do a certain amount of domestic work. A Supplementary Register was not wanted, but a Roll of such women was urgently required.

MISS MUSSON asked whether it was considered there was a need for this type of attendant; the matter was discussed by the various representatives, the opinion generally being that there was need for some kind of attendant who could look after helpless patients between the visits of the nurse, and undertake some domestic duties.

MISS COCHRANE asked whether it would be possible to have legal protection for the title of Nurse?

MISS MUSSON suggested that all the Associations might join in promoting a Bill for the Registration of all agencies supplying nurses to the public. She asked the representatives to lay this suggestion before their respective Associations.

MISS COX-DAVIES expressed thanks to the delegates on behalf of the Nurse Members of the Council. She said they were all agreed in wanting the best for the Chronic Sick. She thought that the present scarcity of applicants was not only in the Nursing Profession—there was a shortage of labour everywhere; this would presently right itself.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)