

Miss Goodall kindly explained the Draft Scheme as submitted to the Branches and pointed out that members of Associations of Nurses on the Supplementary Parts of the State Register would not be eligible under the Scheme for membership of the College, but for certain privileges outlined in the Scheme (details as under).

Miss Baggallay spoke in support of Miss Carter's resolution and said she felt that if the College affiliated the special Associations it would make the present confusion even more confounded, and obscure the identity of the College of Nursing as an Organisation for General Trained Nurses. She felt it would be very impolitic to form yet another organisation without first approaching the National Council of Nurses. After further discussion, Miss Carter's resolution was put to the meeting and carried without opposition.

It was further resolved that as an emergency the resolution be sent direct to the Council of the College of Nursing, as well as to the Organising Secretary of Local Branches for inclusion in the Agenda of the next appropriate meeting of the Local Branches Committee.

We hope that the officers of the London Branch of the College of Nursing will inform the Council, and the Organising Secretary of Local Branches, that the Constitution of the National Council of Nurses provides for the inclusion of Groups of Nurses on the Special Nurses' Registers.

### DO NURSES GET A SQUARE DEAL?

For many months past the nursing question has been the sport of the press and has been known as "pie" as matter for discussion in its sensational organs. Such campaigns have their uses, as, however excitable and uninformed, no matter in which the public is not interested receives continued attention.

The public are interested in the standard of nursing available for the sick and in the conditions of training, and existence of nurses, primarily because these workers are their own flesh and blood, and we observe that the public has got its teeth into the nursing question and does not intend to let it drop until it is satisfied that its daughters "have a square deal."

Whatever our nursing politics we have to thank the Trades Union Congress for making nursing conditions a test question whether we agree with their policy and opinions or not. The result has been that the most independent and forcible weekly review, *Time and Tide*, the enlightened protagonist on women's questions, has for the past month devoted liberal space to the discussion of nursing from various points of view—opening on January 15th with an article on "The Lady with the Lampshade," contributed by the Chairman of the Association of Nurses, from the trades union point of view. This article was followed on January 22nd by one from the pen of Miss K. F. Armstrong, the advocate of the College of Nursing, on "What Nursing Needs"; and on January 29th, Dr. Harold Balme wrote on "Grievances and Remedies." On February 5th the Editor of *Time and Tide* summed up and replied to the question "Do Nurses Get a Square Deal?" with an emphatic "No."

#### "THE LADY WITH THE LAMP SHADE."

The three articles are exceedingly characteristic—would that we had space for a lengthy quotation from each. "The Lady with the Lampshade" does not mince matters. "The Ethics of Nursing, as taught in nursing schools," she writes, "is a hymn of praise to Florence Nightingale. In the interests of the patient and of good nursing this wonderful woman battled against and conquered all the forces of ignorance, complacency and traditional inefficiency. She spared no person, whether matron, doctor,

general or Cabinet Minister, who dared to defend the bad old ways or obstruct her reforms. Her light still shines in every nurse's heart. Are nurses taught that it is their duty to be quick to oppose inefficiency? Of course they are not. The lamp of Florence Nightingale is conjured up. Then over it are firmly planted a series of opaque, substantial lampshades. A good nurse is uncomplaining, even in the face of unnecessary hardships. Down comes lampshade number one, the shade of Martyrdom. A good nurse allows every moment of her life, waking or sleeping, to be bound by rules and restrictions—lampshade two; the shade of Tyranny. A good nurse is loyal to her hospital, and says nothing while a patient is being sacrificed to hospital inefficiency—lampshade three; liberally coated with Whitewash. A good nurse must not speak to a doctor, even when he doesn't know what should be done and she does—lampshade four, the shade of Etiquette. So one by one the shades come down, completely obliterating the flame of reforming zeal which Florence Nightingale kindled."

The writer refers to the "stay-out strike" of young women, with the resulting shortage of nurses. "The stay-out strike is a slow form of pressure, but very sure. The lack of nurses becomes a grave public problem, and the unattractiveness of the nursing profession is discussed in the press and on the platform... Minor reforms are worse than useless... The Trades Union Congress has performed a great and timely public service in producing the Nurses' Charter... the first hospital to announce publicly that it intends to put the Charter into practice will reap a rich harvest in prestige, nursing recruits and increased public support."

#### WHAT NURSING NEEDS.

Miss K. F. Armstrong, Editor of the official organ of the College of Nursing, admits that more nurses are wanted, but states that the increased demand is partly accounted for by the fact that many hospitals have enlarged their nursing staffs so that patients may have fuller nursing care and nurses' hours of work may be reduced. She owns that hours are still too long, off-duty times uncertain and irregular. The programme of reform of the College does not include approval of the idea of compulsory introduction of a 48-hour week by law. As nursing is a profession dealing with the needs of human beings, and these needs must always be met, and whilst advocating a 96-hour fortnight, states that there is great difficulty in adopting this for financial reasons, as nurses' homes must be enlarged to accommodate additional staff.

As nurses are clamouring to live out this should not be advanced as a reason for overwork. The College considers that better educational facilities are more desirable than increased pay, and its advocate asks "What other professional training can any girl obtain without the payment of heavy fees for tuition and the expenses of maintenance either at home, or in a residential college or school?" Then she remembers to tell us that the nurse receives board, lodging, uniform, laundry and pocket money while acquiring her training, *paying for it by the work she does*. That is the crux—the nurse is asking for a "square deal," as she is largely of opinion that she is paying too much for goods received, especially when health has to be thrown in as a make-weight!

The College advocate does not think the hospitals should be called upon to bear the cost of educational work necessary for the better tuition of nurses, and considers "the State should bear part of the cost, as it gives considerable grants to medical schools, training colleges for teachers and universities... the State needs the service of nurses. Nurse training needs to be reorganised on sound educational lines, so that more candidates are

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