

Royal British Nurses' Association.

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Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

MEETING TO DISCUSS THE INTERIM REPORT OF THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON NURSING SERVICES.

On the suggestion of a few Members present at a lecture on January 28th, it was agreed to hold a short Meeting to discuss some points of the above-mentioned Report. This Meeting took place on February 2nd and we have to apologise that no notice of it was given, except to members present at the lecture, as probably such notice would not arrive in time to allow many to make arrangements to attend.

It was agreed that certain Recommendations in the Report were to be welcomed, but the main discussion centred round others which were regarded as likely to jeopardise very seriously the professional interests of the Registered Nurses. We can only give some of the points discussed and so will confine ourselves to those on which the Members present appeared to be most interested.

One matter that aroused real indignation was the fact that, in the suggested arrangement for teaching anatomy and physiology in the schools to candidates for the first part of the Preliminary Examination for intending probationers, those responsible for the Report had apparently not even visualised the Sister Tutors and Registered Nurses as qualified to teach anatomy and physiology. If the doctors cannot make it convenient to do so then, it is stated, any competent science mistress or physical training mistress could *easily* (italics are ours) acquire the knowledge necessary for such teaching. What about the days, not so far away, when it was recommended by the G.M.C. that only medical practitioners should lecture on anatomy and physiology to probationers? Evidently, said one Member, that position (against which we protested at the time) is to be aggravated and the Sister Tutors are to be despised, ignored and rejected in favour of a teacher who may or may not have taken anatomy and physiology as one of her degree subjects, or by another accustomed to study the human body when in a condition far removed from any pathological one. If, said someone else, teachers are now to undertake part of the teaching for the Preliminary State Examination, it will not be long before they are examining also and the nurses will be called upon to pay them handsomely for that. The main question (said another participant in the discussion) is: Are the Sister Tutors incompetent to perform a function which obviously should be theirs, or are they not? If they are, why ignore them, instead of protecting them by allocating to them the work they have qualified for, rather than hand it to those who have not. Some one suggested that to do so would open a new Branch for Nurses in the schools and so further increase the shortage of nurses as against the demand.

But most of the discussion centred round the Recommendations relating to the "Assistant Nurse," and on certain of the clauses (particularly when taken in conjunction with the last sentence of paragraph 160 and another near the close of the same page) it was remarked that

obviously the Recommendations set out to provide for a "Register of Gamps"—nothing more nor less. Some derisive criticism arose on the "legal recognition" and "protection" to be given to them as a result of "the very careful consideration of the Committee." Another question was raised as to what was to happen to those women, trained only in midwifery, who are employed by certain authorities to nurse in the homes of the poor, when not engaged in their own branch. Were they to be eligible for the suggested "Roll"? The easy terms proposed, especially during the time of grace, for admission to the Roll were also criticised.

The truth is that the cloven hoof is on parade just as in the old days when economic considerations retarded the progress of the Registration Bill for decades. It passed on to the Statute Book at last, in spite of opposition, and it is precisely the same aims and fears that inspire the effort to extend the operations of the Nurses' Registration Act to give recognition and protection to the half qualified. For, in the ultimate, the matter of the economics of the nurses will not be governed by Recommendations but, as always, by the action of supply and demand.

It was decided that a request be sent in to the Executive Committee to call a public Meeting to discuss the Report and also it was agreed to have a few short meetings weekly at headquarters for further discussion.

LECTURE.

X-RAYS.

By Dr. S. Cochrane Shanks.

Recently we had a most valuable lecture at Headquarters from Dr. Cochrane Shanks. It is one, however, that cannot fail to lose much in a report because it was illustrated throughout by a marvellous collection of lantern slides. So manifold were they in variety and so clear that we were left with a feeling that we had viewed a whole world in the human body itself; these slides were illustrative of many of the internal organs and indicated the value of Radiology to the medical profession in the diagnosis of bone injuries and pathological conditions of the internal organs.

The term "X-ray" was the name given by their discoverer, Wilhelm von Röntgen, of Würzburg, in 1895, to the invisible rays emitted during the passage of an electrical current through a glass bulb from which the air has been exhausted as far as possible and into which two metal electrodes have been sealed.

The essential nature of X-rays is similar to other forms of radiation, except that their wavelengths are different. At the long end of the "wavelength spectrum" are the wireless or Hertzian rays, and at the short end are the recently discovered cosmic rays, the shortest rays yet known. Next to the cosmic rays come the gamma rays of radium. Between the two extremes of long and short lie such differ-

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