

ruthlessly degraded by a grave breach of contract upon the part of the Government in power."

American Nurses Stand for Quality of Nursing Service.

In this connection, the following advice is proffered by the American Nurses' Association to its members as their slogan for 1939:—

"The Association points out that a new emphasis placed on *quality* of Nursing Service is one of the most significant trends of to-day. Our cue for this year is to supply more nursing service of a high quality to those who need it. We also would emphasise that the nursing of the future must be for ever on the up grade if our work is to be worthy of its fine possibilities in the service of mankind. Let us take heed, therefore, that expediency and ignorance shall be determinedly opposed when they venture to dictate a course of deterioration in our standards of service."

The slogan of our American colleagues might well be adopted by British Nurses at this crisis.

Thanks to Scotland.

"I will conclude my remarks with an expression of thanks to the Scottish Departmental Committee on Nursing, coupled with the name of its able Chairman, Lord Alness. This Committee realised that to bestow legal status on the untrained nurse meant to hurtle the Registered Nurse into an economic abyss, so it wisely decided to cling to the proverbial 'saxpence.'

"And here a word on finance would not be out of place.

"You will remember that the 30 years' war with the Nursing Schools cost the Registrars some £30,000; when won in 1919, the Nurses' Registration Act provided that those who benefited should pay the entire cost of administration. The Treasury is not responsible for one penny.

"During the past 19 years the hundred thousand Registered Nurses have contributed hundreds of thousands of pounds for the benefit of legal status, and incidentally for the protection of the public from unskilled nursing, and the promotion of national health.

"The latest Revenue Account to hand of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales for 12 months amounted to upwards of £51,000.

"A profession whose economic status is maintained by such stupendous expenditure has a right to economic security, and the recommendation of the Inter-Departmental Committee to deprive the Registered Nurse of such security, is a matter, which, believe me, is one of life or death to the Nursing Profession. Let it be known to the Government by our unanimous vote that we will never submit to such a betrayal."

Resolution 2, seconded by Miss C. E. Nelson, S.R.N.

The Chair then called upon Miss C. E. Nelson, S.R.N. to second the Resolution.

Miss Nelson said: "I feel it a very great honour to be asked to second the resolution formulated by our splendid and most illustrious State Registered Nurse, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

"In doing so I should like to emphasise the fact that though the Commission's function was to consider the shortage of nurse candidates they carefully avoided throughout their Interim Report to acknowledge the attainments of the State Registered Nurse and the benefits accruing from a well-earned professional status. As an example of this I see in the Report mention is made concerning the appointment of House Wardens, not necessarily State Registered Nurses, with the proviso that these people may have direct access to a Committee. This is not very encouraging to a candidate who may look forward herself towards obtaining some such post when she is State

Registered, only to find the opportunities for advancement steadily closing in her face in favour of non-trained people. In many cases I think you will agree that it is a fact that even the Matron cannot obtain direct access to committees; in some cases, after hard endeavour she has been able to convince her lay committees that she really does know what she is talking about and has obtained recognition of her pre-eminence in Hospital affairs. Why a House Warden should have more knowledge is hard to understand. Another very important point a most hardworking and painstaking State Registered Nurse has been carefully ignored by this Commission, thereby closing another door to advancement to the coming probationer, the Sister Tutor. She has, in many cases, sacrificed some of her hard-earned salary, and many of her hours off duty, to obtain special knowledge to enable her to teach nursing both from technical, clinical and practical points of view before and after the candidate enters the Hospital ward, and all the reward she obtains from this estimable Commission is that the teaching of would-be probationers is just as easily done by school teachers—yes, more easily, but surely not so efficiently. Note what encouragement this gives to the potential probationer who may have a liking for this side of nursing.

"Who is to pay for this influx of the Education Department into our affairs? Not that Department, you may be sure—again the nurses' pocket will be tapped.

"The next suggestion will be that school teachers shall be placed on the examining panel for the State Examinations—thus the third door will be closed against the State Registered nurse, but again she will have to pay.

"What was to be expected from such a Commission but an encouragement for the present State Registered Nurse, and an acknowledgment of her splendid achievements? This would have sounded a note of stimulation to young people to train and established her status more firmly in the eyes of the public, but the report as such takes a more firmly retrograde line still.

"Even our own elected representatives on the General Nursing Council do not think it necessary to help in encouraging State Registration since they consider it too great an expense to publish the State Examination results in the daily press, but they calmly spend the nurses' money on educational experiments which are already proving a costly failure and are distinctly preventing candidates coming forward for training."

A Legal Point of View.

Mrs. Helena Normanton, Barrister-at-Law, advised that all State Registered Nurses should oppose with determination the proposal in the Inter-Departmental Report to set up a Roll of Assistant Nurses. In her opinion the plan to do so was an attempt by the Government to create a pool of cheap nursing service in the fear that war might be prospective—in which eventuality the injured merited the best trained nursing service procurable.

The speaker urged that Government Departments were all too prone to set a low value upon the work of women—an under-estimate which could be corrected only by women themselves. Nurses should remember that they were now enfranchised citizens and had political power to enforce their views, if they would only use it. In the days of the struggle for the vote, she recalled that a nursing paper had said that any nurses taking part in a suffrage procession would be breaking their vocation and dishonouring the spirit of Florence Nightingale. "But," urged Mrs. Normanton, "Florence Nightingale broke open a hut of medical stores in the Crimea with a hatchet when the stupidity of soldiers and officials wanted it kept locked." Some more of that spirit of Florence Nightingale

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