

the special attention of the Registration Board and of the Executive Committee. No trouble has been spared to make it as complete and accurate as possible, both with regard to change of address and additional qualifications, and the Council has good reason to believe that this most important work will continue to be received with increasing appreciation both by the public and the medical profession. In this connection, the publication of the third Report of the Lords' Committee on Hospitals, containing as it does a summary of a vast amount of evidence on the subject of nursing, is an event of such magnitude that it can scarcely be allowed to pass without reference or comment. Under the head of "Conclusions" are published the collective opinions of the Committee, and among these are to be found the following weighty words: "They (the Committee) are of opinion that the minimum period after which a Nurse can be advertised as thoroughly trained is three years, and, considering the large amount of money these Nurses can earn for the hospital, the Committee think that a sliding scale commission on their earnings, mentioned as being in practice at one of the large general hospitals, would be a fair addition to their regular hospital wages." It cannot fail to be a source of great satisfaction to the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association that so distinguished and well-informed a body have set the seal of their approbation on the period of training for which the Association has contended, and that such high sanction is given to the practice which prevails in at least one of the great hospitals, of bestowing on Nurses engaged in private work a fair proportion of their earnings. On the system of Registration which has been established by the Association the Committee expresses no opinion, but in the summary of the evidence the following passage occurs: "It was admitted that a woman might go through three years of training at a hospital, and get her certificate and yet be a very indifferent Nurse, and be known at the hospital to be so, but the public who read her name in the register would suppose her to be competent, unless the register clearly stated that it did not guarantee the efficiency of its Nurses. On the other hand, if the Association disclaims responsibility for the efficiency of the Nurses whom it registers, it seems difficult to understand wherein lies the security which it offers to the public."

In reply to this observation it is important to state that the Register fulfils the purpose of recording plainly what Nurses have undergone the training which the Select Committee of the House of Lords considers to be necessary for the protection of the public. Herein manifestly lies the security which the register offers. But in the published "Conclusions" of the Select Committee the following passage occurs with reference to the manner in which Hospital certificates are granted; "The Nursing capabilities and conduct of the Nurse may be described respectively as 'excellent' and 'exemplary,' which constitutes a first-class certificate, or as 'good' in both cases, when the certificate ranks as second-class. It would seem that the latter form is used when the matron is *by no means satisfied with a Nurse*, and the Committee think that words indicative of inferiority should be inserted in all certificates below the rank of the best, if, indeed, it is desirable that any such certificates should be issued at all." It is, therefore, clear beyond all question that the Committee has elicited conclusive evidence that it is the practice of some Nurse-training institutions to certify as 'good,' Nurses who have proved to be unsatisfactory, both as to capabilities and conduct, and it is only just, therefore, that the responsibility for the efficiency or inefficiency of their Nurses should rest on the certifying Hospitals. The public will now learn, from their Lordships' authoritative statement, why it is that the Registration Board of the Association, in the preface of the Register of Trained Nurses, has declined to be held responsible for the

efficiency of Nurses whom it has no alternative but to register, on the certificates which they have obtained from their training schools. For this and other reasons, the Registration Board discern increasing difficulty in dealing with Nurses who are resident in the Colonies and who apply to be placed on the Register, and they foresee that in the near future, the Association will have to devote its attention to the establishment of colonial branches and registration boards, to whom local and precise information will be more easily accessible. In conclusion, the General Council submits for the approval of the Annual Meeting new bye-laws relating to the election of the Council and to the subject of Registration." (Loud applause.)

The Balance-sheet for the year ending June 30th shewed on the general account receipts amounting to £980 15s. 3d. The expenditure amounted to £734 6s., leaving a balance in hand of £246 9s. 3d., as compared with £116 13s. 9d. at the beginning of the year. The Journal account shewed receipts of £163 17s. 1d., and payments of £157 11s., leaving a balance in hand of £6 6s. 1d.; and the registration account receipts of £229 2s. 11d., and payments of £226 2s., leaving a balance in hand of £3 0s. 11d. The investments amounted to £1,340.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK moved the adoption of the Report and Balance-sheet, remarking that the first point he had to call attention to was that the Association had now given two pensions. This had been a project of the Association for some time, and had now come into force. The Association was also doing a good work in giving assistance to members to help them over times of difficulty. The chief cases that had come before the Committee had been those of Nurses who had been laid up by illness until their savings had been exhausted, and who had been enabled in one or two cases to pay their rent and so keep up their home, and in others to go to seaside houses or convalescent homes to regain their strength. In the next place, he thought the Association was very much to be congratulated on securing the services of Dr. Bezly Thorne as Hon. Secretary. From the very beginning of the Association he had taken the warmest interest in it, and it was a great source of strength to the Association, and its stability must be increased by securing such an active and efficient worker as one of its chief officials. He thought they would be doing wrong if they were to pass the report without recognising in the fullest way the fact that her Royal Highness Princess Christian had once more come forward to help the Association in a marked and important manner by presenting the petition for the Charter in person, thus giving a weight to the petition it would not otherwise possess. It would not be proper to refer further to the Charter, as it was under consideration by the Privy Council, but whatever the result, the fact remained that the Princess Christian had once more shewn her extreme desire to help the Association and Nurses generally, which, he was sure, the meeting would wish to recognise. (Applause.)

With regard to the Report, a very important matter had been brought out by the House of Lords' Committee on Hospitals. The Committee came to the conclusion that no woman could be described as thoroughly trained until she had had three years' training, a point for which the Association had contended, and on which it had met with strenuous opposition, but which now had the weight of that official and authoritative opinion to support it. In other directions there were not wanting signs that whether the Association got the Charter for which it had applied or not, it was practically assured of success in the reforms for which it had been striving. The work of registration, which would shew who were thoroughly trained Nurses and who were not, was distinctly on the verge of complete success, for most Hospitals were beginning to recognise that registration must be carried

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