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## EDITORIAL.

### NURSING MAY BECOME A CRAFT.

At a recent meeting of the Hertfordshire scheme for training Assistant Nurses, Sir David Rutherford, Chairman of the Hertfordshire Public Assistance Committee, presented certificates to assistant nurses trained under the scheme.

Sir David said he regarded the presentation as an important occasion. He then referred to the increased status granted to assistant nurses by the first report of the Rushcliffe Committee. He also mentioned the Nurses Act, the effect of which, he said, so far as the present purpose was concerned, was to grant what one might term a Charter to assistant nurses. The assistant nurse had hitherto been regarded as the Cinderella of the nursing profession, but, he declared, she was now established as a recognised and important factor in that profession. A roll was to be set up on which the names of qualified assistant nurses would appear.

Essex had had a scheme of training in operation for some years, and it was so far established as to be recognised as an important factor both by the Rushcliffe Committee's Report and the Nurses Act. The lady who was in charge of the Essex scheme, Miss L. Snowden, had afforded Hertfordshire her assistance in the inauguration of the county scheme. Sir David expressed the hope that the inauguration of this service would bring forward many girls who thought they had a bent for nursing, so that the demand for nurses—so far as Hertfordshire was concerned—would be met to a substantial and reasonable extent.

### PRE-REGISTRATION STANDARD

This scheme reverts to the standards of pre-registration times, and substitutes a two years' manual training for nurses instead of three or four years' systematic instruction as at present required for State Registration.

Thus instruction in the advance in scientific medical requirements in the efficient training of nurses is undermined; the standards of the General Nursing Councils for England and for Scotland ignored, and the whole status of nursing as a profession lowered to rule of thumb in operation 60 years ago. No one has worked more determinedly for this disastrous de-grading than Miss L. Snowden, who is a Registered Nurse, and a member of the Assistant Nurses' Committee in connection with the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, to which she was appointed by Mr. Ernest Brown, the Minister of Health, in conformity with the Nurses Act, 1943. She is also busily engaged organising the National Association of Assistant Nurses. It is a pity Registered Nurses are not alive to the serious results of the dilution

of the standards they have attained by so much self-sacrifice and expenditure of cash in the past.

The result of the Nurses Acts, 1943, will undoubtedly place the nursing controlled by Public Authorities in the hands of the short-termed trainee, who will thus rapidly increase in numbers and flood the nursing market at reduced fees.

### NURSING, A CRAFT.

We note in the *American Journal of Nursing* for June last editorial remarks on the ubiquitous Assistant Nurse.

"In industry," says Dr. Basil C. MacLean, "we have mechanical engineers and we have mechanics. Perhaps in health we should have a nursing profession and a nursing craft. The latter, however, implies recognition, certification and licensure of both."

"Is the time ripe," asks the Editor, "for frank recognition throughout this country [U.S.A.] of the nation's need for both a nursing profession and a nursing craft? If the profession really accepts that challenge, it must give wholehearted effort to securing appropriate legal, economic, and social recognition of the craft. The States which have Acts providing for the licensure of practical nurses or attendants have taken the first step in this direction. England wants, in the new group of assistant nurses, who will have a two-year instead of a four-year training, women who will not be expected to have 'the depth of knowledge or the breadth of skill' required of the State Registered Nurse."

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"Flyers have great respect for the mechanics in their ground crews. They know they are vitally important to successful flying. We have a great need of nursing service and of professional nursing care. Has not the time arrived when the nursing profession should courageously accept greater responsibility than it has yet done for analysing nursing needs and for equipping workers to meet these needs . . . This question cannot be answered off-hand or by a lucky guess. Nor should it be answered on the basis of emotion or prejudice. The war has intensified, it has not created, a problem which now demands a solution."

### NURSING, AN ART

Apparently people advocating nursing as a craft (the nurse as a mechanical operator), imagine these mechanics will stay put. They will not; and may we remind their advocates that mechanical engineers and their craftsmen manipulate stone and steel, and that we nurses handle flesh and blood, spirit and soul, with life and death in the offing? Nursing is inspired by many graces—faith and service—but it is first and foremost an art. Florence Nightingale made this claim for the profession she founded, and it stands for all time.

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