

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Membership. As a special concession to our lapsed members, who wish to re-join the Association.

The T.N.A.I. Council assembled at Delhi on 13th & 14th March decided that till the end of financial year, 30th Sept. 1950, the re-joining fee of Rs. 3/- shall be waived.

Anniversary Greetings. Trained Nurses Association of Pakistan is a year old, and we send our best wishes.

It's in the Air. I was awakened from my sleep at 12-15 A.M. to take delivery of a telegram from the South which read, "Convention Successful". It was telling us that Madras, following closely in the steps of Delhi, had established its T.N.A.I. Regional Branch on the 14th of February.

I gather there had been much excitement and bustle preceding the meeting, for an enthusiastic group of campaigners had been calling up members and stimulating interest in the new venture; we rejoice with them that their efforts had been crowned with success.

Well done Madras. Head Office sends you their warmest congratulations and best wishes for a fruitful and happy future.

General Secretary.

PRIZE ESSAY

Scarcity of Trained Nurses with Reasons and Remedies.

The shortage of Nurses is a much debated subject in almost every country in the world, and is due to various causes and factors.

To my mind this shortage is more acute in the Asiatic Countries because we are not tackling the problem in the right manner.

To begin with the prejudice to "Nursing" has come down through the ages. Prior to Miss Florence Nightingale's days, nursing was done by Religious orders and philanthropic societies. They gave of their best willingly without any thought of gain or remuneration, but as years went by the uneducated women, whose morals were not of the best, took to nursing (if such could be called nursing) with a view to earning money. I refer to Charles Dicken's "Sairey Camp" and "Betsey Prigg" type.

Prejudice continued and parents of the educated and cultured classes looked in horror at hospitals and nursing as such.

Then came Florence Nightingale, "the lady with the lamp" who in spite of opposition, revolutionized and organised nursing and the spirit of nursing. She and her band of followers have made nursing what it should be, the most noble profession in the world, particularly for women. She stated clearly why it was essential that educated ladies should band together, live in a hostel, and be actually taught the procedures of nursing, so as to be able to give of their best and selfless service to the sick and suffering humanity. Thus started the first Nightingale Training School for Nurses in St. Thomas' Hospital, London.

From this small beginning, other similar schools sprang up, not only in England, and in other Western Countries, but, the prejudice to nursing remained to a good extent, and parents felt their daughters should be guarded against the performance of "such menial work".

As years went on the prejudice somewhat gradually began to die out, and many ladies of the educated class took up nursing in the west, but in Asia the prejudice remained. Nursing was, and is still, considered a "menial task" by some section of the people.

To quote one country America, the position of nurses is enhanced to-day, because many of their training schools are "Independent Schools" recognised by the Universities. The young nurses are treated as students and the hospitals are not dependent upon them entirely for the nursing care of patients. Trained graduated nurses are employed to staff the hospitals, while the student nurses work directly under the supervision of clinical nurse instructors. They are given more time and every facility for study. Every training school is provided with an adequate library-cum-reading room, and nurses are encouraged to read and correlate theory with practice. Some of the larger schools have librarians to help and guide student nurses in the selection of reference books.

Although there is a complaint of shortage of nurses in America, there is no dearth of nursing instructors and supervisors. The main shortage lies in bed-side nurses and I feel that one of the reasons for this, is that more nurses after graduation, take up specialized nursing of which there are a variety of branches to choose from; Public Health and Industrial Nursing being two of the more important ones.

I think I am right in saying the U.S.A. has about 200 thousand nurses to a population of 40 million, that is 1 nurse to 200 persons, while we in India have 1 nurse to 43 thousand persons. The prejudice to nursing in U.S.A. and Canada is negligible.

In Eastern countries the problems are very different and diverse, and in order to bring forward some of the reason for the scarcity of nurses, I take my own country, India.

First and most important the prejudice in parents' minds against nursing as a profession is very great, and we in India have not taken enough steps to eradicate that prejudice, and until we do so there will be a continued shortage of nurses. Hence education of the Public as to what "Nursing" means and stands for, is an important factor, which must not be lost sight of in this country. I would say then that the knowledge of nursing should become a social reality. A radical change should be created in the minds of the Public to their entire conception of this profession and its use for human good, so that they would freely give their daughter to fight the battle of diseases and human suffering. The scourge of disease and epidemics carries off more precious lives than even a world war does. Money can be found some how to fight a war—why not then find the money to fight a war of disease and sickness, both physical and mental? A healthy mind and body, the two being synonymous, would perhaps have less thoughts of war, either cold or aggressive! More publicity by visual education, talks to the Public and to high School Girls, and recruitment campaigns should be organised.

The good qualities of the nursing profession has been long hidden under a bushel and its light has not been seen hence the lack of Public understanding as to what this great profession entails. In order to build a strong and healthy nation, we need certainly more doctors, but still more trained and intelligent nurses with a strong knowledge of Public Health aspects, for many of our diseases are preventable, and "if preventable, why not prevented".

Nursing should not be considered as a "job" that anyone can take up if they are not successful in school, or have not had the means or opportunity for a higher education. We must keep the educational standard high, in order that efficient and intelligent nursing service may be given to the sick.

For the present, to meet our acute and critical need, the lesser educated girls may be given a shorter period of training, approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 years, and upon completion of training may be enrolled as "Assistant Nurses" or "Nurse Aides" to work under the supervision of graduate nurses.

Having stressed in some detail the need to eradicate prejudice to nursing in the minds of the people, I will now proceed to give other reasons with remedies to combat the acute shortage of nurses in India.

The paucity of homes for nurses comes high in the list. The need for more and better homes to house nurses after their long and arduous duties in caring for the sick, is an acute and urgent necessity. If more nurses homes were built, the existing hospitals could train more nurses, and so increase our numbers.

By increasing the numbers, shorter hours of duties could be arranged. The eight hour duty system of three shifts in the 24 hours, with a day off per week, would be one of the attractive factors for recruiting more nurses.

Similarly the quality of food should be improved, with an extra allowance of milk for every nurse, for it is the nurse who is exposed to infection.

Adequate recreational facilities should be provided, both physical and cultural.

The need for nurses Residential Clubs in all big cities is a long felt need. The club could provide a good library, a variety of games, and meals on a non-profit making basis. The subscribers to the club would have a common meeting ground, where they could exchange ideas, and also entertain friends of other professions.

Holiday homes for Convalescent nurses, and for those unable to afford expensive holidays while on annual leave, are also desirable. Retired nurses could be employed to take care of these homes.

A Health Insurance scheme for all nurses, and a pension scheme for retired nurses would be an added attraction to this profession. The need for security and well being is innate in all human beings, and nurses, no less, find that there is no security later in life in becoming a nurse. This may sound materialistic, but then, we are living in a materialistic world! Free medical treatment and modern drugs should be provided for nurses who become ill on duty, and hospital beds should be made available to them free of charge, particularly for long illnesses.

Better living wages should be paid to trained nurses, many of whom have dependents to take care of and support.

Married nurses living in their own homes should be permitted to do part time work in hospitals and be paid on the hourly basis system. This would help to bring many married nurses back into the profession and so relieve some of the shortage.

To-day our hospitals are practically dependent on the student nurses for the nursing care of patients. I feel if "probationers" were treated more as "students" rather than as "a pair of hands", it would entice more girls to take up nursing.

More training schools recognised by Universities, would certainly attract well educated and cultured girls from good homes to study nursing. If we ponder over this, we find that many girls would rather become teachers, (a poorly paid profession) or even office clerks, why? To my mind the raising of our standard would be an asset rather than a liability.

In the years to come, with the introduction of one national language in this sub-continent of India, and with books published in the national language, I am sure the obstacle of recruiting more girls for nursing will be surmounted to a great extent.

Nurses should be treated as adults and not as children. A certain amount of restriction and discipline is good for the welfare and good name of any institution. Rules are made for the good of the whole, but leisure and freedom of speech should not be denied them. Nurses should be made to feel that they can approach the Matron or Nursing Superintendent at any time, and she should be able to look into their grievances and complaints sympathetically and be able to guide and advise them for their good.

Another point I would like to stress with all due respects to the medical profession, the place of nursing is influenced greatly by the doctors' attitude towards nurses. Doctors should feel that nurses are co-partners with them in this fight for health, and not subservient to them. When nurses serve the doctor, it is indirectly a service to the patient. This change of heart would give the nursing profession a status, and perhaps help to bring more intelligent women into it, for "Profession" means "Service above self".

I end with the words one given to me by my friend and tutor:—

"Back of the tool is the Workman's arm
And back of the arm is a force;
And back of the force is the spirit of man
Directing the tool in its course—
And it isn't his pride in the work or the art,
But the prayer on his lips and the hope in his heart
That the work that he does may be worthy
To lay on the altar of God at the end of the day."

This article is written without bias, and with a genuine desire and a fervant hope, that with the combined efforts and points raised by my colleagues to combat this scarcity of trained nurses, we may see this great and noble profession go forward from strength to strength, so as to be able to build up a strong and healthy India.

Edith H. Paull,
G. T. Hospital, Bombay.

INTERNATIONAL GROUP EXCURSION IN DENMARK

June 11th—24th, 1950.

Subject : Tuberculosis Care and Tuberculosis Treatment, especially in relation to the Prevention of Tuberculosis and to BCG Vaccination.

With reference to the recommendations of the Exchange of Nurses Committee unanimously agreed at the Grand Council meeting of the International Council of Nurses in Stockholm, the 15th of which recommendations runs as follows—

★POST GRADUATE STUDENTS IN U. K. If your studies permit, you might consider availing yourselves of the opportunity of joining the Group. The excursion promises to be interesting and Denmark is a beautiful country.

Members in India may obtain Application Forms from T.N.A.I. Office, 1, Underhill Lane, Delhi,

General Secretary,
T. N. A. I.