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EDITORIAL COMMENT

RANK FOR NURSES

The bill for Rank for Nurses which was defeated in the last Congress has again been introduced. Every member of the nursing profession, whether she has been in the military or Red Cross service or whether she has served at home during this war period, has a duty to perform at this moment. The members of both houses of Congress should be made to realize that their nurse constituents wish this measure to become a law, and should also have it impressed upon them that during this war period, nurses have represented the womanhood of America and that in the great majority of states they are or will soon be voters.

For the better information of those of the younger group who are not familiar with the inner facts of this bit of nursing history, we pause to give a brief outline of the relationship which exists to-day between the American Nurses' Association and the Red Cross.

In 1908, a joint committee was appointed from the League and the American Nurses' Association for the purpose of obtaining affiliation with the Red Cross. The report brought back by this committee in 1909 was not altogether satisfactory, as is shown in the League report for that year, but after very full discussion, at the meeting of the American Nurses' Association, the motion was made and carried that we should ask for affiliation, trusting to the future to be able to adjust the relationship between the two organizations on a satisfactory basis. The idea in the minds of the members of the American Nurses' Association and the proposition made to the Red Cross was that the American Nurses' Association would assume the responsibility of enrolling nurses for the Red Cross, to serve in time of war or national calamity and to become the Army reserve.

How these plans were worked out, with Miss Delano as the chief, and with committees of the American Nurses' Association over the length and breadth of the country, is known so well to our readers that we need only allude to it.

The American Nurses' Association has met its pledges to the Red Cross, its nursing service committees which extend from one end of the country to the other, have enrolled the 35,000 Red Cross nurses who have constituted the Red Cross personnel during this war period, and the late Jane A. Delano and her associates at the headquarters in Washington and at the thirteen Division offices have given and the latter are still giving, expert service.

The Red Cross nurses who have made up the Army reserve, when they have been transferred from the Red Cross to the Army, have become automatically Army nurses, absolutely under the control of the Surgeon General's office. It is the consensus of opinion of those who have thus served and of those who have been in a position to know, that the Army has failed to give them the consideration to which they were entitled. For this reason we are going over the heads of the Surgeon General's office and are appealing to Congress for rank. This is the only way, because of the established custom of the Army, that we believe certain defects can be remedied.

The Red Cross has not taken any part in this movement for rank. We understand it is against its policy as an organization to concern itself with legislation in any form, but our contention is that the Red Cross has an obligation to the American Nurses' Association through which it has been able to supply to the Army this magnificent body of nurses to care for the sick and wounded, both at home and abroad, during the war period. And in our judgment, the Red Cross owes it to the nurses of this country to insist that Army regulations shall be so changed that certain objectionable features in Army service shall be removed in the future.

We made it very plain in our May editorial that the effort to obtain rank was not because of hardships endured by nurses in caring for the sick and wounded soldiers at home or abroad, or because of the inconveniences which they were obliged to endure during the active fighting period. There is a great tendency on the part of many of our members to complain about petty annoyances and discomforts; with this we have no sympathy. What we are asking for is such a change in the regulations as will give nurses in the Army a definite status, with the insignia of rank which are recognized by every one in military service from the highest to the lowest,—first to ensure greater efficiency in the discharge of their duties, and then to give them the same kind of personal comfort in their living conditions and in traveling as it has been found possible, even under war conditions, to furnish for officers.

Nurses everywhere over the country at this time should ask the support of the Red Cross Chapter members in this movement. As

individuals, such members can at least give their aid, even if the chapters within the national body are unwilling to lend their support to this crusade.

We must bear in mind that this law will not go into effect, even if it is passed, until the nurses now overseas have returned, and it will apply only to the Army Nurse Corps and to those who may in future be called upon to make up the Army reserve.

In the Letter Department of this JOURNAL we are publishing a number of letters from various women among our leaders, over their own signatures,—their endorsement of this movement for Rank for Nurses.

How To Do It

The great thing is to make a personal appeal to your Senators and to the Representatives from your District. If you do not know who they are, find out through the men of your family, or ask some of your local politicians for their names and addresses. Write as concisely as possible and have your letter typewritten, something as follows:

I am one of your constituents living at ————. I am asking you to vote favorably on the Lewis-Raker bill on Rank for Nurses which is now before Congress.

If you have served, or have friends who have served, and can give special definite reasons for wanting this bill passed, state them briefly. The great thing is the request from you as a constituent in the locality which they represent, and a possible voter, for their support of this measure. To have your letter effective, write immediately.

Miss Delano had absolute faith that the nursing service which she spent so many years in building up, would be justly recognized and rewarded by the men of this country when the excitement of the war period was over. Perhaps she was over sanguine.

PEACE TIME REORGANIZATION OF THE RED CROSS

Every week we have evidences of changes in the form of organization and plans for the peace programme of the Red Cross, all of which seem to be more dependent on the nursing body than on any other one group of workers. Miss Wald's report of the conference at Cannes, as reported in the Survey for May 31, and Miss Stimson's report of the same conference, quoted in the Red Cross Department of this issue of the JOURNAL emphasize this.

That the public health nurse is recognized as one of the great features in the immediate carrying out of the peace programme, is indicated by the recent appropriation by the Executive Committee

of a sum of money to be used for scholarships for instructors of public health nurses. While the plans are just now in process of formation, definite information can be obtained by sending to the Bureau of Information in New York.

The personnel of the management of the directors of the Red Cross is also undergoing a change from a voluntary to a paid basis. In the earlier days, when the American Nurses' Association made its affiliation with the Red Cross, its affairs were being directed by Miss Boardman and, later, by Mr. Taft and Mr. Wadsworth, with other volunteers as heads of departments. With the reorganization, all of those who are in Red Cross work are to be paid, from Dr. Farrand, its head, down to the lesser officials.

THE WILL OF JANE A. DELANO

It is reported that Miss Delano left a fortune of something over \$500,000, every cent of which, with the exception of a bequest of a few thousands to an aged aunt, her only relative, is left to personal friends who are nurses, to the children of a friend who was a nurse, or to some nursing interests, conspicuous among which are the five bequests which follow: First, to the Alumnae Association of Bellevue Training School for Women Nurses, the sum of \$5000 in trust, the principal of said sum to be kept intact perpetually and the income, only, arising therefrom to be used by such Association for the sick benefit fund for the support and relief of sick nurses who are members of said association; second, to the Alumnae Association of the Training School for Nurses connected with the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania situated in Philadelphia, \$5000, to be used for the same purpose as that given to the Bellevue Alumnae; third, to the American Nurses' Association, \$5000, in trust, the principal to be kept intact, and the income to be used at the discretion of said Association for the Nurses' Relief Fund, or for the promotion of any of the objects for which that Association was established; fourth, to the American Red Cross, the sum of \$25,000, in trust, the principal to be kept intact, the income to be used for the support of one or more visiting nurses under the supervision of that organization, "in loving memory of my father and mother, such nurse or nurses to be known as the 'Delano Red Cross Nurse or Nurses'"; fifth, the remainder of her property to the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary to be used to assist in the construction of a residence for nurses or for such other useful purposes as shall be determined upon by the Board of Trustees, this residuary provision being made as a memorial to the late James J. Higginson, who was for many years president of the Board of Managers of that institution.

Perhaps no greater proof of Miss Delano's devotion to her profession can be furnished than these provisions in her will which was drawn more than three years ago.

When we consider how Miss Delano went to her office day after day, reaching it early and remaining late, working evenings or on Sundays, when necessary; how she stayed at her desk during the whole period of the war, taking no vacations, taking her place in line with others, at lunch time, at a cafeteria; how she bore not only the long hours of work but the harder task of great responsibilities and decisions, when all the time she had at her command the means for a life of comfort and leisure,—we feel that the sacrifices made by most of us are very small and that the least we can do in memory of her service is to stand up bravely to our daily task without fretting over trifles, to coöperate with others to the best of our ability, and to make every effort to secure to the nurses who are to follow us in Red Cross or Army service, the consideration to which they are entitled.

A LETTER ON RANK FOR NURSES

Too late for classification, comes a letter on this subject from Mary Beard, president of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing:

The Committee on Securing Rank for Nurses is convinced that our best hope of success lies in a united and sustained effort lasting two or three months to support the "relative rank" bill, rather than to work at this time for actual rank. It is actual rank that is needed for efficient work, but the Committee feels that the first step towards getting that is to write in an effort to secure the less radical measure. Such an effort must have the hearty endorsement of each one of us. The confident expectation of success will go far towards winning it.

Let us trust in the wisdom of those who have been studying the question so thoroughly, and who feel that to secure relative rank is the best hope of getting what we need, and let us not divide public opinion by refusing to endorse "relative rank" because we prefer "actual."